

ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICY
FOR THE
PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM

April 21, 2008

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Introduction

ABOUT THE ACOP

REFERENCES CITED IN THE ACOP

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

HUD

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

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

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

State Law

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

Industry Practice

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

RESOURCES CITED IN THE ACOP

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

Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook

In June 2020 HUD began issuing a new version of the *Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook* chapter-by-chapter. Unlike the previous version of the guidebook in which chapters were

numbered, the new version includes chapter names, but no numbers. As the new version of the guidebook has not yet been fully released, and since the previous version of the guidebook contains guidance not found in the new version, the policy cites both versions of the guidebook. Therefore, where the *Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook* is cited in the policy, the citation will make a distinction between the “old” and “new” versions of the guidebook. The “old” version of the guidebook will continue to be cited as *PH OCC GB* with a chapter/page reference (example: PH OCC GB, p. 5-4). If HUD has also released a new chapter on the same topic with information that either adds new information or updates existing information from the previous guidebook, the new guidebook will be cited as *New PH OCC GB* with a chapter title and page reference (example: New PH OCC GB, *Lease Requirements*, p. 11).

On September 29, 2023, HUD issued Notice PIH 2023-27 to implement sections 102 and 104 of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA). The notice supersedes relevant portion of the guidebook, specifically the chapters on eligibility and occupancy, income determinations, and reexaminations. Where chapters have not been altered by the HOTMA implementation notice, the model policy continues to cite the Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook.

Abbreviations

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

Abbreviation	Document
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
HUD-50058 IB	HUD-50058 Instruction Booklet
PH OCC GB	Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook, June 2003.
New PH OCC GB	Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook, Various dates of release
RHIIP FAQs	Rental Housing Integrity Improvement Program (RHIIP) Frequently Asked Questions.
VG	Verification Guidance, March 2004 (attachment to PIH Notice 2004-1)

Resources and Where to Find Them

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

Guidebooks, handbooks, and other HUD resources may be found at the HUDClips website: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/administration/hudclips

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

Document and Location
Code of Federal Regulations http://www.ecfr.gov
Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System PHA Security Procedures, http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/rhiip/docs/eivsecguidepha.pdf
Executive Order 11063 http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/FHLaws/EXO11063.cfm
Federal Register https://www.federalregister.gov/
HOTMA Final Rule https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/02/14/2023-01617/housing-opportunity-through-modernization-sections-102-103-and-104?utm_campaign=subscription+mailing+list&utm_source=federalregister.gov&utm_medium=email
HOTMA Implementation Notice, PIH 2023-27 https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/OCHCO/documents/2023-27pihn.pdf
Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, issued M https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2010/12/14/joint_statement_ra.pdf

Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin and English Proficient Persons, published January 22, 2007
https://www.lep.gov/guidance/HUD_guidance_Jan07.pdf

Notice PIH 2007-27 (HA), Disallowed Costs and Sanctions Resulting from On-Site Monitoring Reviews
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/publications/notices/07/pih2007-27.pdf>

Notice PIH 2017-12, Administrative Guidance for Effective and Mandated Use of the Enterprise Income Verification Process
<https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/PIH2017-12EIVNOTICE.PDF>

Notice PIH 2010-26 (HA), Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/publications/notices/10/pih2010-26.pdf>

Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook, June 2003
https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_10760.PDF

VAWA Resources
<https://www.hud.gov/vawa>

Chapter I

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM AND PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Housing Authority of the City of Bremerton which is doing business as the Bremerton Housing Authority (BHA) receives its operating subsidy for the public housing program from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. BHA 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. BHA enters into an Annual Contributions Contract with HUD to administer the public housing program. BHA must ensure compliance with federal laws, regulations and notices and must establish policies and procedures to clarify federal requirements and to ensure consistency in program operation.

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

There are three parts to this chapter:

Part I: Housing Authority of the City of Bremerton (BHA). This part includes a description of BHA, its jurisdiction, its programs, and its mission and intent.

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

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

PART I: THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BREMERTON (BHA)

1-I.A. OVERVIEW

The Public Housing Program was created by the United States Housing Act of 1937. Administration of the Public Housing Program and the functions and responsibilities of BHA, its designees and staff shall be in compliance with BHA's Personnel Policy, any Union agreements with BHA, and this Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP). The administration of BHA's housing program will also meet the requirements of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Such requirements include any Public Housing Regulations, Handbooks, and applicable Notices. All applicable Federal, State, and local laws, including Fair Housing laws and regulations also apply. Changes in applicable federal laws or regulations shall supersede provisions in conflict with this policy. Federal regulations shall include those found in Volume 24 CFR, Parts 1, 5, 8, 100 and 900-966 (Code of Federal Regulations).

1-I.B. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Public housing is funded by the federal government and administered by BHA for the jurisdiction of the **City of Bremerton**.

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

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

The principal staff member of BHA is the executive director (ED), who is selected and hired by the board of commissioners. The executive director oversees the day-to-day operations of BHA and is directly responsible for carrying out the policies established by the commissioners. The ED's duties include hiring, training, and supervising BHA's staff, as well as budgeting and financial planning for the agency. Additionally, the ED is charged with ensuring compliance with federal and state laws, and program mandates.

1-I.C. MISSION

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

BHA Policy

BHA's mission is to provide high quality, stable and sustainable housing and related services to people who have limited financial means. Our work is to help our clients become economically self-sufficient, while at the same time strengthen communities. We will use our

public and private resources efficiently and effectively.

To achieve this mission, BHA strives to:

- Recognize the residents as its ultimate customers.
- Develop problem-solving partnerships with the private sector, HUD, local governments and the community.
- Improve management and service delivery efforts through resource management, risk assessment, and implementation by trained, diagnostic, and results-oriented staff.
- Implement resident initiative programs that offer opportunities such as skills and educational training, the possibility of homeownership and substance abuse programs.

1-I.D. BHA'S COMMITMENT TO ETHICS AND SERVICE

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

- Administer applicable federal and state laws and regulations to achieve high ratings in compliance measurement indicators while maintaining efficiency in program operation to ensure fair and consistent treatment of clients served.
- Provide housing that is safe, habitable, functionally adequate, operable, and free of health and safety hazards—in compliance with the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate: Inspection Standards (NSPIRE) for very low- and low-income families.
- Achieve a healthy mix of incomes in its public housing developments by attracting and retaining higher income families and by working toward deconcentration of poverty goals.
- Encourage self-sufficiency of participant families and assist in the expansion of family opportunities which address educational, socio-economic, recreational and other human services needs.
- Promote fair housing and the opportunity for very low- and low-income families of all races, ethnicities, national origins, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and with all types of disabilities, to participate in the public housing program and its services.
- Create positive public awareness and expand the level of family and community support in accomplishing BHA'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 BHA's support systems and commitment to our employees and their development.

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

PART II: THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

1-II.B. PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM BASICS

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

The job of BHA pursuant to HUD regulations is to provide safe, habitable dwelling units, to low-

income families at an affordable rent. BHA screens applicants for public housing and, if they are determined to be eligible for the program, BHA makes an offer of a housing unit. If the applicant accepts the offer, BHA and the applicant will enter into a written lease agreement. At this point, the applicant becomes a tenant in the public housing program.

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

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

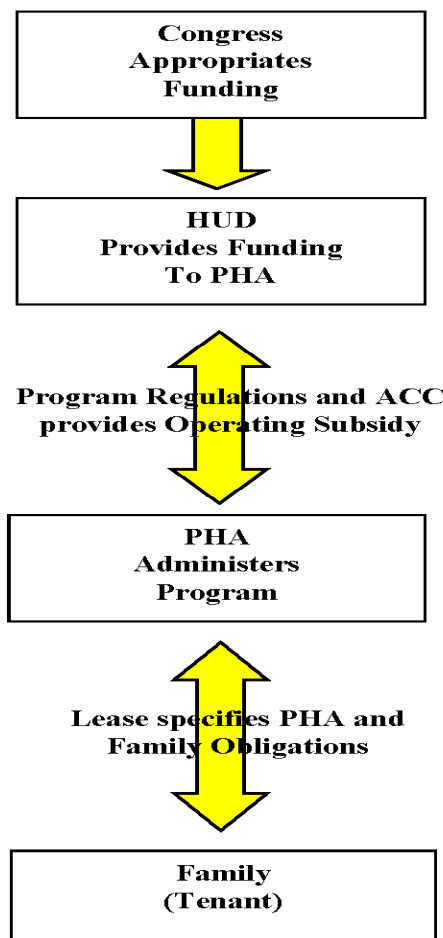
1-II.C. PUBLIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

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

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

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

The Public Housing Relationships



What does HUD do?

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

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

What does BHA do?

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

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

What does the tenant do?

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

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

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

1-II.D. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Applicable regulations include:

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

PART III: THE ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICIES

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

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

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

1-III.B. CONTENTS OF THE POLICY

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

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

Mandatory vs. Discretionary Policy

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

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

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

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

1-III.C. UPDATING AND REVISING THE POLICY

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

BHA Policy

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

Chapter 2

FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

BHA's Section 504 Coordinator is responsible for monitoring BHA's compliance with its reasonable accommodation policy as outlined in this chapter. Individuals who have questions regarding this policy, its interpretation, or implementation should contact BHA's Section 504 Coordinator in writing, by telephone, or by appointment as follows:

Ebony Searles, Section 504 Coordinator
600 Park Avenue
Bremerton, WA 98337
esearles@bremertonhousing.org
(360) 616-7127 Phone
711 Telecommunications Relay Service

PART I: NONDISCRIMINATION

2-I.A. OVERVIEW

Federal laws require BHA to treat all applicants and tenant families equally, providing the same quality of service, regardless of family characteristics and background. Federal law prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, and disability. In addition, HUD regulations provide for additional protections regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status. BHA 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 (to the extent that it applies, otherwise Section 504 and the Fair Housing Amendments govern)
- The Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Final Rule, published in the *Federal Register* February 3, 2012 and further clarified in Notice PIH 2014-20.
- The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA)
- Any applicable state laws or local ordinances and any legislation protecting individual rights of tenants, applicants, or staff that may subsequently be enacted

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

BHA Policy

In addition to Federal nondiscrimination laws, the following Washington State nondiscrimination laws and ordinances also apply: creed; HIV AIDS and Hepatitis C status; pregnancy or maternity; use of a service animal by a person with a disability; honorably discharged veteran or military status; retaliation for filing a whistleblower complaint with the state auditor; retaliation for filing a nursing home abuse complaint; retaliation for opposing an unfair practice.

2-I.B. NONDISCRIMINATION

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

BHA shall not discriminate because of race, color, sex, religion, familial status, age, military status, retaliation, 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.

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

BHA Policy

BHA does not identify any additional protected classes.

BHA will not use any of these factors to:

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

Providing Information to Families

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

2-I.C. DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

Unlawful Discrimination:

Applicants or tenant families who believe that they have been subject to unlawful discrimination may notify BHA either orally or in writing.

Within 10 business days of receiving the complaint, BHA will investigate and attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against BHA. BHA 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 BHA lobbies, will reference how to file a complaint with FHEO.

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

Unlawful Discrimination under the Equal Access Final Rule:

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 BHA either orally or in writing.

Within 10 business days of receiving the complaint, BHA will provide a written notice to those alleged to have violated the rule. BHA 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).

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

Within 10 business days following the conclusion of BHA's investigation, BHA 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.

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

VAWA Complaint:

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

BHA will advise the family of their right to file a VAWA complaint with HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). BHA 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.

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

BHA 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 a 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.

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

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

BHA Policy

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

“The Bremerton Housing Authority complies with the Fair Housing Act and provides reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities. If you or anyone in your family is a person with disabilities, and you require a specific accommodation in order to fully utilize our programs and services, please contact the housing authority.”

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

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

Sources used for this policy include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Fair Housing Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ 42 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq ~ 24 C.F.R. Part 100 et seq ~ H 02-03 (May 3, 2002) ~ PIH 2010-26 (July 26, 2010) ~ Joint Statement of HUD and DOJ on Reasonable Accommodation under the Fair Housing Act (May 17, 2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ American with Disabilities Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ 12 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq ~ 28 C.F.R. Part 35 ~ 29 C.F.R. § 1630
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Washington Law Against Discrimination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Chap. 49.60 RCW ~ Chap. 162-26 WAC ~ Chap. 162-38 WAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ 29 U.S.C. § 794 ~ 24 C.F.R. Part 8

Parties Responsible for Compliance with Policy

Who	Responsibilities
All BHA Staff	All staff must be alert for the needs that disabled persons (other staff, tenants, Voucher holders, and applicants) may have for reasonable accommodation/modification under this policy. When appropriate, staff should offer to help persons who appear to need help to make a request under this policy for reasonable accommodation/modification.
Section 504 Coordinator	<p>BHA's Section 504 Coordinator is designated as BHA's Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. This means that he or she has the following duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate and monitor BHA's compliance with this policy; • Coordinate BHA's compliance with Section 504 and the ADA pursuant to 24 C.F.R. § 8.53(a), and 28 C.F.R. § 35.107(a); • Chair and Staff the Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee pursuant to this policy; • Properly store the records under this policy; • Compile data on BHA's compliance under this policy; • Arrange for training as appropriate for staff with responsibilities under this policy; • Review reasonable accommodation/ modification request; • Serve as First and Second Line Staff person on requests for reasonable accommodations that do not fall within the responsibility of anyone else.
Site Manager (First Line Staff)	<p>Responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving requests (written or verbal) for accommodations/modifications from persons within their areas of responsibility; • Gathering information necessary to assess the request; • Sending for verification of the need for accommodations/modifications to the knowledgeable professional; • Tracking request for accommodations/modifications for a timely response; • Delivering request for accommodations/modifications to the second line staff; • Acting as BHA's contact for the requester and guiding that person through the process set out in this policy. <p>Decisions regarding reasonable accommodations/modifications that can be made by Site Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative correspondence/payee/copy mail to • Specific type and time for appointments • Large print documents • Assisting to complete paperwork
Housing Programs Manager	<p>Responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving and reviewing the information gathered by the First Line staff; • Making an initial decision regarding the request for accommodations/modifications; • Mail all notices under this policy with copies to first line staff and BHA Section 504 Coordinator;

Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee	Reviews all denials of reasonable accommodation/modification requests or requester appeals from modified approvals. Members of the committee will review the RA and supporting documentation to determine whether the denial should be upheld. The members of the Committee are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Section 504 Coordinator, Chairperson ▶ Director of Housing Programs or designee, Vice Chairperson ▶ BHA staff person chosen by Executive Director ▶ Representative of community organization that serves disabled Persons, chosen by Executive Director
Executive Director	The Executive Director must approve all accommodations/modifications that cost more than \$ 2,000 in any one year.

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

2.II.B. DEFINITIONS OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

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

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

Types of Reasonable Accommodations

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

- Permitting applications and reexaminations to be completed by mail
- Providing “large-print” forms
- Conducting home visits
- Permitting a higher utility allowance for the unit if a person with disabilities requires the use of specialized equipment related to the disability
- Modifying or altering a unit or physical system if such a modification or alteration is necessary to provide equal access to a person with a disability
- Installing a ramp into a dwelling or building
- Installing grab bars in a bathroom
- Installing visual fire alarms for hearing impaired persons

- Allowing a BHA-approved live-in aide to reside in the unit if that person is determined to be essential to the care of a person with disabilities, is not obligated for the support of the person with disabilities, and would not be otherwise living in the unit.
- Providing a designated handicapped-accessible parking space
- Allowing an assistance or service animal
- Permitting an authorized designee or advocate to participate in the application or certification process and any other meetings with BHA staff
- Displaying posters and other housing information in locations throughout BHA's office in such a manner as to be easily readable from a wheelchair

Disability	<p>“Disability” means the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment. <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The presence of a sensory, mental, or physical impairment that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Is medically cognizable or diagnosable; or (ii) Exists as a record or history; or (iii) Is perceived to exist whether or not it exists in fact. <p>A disability exists whether it is temporary or permanent, common or uncommon, mitigated or unmitigated, or whether or not it limits the ability to work generally or work at a particular job or whether or not it limits any other activity within the scope of this chapter.</p>
Impairment	<p>"Impairment" includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) 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, genitor-urinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine; or (ii) Any mental, developmental, traumatic, or psychological disorder, including but not limited to cognitive limitation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

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 BHA 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 BHA's programs and services. If the need for the accommodation is not readily apparent or known to BHA, the family must explain the relationship between the requested accommodation and the disability.

BHA Policy

BHA will encourage the family to make its request in writing using a reasonable accommodation request form. However, BHA 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. Criteria for BHA's Obligation to Accommodate or Modify

BHA will grant requests for accommodation or modification that are shown with adequate verification to satisfy all of the following four criteria:

Criteria 1: Request

BHA must receive a request for the accommodation or modification. The request does not have to come from the disabled person in question. Another person may make the request on behalf of the disabled person. The request may be verbal or written. The person should use the BHA-approved form. However, if they are unable to do so, a BHA staff person will assist them by completing the form for them.

Criteria 2: Disability

The accommodation or modification must be for a person who fits the definition of disability. It is not necessary for BHA to know the details of a disability. BHA will not require a person to grant it access to confidential medical records in order to verify a disability. It is enough to get verification of the manifestation of the disability from someone who is in a position to know. That person need not have a medical degree or a particular expertise. However, BHA must have adequate confidence in their judgment and competence. BHA's staff may also know enough about a requester to assess whether the person is disabled.

Criteria 3: Necessity for Reasons Substantially Related to the Disability

The requested accommodation or modification must be necessary for the disabled person's full enjoyment of BHA programs, facilities, or employment, or premises, and the necessity must be substantially related to the disability.

BHA is not obliged to provide an accommodation or modification that, although not necessary, would be beneficial or convenient.

BHA is also not obliged to provide accommodations or modifications that may be necessary to the tenant but for reasons that are not substantially related to the disability.

Criteria 4: Reasonableness

The requested accommodation or modification must be reasonable. A request is not reasonable if any of the following are true:

(a) Undue Administrative Burden on BHA

The request would, if approved, impose an undue administrative burden on BHA. This may mean that the request would require more staff time than BHA has available.

BHA will determine on a case by case basis whether a request would impose an undue administrative burden. Relevant factors include: the administrative cost or burden of

the requested accommodation in comparison with the administrative cost of regular operation; limits or availability of BHA's overall resources; the benefits that the accommodation would provide to the requester, and the availability of other, less expensive alternative accommodations that would effectively meet the requester's disability-related needs.

(b) **Undue Financial Burden on BHA**

The request would, if approved, impose an undue financial burden on BHA. This may mean that the request would cost money that BHA does not have.

BHA will determine on a case-by-case basis whether a request would impose an undue financial burden. Relevant factors include: the financial cost of the requested accommodation compared with the cost of the regular operation, availability and limits of BHA's overall financial resources; whether BHA has specifically budgeted money for the purpose and whether any of that money remains for the fiscal period; the benefits that the accommodation would provide to the requester, and the availability of other, less expensive alternative accommodations that would effectively meet the requester's disability-related needs.

(c) **Fundamental Alteration in the Nature of BHA's Program(s)**

The request would, if approved, fundamentally alter BHA's program(s). In the case of a request from an employee, the request is not reasonable if it would not allow the employee to perform the essential functions of his or her job.

If the requested accommodations/modification is not reasonable, BHA will explore other accommodation/modifications that would address the person's need and that would be reasonable. If these alternatives are available, BHA will offer them.

2.II.E. Burden of Proof

The person making the request has the burden of showing that the first three of the four criteria in the above section are satisfied. Under the fourth criteria, BHA bears the burden of showing that the request is not reasonable.

2.II.F. Approval/Denial/Review of Reasonable Accommodations/Modifications

BHA Policy

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

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

If BHA 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 BHA's operations), BHA will discuss with the family whether an alternative accommodation could effectively address the family's disability-related needs without a fundamental

alteration to the public housing program and without imposing an undue financial and administrative burden.

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

All Reasonable Accommodation/modification approvals are subject to BHA's later review, modification, or withdrawal. BHA may request more information during such reviews to determine the continued need and/or reasonableness of the accommodation. For BHA Program participants, BHA will review approvals at least once a year during any applicable annual recertification.

2.II.G. Program Accessibility for Persons with Hearing or Vision Impairments

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

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

BHA Policy

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

To meet the needs of persons with vision impairments, large-print and audio versions of key program documents will be made available upon request. When visual aids are used in public meetings or presentations, or in meetings with BHA 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.H. 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, BHA 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 BHA's programs and services.

If a person's disability is obvious or otherwise known to BHA, 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 BHA, BHA 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, BHA 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].
- BHA must request only information that is necessary to evaluate the disability-related need for the accommodation. BHA may not inquire about the nature or extent of any disability.
- Medical records will not be accepted or retained in the participant file.
- In the event that BHA does receive confidential information about a person's specific diagnosis, treatment, or the nature or severity of the disability, BHA will dispose of it. In place of the information, BHA 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.I. BHA Staff Responsibilities; Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee (RARC)

Time Lines in This Policy

This policy sets forth general time lines for each stage of the process. By those time lines, BHA will generally give an initial response within twenty (20) working days of receiving a request. However, these are only general guidelines. Several factors will affect how long it should take:

1. BHA should take a much shorter time to answer requests that should clearly be granted because the basis for them is clear, e.g., BHA should not need much time to allow a clearly qualified service animal to a tenant who is clearly visually impaired or to approve the installation of a shower grab bar for a tenant who clearly needs one. In these cases, BHA staff should speed up each stage of the process to approve the request within a few days.

2. BHA should speedily respond to a request for an accommodation that also is necessary to address a safety threat. As appropriate in such cases, staff can rely on verbal approval and allow the paperwork of this policy to catch up later.
3. BHA may also require more time than the general time lines set forth in this policy to answer a request that presents hard questions or that is based upon facts that are not clear.

Designation of Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee

BHA shall have a Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee as follows:

(a) Committee Membership

The following persons shall constitute the Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee. This shall be a standing Committee.

- (i) BHA Section 504 Coordinator, Chair and Staff to the Committee
- (ii) Housing Programs Director or designee
- (iii) Another BHA staff person (preferably a person who is disabled or has a personal acquaintance with the needs of disabled persons), appointed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director may change this appointment at any time.
- (iv) A representative of a community organization that serves disabled persons, appointed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director may change this appointment at any time.

Anyone participating as a Committee member must have received reasonable accommodation training.

(b) Committee Responsibilities

- (i) To review and adjudicate all appeal of denials of requests for accommodation or modification. For its review, the Committee shall use the criteria and procedures set forth in this policy;
- (ii) To store the records of all reasonable accommodation/modification requests that BHA receives, with all associated documentation, and compile the data from these records to show their aggregate numbers, types of requests, outcomes, and other information useful for tracking BHA's compliance with this policy. BHA's Section 504 Coordinator shall be the custodian of these records;
- (iii) To monitor BHA's compliance with this policy; to report annually on BHA's compliance to the Executive Director;
- (iv) To recommend policy changes to the Executive Director and ways to improve BHA's compliance with the policy.

Training for Staff

All persons designated with responsibilities in this section shall first receive training on the duty of reasonable accommodation/modification.

2.II.J. How to Request Reasonable Accommodation/Modification

A person seeking accommodation/modification must request it from BHA or have someone else request it on his or her behalf.

The request need not be in any particular form. Requests can be made either verbally or in writing; however, to facilitate the reasonable accommodation process, BHA will transfer any request received (either verbally or in writing) to the approved BHA form. In addition, the person making the request does not have to use any particular words. For example, the person does not have to ask explicitly for “reasonable accommodation.”

A person seeking reasonable accommodation/modification may direct his or her request to the First Line staff persons designated above to receive and investigate requests. Any other staff person receiving a request should direct the request to these First Line staff persons. For example, many tenants will make their request of a maintenance staff person. The maintenance staff should help the tenant direct the request to the site manager. If necessary, the maintenance staff should convey the request him or herself to the site manager.

The person making the request should use the BHA-approved form. This form shall be available from any BHA site office. It shall also be part of the orientation materials given to new tenants.

The designated First Line staff person shall offer to help the person fill out the form. If the requester does not wish to use the form or if the request is verbal, the First Line staff person shall fill it out using information the requester provides. The First Line staff person who fills in the BHA-approved form for a person seeking reasonable accommodation/modification should read it back to the person and verify that it accurately reflects the person’s intended request.

The First Line staff person shall remain the requester’s guide and primary contact person throughout the process. The First Line staff person shall immediately email notice of the request to the Second Line staff. This copy serves to alert him or her about the request so he or she can track it through this policy.

2.II.K. First Line Staff Person

Gather Information

The First Line staff person shall gather the information necessary to assess the request under the criteria mentioned above.

(a) Sources of Information

The following will be common sources of information:

(i) ***Information that BHA already possesses:***

BHA may already possess pertinent information. For example, BHA staff may already be quite familiar with a tenant’s or Voucher holder’s disabilities. BHA is free to use this information to support or refute the request.

(ii) ***Disabled Person:***

The disabled person will usually know better than others the extent of his or her

disabilities and related needs. The staff person should use the BHA-approved form to seek more information from the requester.

(iii) ***Third Parties:***

Information from third parties is often helpful or necessary. Social service providers or medical providers, in particular, may have information needed to assess a request. To seek third party information, staff may use the BHA-approved form. The staff person should enclose the authorization for the release of information that the requester signed as part of the request packet. If the written information from a third party is unclear or needs clarification, staff should call them directly and document to file which will include staff signature and date.

(b) What information to seek and what not to seek

BHA should seek only what it needs to know in order to assess the request for reasonable accommodation, e.g., that someone is disabled under the definition and that the requested accommodation is necessary for reasons related to the disability.

BHA does not need, and should not ask to know, the type of disability or diagnosis. The requester may volunteer this information, which may indeed be helpful to assess the request.

Interactive Discussion

The First Line staff person shall affirmatively engage the requester or his or her representative in an interactive discussion for the following purposes:

- (a) To collect information that the requester has to provide;
- (b) To help BHA understand the requester's needs and proposals;
- (c) To help the requester understand BHA's needs and requirements;
- (d) To fully explore all alternatives and seek an agreement on a solution. BHA may propose alternative ways to address the disabled person's needs. The goal is to find a solution for genuine needs. Agreements should be put in writing. Senior Property Manager must sign all agreements for BHA. NOTE: the Executive Director must approve agreements that cost more than \$ 2,000 in any one year.

Recommendation and Report

The First Line staff person will record the information, the accommodation request, and the various proposals discussed on a BHA-approved form. He or she shall forward the form and accompanying information to the Second Line staff person designated to make the decision. He or she shall do so within five (5) working days from the date BHA received the request. If the request is urgent, he or she will do this more quickly.

2.II.L. Second Line Staff Person

Using the process below, the Second Line staff person shall make a decision about the request. In normal circumstances, he or she will do this within five (5) working days from the receipt of the information from the First Line staff person.

Once the final decision is made, the Second Line staff will send the requester written notice of the decision.

If the Second Line Staff Person decides that BHA needs information to assess the request, he or she shall seek it, generally by asking the First Line Staff Person to collect it. In any event, the Second Line Staff Person is responsible for making and monitoring arrangements to procure the needed information and making the decision when the information arrives or doing without it if it proves unavailable within a reasonable time.

There are three types of decisions:

- (a) Approval of request: In this event, the Second Line Staff Person shall be responsible for implementing the approved accommodation and modification and documenting that it gets done.
- (b) Approval of alternate accommodation/modification
- (c) Denial, subject to review by the Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee

2.II.M. Executive Director Approval

The Executive Director, or his or her designee, must approve all accommodations/modifications that cost more than \$2,000 in any one year.

The Executive Director has the authority to direct the approval or denial of any request.

2.II.N. Section 504 Coordinator

The Section 504 Coordinator shall report the decision to the requester using the appropriate forms.

The approval may be for an alternative form of accommodation/modification. The requester may not be satisfied with the alternative. He or she may request an informal review before the Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee to review the matter. He or she may participate in the review.

A response may be a mix of both approval and denial. The Section 504 Coordinator should use that form that seems to fit best. Either form allows the requester to seek the Committee's review.

The Section 504 Coordinator will then send a copy of the letter to the First and Second Line Staff Person.

2.II.O. Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee (RARC)

BHA's Reasonable Accommodation Review Committee will review all requested reasonable accommodation/modification appeals. It shall apply the criteria listed above.

Committee Process

- (a) The RARC shall convene the Committee whenever necessary under this policy.
- (b) The Committee Chairperson shall preside. In his or her absence, the Vice-Chair shall preside.
- (c) Three Committee members shall constitute a quorum.
- (d) Senior Property Manager, whose decision is being reviewed, will present the decision and the basis for it. If he or she is also a Committee member he or she shall not vote in the Committee's decision. In that event, the RARC may appoint a temporary replacement on the Committee for the case.
- (e) The Committee shall decide by a majority vote of members voting; a tie vote upholds the decision under review. A reversal of a denial on legal grounds MAY BE MADE without regard to the majority vote.
- (f) The Committee's process shall be informal and conducive to a speedy and informed decision.

If Requester or His or Her Representative Chooses to Participate

If the requester or his representative chooses to participate in the Committee's review, then the following additional procedures will apply:

- (a) The requester may appear before the Committee in person or through a representative that he or she affirmatively authorizes.
- (b) The Committee shall schedule its meeting so as to reasonably accommodate the schedule of a requester and/or his or her representative.
- (c) The requester or his or her representative may, in advance of the Committee's meeting, review and copy at BHA expense any documentation that the Committee will rely upon in the matter.
- (d) The requester or his or her representative may make a presentation in support of the request.
- (e) Senior Property Manager shall then present the basis for the denial.
- (f) The Committee may consider new information presented at the review.

Committee's Decision

The Committee shall make a decision as promptly as reasonably possible after the conclusion of the review. A Civil Rights Compliance Officer may overrule the Committee. The Executive Director must approve any accommodation/modification that costs more than \$ 2,000 in any one year.

Final Decision

The Committee's decision shall be final subject to the authority of the Executive Director to overrule its decision.

Other Grievance Processes

BHA will use the procedures in this policy to respond to requests for reasonable accommodation/modification. Some persons also have access to other grievance processes within BHA:

Tenants Voucher Holders	Grievance Procedure for Tenants, Voucher Holders and Applicants
BHA Staff	BHA Personnel Policy

Persons with access to these other BHA grievance processes may **not** use them merely because they are dissatisfied with the answer that emerged from this policy's procedures in an attempt to get a different answer. Instead, persons may use the other processes only to complain that BHA failed to follow the procedure in this reasonable accommodation/modification policy. In that event, the other process may direct BHA to try again under the procedures of this policy, correcting any failure of process.

2.II.P. Review of Approvals

All approvals are subject to review, modification or withdrawal to account for a change in circumstances. BHA will review them at least annually or whenever it has reason to believe a change in circumstances may warrant modification or withdrawal of an approved accommodation/modification. For BHA Program participants, BHA will review approvals at least once a year during any applicable annual recertification.

2.II.Q. Guidelines and Examples for Reasonable Accommodation/Modification

Below are some general guidelines and examples in applying the reasonable accommodation policy.

GENERAL GUIDELINES	
1	Interactive and Good Faith Discussions to Find a Solution BHA staff and the requester must work together in an "interactive" process to identify genuine needs and seek solutions. They both must make a good-faith effort to do this. BHA staff should make the process as easy as possible for the requester to use; BHA staff should make clear that BHA takes its obligation seriously and remains ready to listen and to try to understand the request. The best way for BHA staff to start this discussion may be simply to ask, "What can I do for you?" The requester must cooperate by providing information that will help BHA understand and assess the request under the criteria of this policy. Both staff and the requester should show flexibility, creativity, and goodwill.
2	BHA Will Treat Every Request Individually BHA will assess each request for accommodation or modification individually. Whether BHA should approve or deny a request usually depends on facts particular to the individual requester's circumstances including the financial, administrative and programmatic limitations on BHA at the time. There are few standard formulas. What one person needs

GENERAL GUIDELINES	
	will be different from what other persons need. Similarly, BHA's financial and administrative abilities will also vary. What is reasonable in one situation or at one time may be unreasonable in another.
3	<p>The Views Or Needs Of Other People</p> <p>In general, BHA will not consider what other people may think about the request. For example, other people may feel that BHA shows favoritism by allowing a disabled person to keep a service animal that is larger than the pet policy would otherwise allow to non-disabled persons. Similarly, they may object if BHA suspends an eviction for lease violations to give the disabled person a reasonable chance to control a problem that results from the disability. They may feel this is unequal treatment since the same behavior would result in their own eviction. These sentiments are not a reason to deny the disabled person's request.</p> <p>However, other people's needs are a legitimate part of the assessment of whether a request is reasonable. For example, the safety and peaceful enjoyment by other residents are fundamental attributes of BHA's housing. An accommodation is not reasonable if it would jeopardize them.</p> <p>Similarly, BHA cannot deny a request for fear that an approval would encourage other people to ask for the same accommodation. Instead, BHA should assess each request individually. It may be possible that too many requests would become unaffordable, too administratively burdensome, or work a fundamental alteration in the nature of BHA's employment or program. However, BHA should not deny a request by presuming that this will happen.</p>
4	<p>What if the requester does not provide enough information to support the request?</p> <p>The requester has the burden of providing the information that will support the request. BHA will reasonably help the requester do this. However, after a reasonable effort or period of time, BHA will make a decision on the request based upon the information that is available. If the information is not sufficient, BHA will deny the request. The requester can always submit another request later with more information.</p>
5	<p>What if more than one accommodation would work?</p> <p>If more than one reasonable accommodation/modification would fulfill the needs of the disabled person, BHA and the requester will try to agree on which one to use. If there is no agreement, BHA may choose the option that is less burdensome or expensive, as long as it meets the disabled person's needs.</p>
6	<p>Verification</p> <p>BHA is responsible for determining that each request meets the criteria necessary for approval. BHA will do this by requiring adequate verification from sources it deems to be credible. There are no hard rules for this assessment. Generally, BHA must be satisfied that a person who is providing the verification must have adequate knowledge of the facts and adequate skills or experience to offer a useful assessment.</p>

HOW TO REQUEST REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION/MODIFICATION	
1	BHA's legal obligation to accommodate a disability arises when BHA receives a request to do so. Without a request, there is no obligation.
2	A request does not have to be in any particular form. It can be written or verbal. However,

	BHA staff should help the person put the request in writing using the appropriate form. This form helps to ensure a record of the request and prompts a person to provide the information that BHA will need to assess the request. If the person does not want to fill out the form, the staff should fill out the form to create a written record of the request. The staff should make sure that the form accurately reflects the person's intended request.
3	A request does not have to contain or convey any special words. For example, a person does not have to use the words "reasonable accommodation."
4	A request does not have to come from the disabled person. Another person may make the request on behalf of the disabled person. However, in these cases, BHA must be satisfied that the disabled person has authorized the other person to speak for him or her. BHA staff should also be alert to situations where a person may appear to need help even if the person does not request it. In those situations, BHA staff should ask if they would like assistance.

IS A PERSON DISABLED?	
1	Whether or not a person is disabled is frequently evident to BHA staff. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person receives income conditioned on a finding of disability (Social Security Disability, SSI, GAU, residence in housing for disabled persons) BHA's staff may have sufficient acquaintance with the person to know that the person is disabled, e.g., the person may use a wheelchair.
2	If the disability is not evident, BHA needs verification from someone who has both the competence and the necessary acquaintance with the person to make an informed assessment.
3	BHA is only interested to know if the person fits the definition of disability. It is generally unnecessary to know the type of disability or the specific condition or diagnosis.

IS THE REQUESTED ACCOMMODATION/MODIFICATION RELATED TO THE DISABILITY?	
1	A request must be related to the disability. For example, a sight-impaired tenant may reasonably request a washer/dryer to be installed into their units. This would allow him or her to do laundry without having to use the stairs to get to the laundry facility. It is much less clear why the tenant can't use the onsite laundry facilities. Installing a washer/dryer may be beneficial or even necessary for the person to live independently. However, BHA would not approve this request without a showing that is necessary for reasons related to the disability.

IS THE REQUESTED ACCOMMODATION/MODIFICATION NECESSARY?	
1	The requested accommodation must be necessary. If the requester is a tenant, the requested accommodation must be necessary to allow him or her equal opportunity to use BHA's housing or other services. An accommodation or modification may be beneficial or convenient. That is not enough, however, to oblige BHA to approve it.

IS THE REQUESTED ACCOMMODATION/MODIFICATION REASONABLE?	
BHA shall not grant a request for unreasonable accommodation/modification. A request is not reasonable if any of the following are true:	
Undue Administrative burden to BHA	

<p>BHA is not obliged to approve a request that would impose an undue administrative burden. In general, this means that it would be too hard to do or would require work that BHA's staff does not have the time to do.</p>	
<p>Undue Financial burden</p>	
<p>BHA is not obliged to approve a request that would impose an undue financial burden. In general, this means that it would cost too much.</p>	
<p>Fundamental alteration in the nature of the job or BHA's program</p>	
<p>The law does not oblige BHA to fundamentally change a job or the nature of its services even if the change would be necessary to a disabled person.</p>	
<p><i>Employment</i></p>	
<p>1.</p>	<p>Each job at BHA has essential functions. The adequate performance of these functions is fundamental to BHA. BHA will reasonably accommodate disabled employees in ways that will allow them to adequately perform the essential functions of their job. This means that BHA will consider changing aspects of their job or their working environment. Perhaps some additional equipment will be necessary and effective for this purpose to allow a sight or hearing impaired person to perform the essential functions of a job. A person who has to receive medical treatment on a particular schedule may still be able to perform the essential functions of the job with a change in the working schedule. BHA will not be able to accommodate a disabled employee who, even with reasonable accommodation, cannot adequately fulfill the essential functions of the job.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>BHA will not be able to create a new job or vacancy for the purpose of accommodating a disabled employee.</p>
<p><i>Tenancy or Services</i></p>	
<p>Below are examples of some fundamental features of BHA's housing and service programs. BHA will not be able to offer accommodations that alter them.</p>	
<p>1.</p>	<p>Rent Receiving full rent on time is fundamental to BHA's programs. Rent is a main source of income that allows BHA to serve its mission. BHA will consider reasonable accommodations that are necessary and effective in allowing a person to pay their rent on time and in full. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ accepting vouchers or payments from third persons who are helping the tenant manage their finances or affairs; ▶ changing the date that rent is due so that the tenant's rent is not habitually late on account of disability checks regularly arriving after the 1st of the month; ▶ accepting installment payments on rent arrears that arose from a mental health crisis if there is reasonable assurance that the person will be able to pay the amount due within a reasonable time. If this happens more than once, allowing installment payments a next time may be unreasonable.
<p>2.</p>	<p>Complying with the lease A tenant's compliance with the lease is fundamental to BHA's program. BHA will consider reasonable accommodations that are necessary and effective in allowing a tenant to comply. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Sanitation:</i> A tenant's unit may have become unsanitary for reasons related to a disability. Perhaps the tenant lacks the physical or mental ability to comply, yet with supportive services would be able to do so. If the tenant can arrange for those services and cooperates with them to make them effective, BHA will consider delaying any eviction action to give the services a chance to work. Prior failures of services to work in this way or prior failures of the tenant to cooperate with service providers may make it unreasonable to give the tenant another chance.

3.	<p>No Supportive Services BHA does not provide in-home care or other services designed to allow disabled persons to live independently. Providing such services would be a fundamental change in BHA's program. BHA will not be able to offer such services as an accommodation.</p>
4.	<p>Criminal Activity, Safety and Rights of Others The following are fundamental to BHA's programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prohibition of criminal activity • safety of all tenants, staff and neighbors • the rights of other tenants to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes • protecting BHA's property from damage <p>A tenant may have threatened these fundamentals for reasons related to a disability. For example, he or she may have exhibited threatening behavior to neighbors because he or she needs medication for a mental illness. Taking the medications will effectively control the behavior. BHA will consider a request to forbear from eviction on the condition that the tenant cooperates with a prescribed treatment plan. In such cases, BHA will require adequate assurance that the treatment plan will work to prevent recurrence of the problem and that the tenant will comply with the plan. Past failures to do so may make another chance unreasonable.</p>
5.	<p>BHA's Compliance with Program Goals or Legal Requirements BHA's compliance with the policy and legal requirements of its housing or service programs is fundamental to those programs. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • income restrictions that reserve housing or housing assistance to persons of specific incomes; • requirements for periodic verification of income and family composition; • rules governing waiting lists for housing assistance set forth in BHA's annual plan. <p>In general, BHA will not be able to waive these fundamental attributes of its programs in ways that would put BHA in violation of the laws or contracts that govern its programs.</p>

SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES	
Service or Companion Animals	
	<p>In general, animals can be necessary to disabled persons in two ways. First, the disabled person may need a trained service animal to assist with the person's specific disability, (e.g. A guide dog for a person with visual impairment). In this event, the person will have to verify that the animal is trained for the purpose. Second, the animal may be necessary as a companion or coping mechanism for a person disabled by a mental or emotional impairment. Such "companion animals" do not need specific training. In either case, the person will have to verify their need for the animal. A person can verify this in various ways. The general discussion in § 8.4.1 applies.</p> <p>In either case, the person will not have to pay the pet deposit or other fees under BHA's pet policy. However, the person must comply with those other aspects of the pet policy that do not unreasonably interfere with the use of the animal to address the need arising from the disability. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disabled tenant may need a companion animal but will probably not need an animal that violates the pet policy's restrictions on size and breed. The question becomes harder if a disabled person needing a companion animal already has one when he or she moves into BHA's housing. In such a case, he or she may already have a long-

	<p>term bond with the animal that is necessary to continue for reasons related to disability. In this case, the issue becomes whether the animal's size or breed are such as to make it unreasonable for BHA to allow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disabled tenant must still register the animal under the BHA pet policy. • A disabled tenant is still responsible for the animal's behavior, care and sanitation so as to comply with the lease standards.
Communication Aids	
	<p>To help BHA communicate with disabled persons, BHA will offer appropriate aids where necessary to afford a disabled person an equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of BHA's programs or activities. BHA will readily provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional explanation of program rules; • offer information in different ways (e.g, verbally, larger written type, plainer language, sign language interpreter or reader); • exchange information with a representative or contact person that the disabled person designates for the purpose; • Where a person communicates by telephone, BHA will when necessary use telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TRS) or other equally effective ways to communicate. <p>See 28 C.F.R. § 35.160-.164; 24 C.F.R. § 8.6.</p>
Requested Modifications to Dwelling Units	
	<p>A disabled person may request BHA to modify his or her dwelling unit in ways that are necessary to make the unit accessible to him or her. At its own expense, BHA will either (i) transfer the person to an available accessible unit or (ii) make the necessary modifications to the present dwelling unit if doing so does not impose an undue financial or administrative burden or fundamentally alter the nature of its housing program.</p> <p>BHA will make the reasonable modification to the present unit if (i) there are no other accessible units available within a reasonable time period; (ii) if the transfer would impose an unreasonable hardship to the tenant or applicant; or (iii) the modification would make the unit significantly more accessible for future disabled occupants of the unit.</p>
Assignment or Transfer to an Accessible Unit	
	<p>Assignment or transfers of persons to units designed to be accessible to persons with disabilities is described in Chapter 7 of the ACOP.</p>
Waiting List	
	<p>BHA removes persons from its waiting lists who do not respond to BHA's requests for information or updates. If the applicant did not respond because of a family member's disability, BHA will reinstate the family to its former position on the waiting list.</p>
Transportation	
	<p>If BHA is providing transportation to functions or activities, on request it will provide accessible transportation to accommodate persons with disabilities and their aides.</p>
Live-in Aides	
	<p>Live-in aides are described in Chapter 3 of the ACOP.</p>

2-II.R. Physical Accessibility

BHA 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

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

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

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

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

2-II.S. Denial or Termination of Assistance

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

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

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

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

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

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

2-III.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

2-III.B. ORAL INTERPRETATION

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

BHA Policy

BHA will utilize a language line for telephone interpreter services.

When exercising the option to conduct remote hearings, however, BHA 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 BHA. BHA, 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 member is a minor, BHA will not rely on the minor to serve as the interpreter.

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

Where feasible and possible, according to its language assistance plan (LAP), BHA 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.

BHA Policy

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

- BHA will provide written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes five (5) percent or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally; or
- If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the five (5) percent trigger, BHA may not translate vital written materials, but will provide written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost.

2-III.D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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

If BHA 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 BHA's public housing program and services.

BHA Policy

It has been determined that BHA serves very few LEP persons; therefore, BHA does not have a written LEP implementation 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 BHA 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, Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection, 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, speaking, 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 BHA) as constituting such a limitation; has none of the impairments defined in this section but is treated by a public entity as having such an impairment; or has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, only as a result of the attitudes of others toward that impairment.

The definition of a person with disabilities does not include:

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

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

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

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

Chapter 3

ELIGIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

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

To be eligible for the public housing program:

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

This chapter contains three parts:

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

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

Part III: Denial of Admission. This part covers factors related to an applicant's past or current conduct (e.g., criminal activity) that can cause BHA to deny admission as well as the asset limitation for public housing.

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 as well as the property where the family is applying for housing. In addition, some requirements apply to the family as a whole and others apply to individual persons who will live in the public housing unit. This part provides information that is needed to correctly identify family and household members, and explains HUD's eligibility rules and the property specific eligibility requirements.

3-I.B. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 5.105(a)(2), 24 CFR 5.403, FR Notice 02/03/12 Notice PIH 2014-20, and FR Notice 2/14/23]

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

Family

To be eligible for admission, an applicant must qualify as a family. *Family* as defined by HUD includes but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status, a single person, who may be an elderly person, 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 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, and the remaining member of a tenant family. BHA has the discretion to determine if any other group of persons qualifies as a family.

Gender Identity means actual or perceived gender characteristics.

Sexual Orientation means homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

BHA Policy

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

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

Household

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

3-I.C. FAMILY BREAK-UP AND REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY

Family Break-up

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

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

BHA Policy

When a family on the waiting list breaks up into two otherwise eligible families, only one of the new families may retain the original application date. Other former family members may submit 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 living in public housing, only one of the new families will retain occupancy of the unit.

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

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

Remaining Member of a Tenant Family [24 CFR 5.403]

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

If dependents are the only “remaining members of a tenant family” and there is no family member able to assume the responsibilities of the head of household, see 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 co-head or spouse.

BHA Policy

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

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

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

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

Spouse means the marriage partner of the head of household.

BHA Policy

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

A *co-head* 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 co-head.

BHA Policy

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

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

3-I.F. DEPENDENTS AND MINORS [24 CFR 5.603]

A *minor* is a member of the family, other than the head of family or spouse, who is under 18 years of age.

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, co-head, foster children/adults and live-in aides. Identifying each dependent in the family is important because each dependent qualifies the family for a deduction from annual income as described in Chapter 6.

Joint Custody of Dependents

BHA Policy

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

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

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

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

Identifying each FTS is important because (1) each family member that is an FTS, other than the head, spouse, or co-head, 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.

BHA Policy

A household consisting exclusively of one or more full-time college students does not qualify as a family unless each individual in the household satisfies the following conditions:

The individual either must have established a household separate from their parents or legal guardians for at least one year prior to application for the admission or must meet the U.S. Department of Education's definition of independent student.

The individual must not be claimed as a dependent by their parents or legal guardians pursuant to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations.

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

Elderly Persons

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

Near-Elderly Persons

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

Elderly Family

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

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

Persons with Disabilities

Under the public housing program, special rules apply to persons with disabilities and to any family whose head, spouse, or co-head is a person with disabilities. The technical definitions of individuals 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, BHA must make all aspects of the public housing program accessible to persons with disabilities and consider requests for reasonable accommodations when a person's disability limits their full access to the unit, the program, or BHA's services.

Disabled Family

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

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

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

A *guest* is defined as a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant.

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

BHA Policy

A resident family must notify BHA when overnight guests will be staying in the unit for more than 3 days. A guest can remain in the unit no longer than 14 consecutive days or a total of 30 cumulative days during any 12 month period.

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

Children who are subject to a joint custody arrangement or for whom a family has visitation privileges, that are not included as a family member because they live outside of the public housing unit more than 50 percent of the time, are not subject to the time limitations of guests as described above.

Former residents who have been evicted from BHA properties for any reason other than eligibility non-compliance within the last three years are not permitted as guests.

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

3-I.K. FOSTER CHILDREN AND FOSTER ADULTS [24 CFR 5.603]

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

BHA Policy

A foster child or foster adult may be allowed to reside in the unit if their presence would not overcrowd the unit.

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

3-I.L. ABSENT FAMILY MEMBERS

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

Definitions of Temporarily and Permanently Absent

BHA Policy

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

Absent Students

BHA Policy

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

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

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

BHA Policy

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

Absent Head, Spouse, or Co-head

BHA Policy

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

Individuals Confined for Medical Reasons

BHA Policy

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

If there is a question about the status of a family member, BHA 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

BHA Policy

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

3-I.M. LIVE-IN AIDE

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

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

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

BHA Policy

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

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

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

- The person commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;
- The person has a history of or commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity;
- The person poses a threat to the health and/or safety of the resident or other residents.

Within 10 business days of receiving a request for a live-in aide, including all required documentation related to the request, BHA 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 establish income limits that determine the income eligibility of applicants for HUD's assisted housing programs, including the public housing program. The income limits are published annually and are based on HUD estimates of the median incomes for families of different sizes in a particular area or county.

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

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

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

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

Area median income is determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller 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 960.201 and Notice PIH 2023-27]

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 a *low-income* family. Income and net family assets of household members are excluded when determining income eligibility; however, household members are considered for purposes of unit size and subsidy standards.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All applicant families must be notified of the requirement to submit evidence of their citizenship status when they apply. Where feasible, and in accordance with BHA'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, co-head, 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 BHA to request additional documentation of their status, such as a passport.

BHA Policy

Family members who declare citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless BHA 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 BHA 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 non-contending family members listing, signed by the head, spouse, or co-head (regardless of citizenship status), indicating their ineligible immigration status. BHA is not required to verify a family member's ineligible status and is not required to report an individual's unlawful presence in the U.S. to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

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

Mixed Families

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

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

BHA 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 BHA that the individual or at least one family member is eligible [24 CFR 5.512(a)].

BHA Policy

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

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

The notice will explain the reasons for the denial of assistance and will advise the family of its right to request an appeal to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), or to request a grievance hearing with BHA. The grievance hearing with BHA 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 grievance hearing process.

Grievance hearing procedures are contained in Chapter 14.

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

For new occupants joining the resident family, BHA 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, BHA must grant such an extension for no more than 30 days [24 CFR 5.508(h)].

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

BHA Policy

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

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

The applicant and all members of the applicant's household must disclose the complete and accurate Social Security Number (SSN) assigned 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 the 6 months prior to the program admission, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program and must disclose and document the child's SSN within 90 days of admission. A detailed discussion of acceptable documentation is provided in Chapter 7.

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

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

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

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

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

revoke consent.

BHA must deny admission to the program if any member of the applicant family fails to sign and submit consent forms which allow BHA to obtain information that BHA has determined is necessary in administration of the public housing program [24 CFR 960.259(a) and (b) and 24 CFR 5.232(a)].

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 the PHA 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 or termination of assistance or admission [24 CFR 5.232(c)].

amily, revokes their consent with respect to the ability of the PHA 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 or termination of assistance or admission [24 CFR 5.232(c)].

BHA Policy

BHA has established a policy that the family's revocation of consent to allow BHA to access records from financial institutions will result in denial of admission.

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

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

BHA Policy

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

Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA 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.

BHA 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, BHA will determine if this information warrants a denial in accordance with the policies in Part III of this chapter.

Income and Income Validation Tool (IVT) Reports

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

PART III: DENIAL OF ADMISSION

3-III.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

While the regulations state that BHA must prohibit admission for certain types of criminal activity and give BHA 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, BHA may not use arrest records as the basis for the denial. Further, HUD does not require the adoption of "One Strike" policies and reminds BHA 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 BHA, 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, the PHA must show that its policy accurately distinguishes between criminal conduct that indicates a demonstrable risk to resident safety and property and criminal conduct that does not.

s not.

This part covers the following topics:

- Required denial of admission
- The asset limitation in public housing
- Other permitted reasons for denial of admission
- Screening
- Criteria for deciding to deny admission
- Prohibition against denial of admission to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- Notice of eligibility or denial

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA will admit an otherwise-eligible family who was evicted from federally-assisted housing within the past 3 years for drug-related criminal activity, if BHA is able to verify that the household member who engaged in the criminal activity has completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program or the person who committed the crime is no longer living in the household.

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

BHA Policy

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

- BHA 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.

BHA Policy

In determining reasonable cause, BHA will consider all credible evidence within the past five years, including but not limited to, any record of convictions, arrests, or evictions of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or the abuse of alcohol. A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the basis for the denial or proof that the applicant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. BHA will also consider evidence from treatment providers or community-based organizations providing services to household members.

- Any household member ever charged or convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the production or manufacture of methamphetamine.
- Any household member subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

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

There are two circumstances under which a family is ineligible for the program 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 that is suitable for occupancy by the family as a residence and the family has:

- A present ownership interest in the real property;
- 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.

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, BHA must comply with all the confidentiality requirements under VAWA. BHA 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;

BHA Policy

BHA defines *not sufficient for the size of the family* as being overcrowded based on the BHA's occupancy standards in Chapter 5.

- 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 BHA or owner);

- 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.

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

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

Criminal Activity [24 CFR 960.203(c)]

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

BHA Policy

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

- *Drug-related criminal activity*, defined by HUD as the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use the drug [24 CFR 5.100].
- *Violent criminal activity*, defined by HUD as any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage [24 CFR 5.100].
- Criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety, or welfare of other tenants [24 CFR 960.203(c)(3)] including but not limited to: Theft 1st and 2nd degree; Assault 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree; Burglary 1st and 2nd degree; Vehicle Prowling 1st degree; Robbery 1st and 2nd degree; Malicious Mischief 1st degree; Reckless Burning 1st degree; Child Molestation – all counts; and possession of illegal firearms or dangerous weapons.
- Criminal activity that may threaten the health or safety of BHA staff, contractors, subcontractors, or agents.
- Criminal sexual conduct, including but not limited to sexual assault, incest, open and gross lewdness, or child abuse.

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

A record of convictions, arrests, or evictions for suspected drug-related or violent criminal activity of household members within the past 3 years.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the basis for the denial or proof that the applicant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

BHA will consider crimes that occurred more than five years ago in circumstances where a household member is required to register as a sex offender and/or in cases where a household member has been charged or convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the production or manufacture of methamphetamine.

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

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

- Has a pattern of unsuitable past performance in meeting financial obligations, including rent and utilities within the past three years. A pattern is defined as three incidents in a rolling 12 month period and no more than six incidents over three years.
- Has a pattern of disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits at prior residences within the past three years which may adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of other tenants or cause infestation. A pattern is defined as three incidents in a rolling 12 month period and no more than six incidents over three years.
- Owes rent or other amounts to this or any other PHA or owner in connection with any assisted housing program.
- Owes rent or other amounts to any PHA in connection with Section 8, public housing, or other public housing assistance under the 1937 Act, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.

When denying admission due to family debts as shown in HUD's EIV system, BHA 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.

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

- Has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.
- Has an open bankruptcy without discharge.
- Has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward BHA personnel.

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

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

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

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

3-III.E. SCREENING

Screening for Eligibility

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA will perform criminal background checks through local law enforcement or screening companies for all adult household members.

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

BHA 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 960.204(a)(4)].

BHA Policy

BHA will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to screen applicants for admission. <http://www.nsopw.gov>

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

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

Obtaining Information from Drug Treatment Facilities [24 CFR 960.205]

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

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

Currently engaging in illegal use of a drug means illegal use of a drug that occurred within 2 years to justify a reasonable belief that there is continuing illegal drug use by a household member.

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

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

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

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

Policy B: BHA must submit a request for information only for certain household members, whose criminal record indicates prior arrests or conviction for any criminal activity that may be a

basis for denial of admission or whose prior tenancy records indicate that the proposed household member engaged in destruction of property or violent activity against another person, or they interfered with the right of peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents.

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

BHA Policy

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

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA will consider the family's history within the past three years with respect to the following factors:

- Payment of rent and utilities
- Caring for a unit and premises
- Respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing
- Criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety, or property of others
- Behavior of all household members as related to the grounds for denial as detailed in Sections 3-III. B and C
- Compliance with any other essential conditions of tenancy

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

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

BHA Policy

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

- **Past performance in meeting financial obligations, especially rent.**
 - BHA and landlord references for the past three years, gathering information about past performance meeting rental obligations such as rent payment record, late payment record, whether BHA/landlord ever began or completed lease termination for non-payment, and whether utilities were ever disconnected in the unit. BHA and

landlords will be asked if they would rent to the applicant family again.

- Utility company references covering the monthly amount of utilities, late payment, disconnection, return of a utility deposit and whether the applicant can get utilities turned on in their name. (Use of this inquiry will be reserved for applicants applying for units where there are tenant-paid utilities.)
- If an applicant has no rental payment history, BHA will check court records of eviction actions and other financial judgments, and credit reports. A lack of credit history will not disqualify someone from becoming a public housing resident, but a poor credit rating may.
- Applicants with no rental payment history may also be asked to provide BHA with personal references. The references will be requested to complete a verification of the applicant's ability to pay rent if no other documentation of ability to meet financial obligations is available. The applicant will also be required to complete a checklist documenting their ability to meet financial obligations.
- If previous landlords or the utility company do not respond to requests from BHA, the applicant may provide other documentation that demonstrates their ability to meet financial obligations (e.g., rent receipts, cancelled checks, etc.).

Disturbances of neighbors, destruction of property or living or housekeeping habits at prior residences that may adversely affect health, safety, or welfare of other tenants, or cause damage to the unit or the development.

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

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

Evidence

BHA Policy

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

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA will consider the following facts and circumstances prior to making its decision:

- The seriousness of the case, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents' safety or property.
- The effects that denial of admission may have on other members of the family who were not involved in the action or failure to act.
- The extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, including whether the culpable family member is a minor or a person with disabilities, or (as discussed further in section 3-III.F) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.
- 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 denial, an arrest may, trigger an investigation to determine whether the applicant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, BHA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. BHA may also consider:
 - Any statements made by witnesses or the applicant not included in the police report.
 - Whether criminal charges were filed.
 - Whether, if filed, criminal charges were abandoned, dismissed, not prosecuted, or ultimately resulted in an acquittal.
 - Any other evidence relevant to determining whether or not the applicant engaged in disqualifying activity.
- Evidence of criminal conduct will be considered if it indicates a demonstrable risk to safety and/or property.
- Evidence of the applicant family's participation in or willingness to participate in social service or other appropriate counseling service programs.
- In the case of drug or alcohol abuse, whether the culpable household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully. BHA 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.
- Mitigating circumstances for a poor credit rating which include but are not limited to:

- Unexpected loss of job
- Long-term unemployment
- Change in family composition so that the primary income earner is no longer a part of the household
- Circumstances related to VAWA that are addressed in Chapter 16.
- Medical issues

Removal of a Family Member's Name from the Application

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

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

BHA Policy

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

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

3-III.G. PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, STALKING OR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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

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

Notification

VAWA 2013 expanded notification requirements to include the obligation for PHAs to provide applicants who are denied assistance with a VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights (from HUD-5380) and the domestic violence certification form HUD-5382 at the time the applicant is denied.

BHA Policy

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

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

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

Documentation

Victim Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007]

BHA Policy

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

Perpetrator Documentation

BHA Policy

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

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

3-III.H. NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY OR DENIAL

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

If BHA 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 BHA 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)].

BHA Policy

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

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

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

EXHIBIT 3-1: DETAILED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO DISABILITIES

Person with Disabilities [24 CFR 5.403]

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

- Has a disability, as defined in 42 U.S.C. Section 423(d)(1)(A), which reads:
 - Inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months
 - In the case of an individual who has attained the age of 55 and is blind (within the meaning of “blindness” as defined in Section 416(i)(1) of this title), inability by reason of such blindness to engage in substantial gainful activity, requiring skills or ability comparable to those of any gainful activity in which he has previously engaged with some regularity and over a substantial period of time.
- Has a developmental disability as defined in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 [42 U.S.C.15002(8)], which defines developmental disability in functional terms as follows:
 - (A) IN GENERAL – The term *developmental disability* means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that-
 - (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
 - (ii) is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
 - (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely;
 - (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: (I) self-care, (II) receptive and expressive language, (III) learning, (IV) mobility, (V) self-direction, (VI) capacity for independent living, (VII) economic self-sufficiency; and
 - (v) reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.
 - (B) INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN – An individual from birth to age 9, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting 3 or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A) if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.
- Has a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration; substantially impedes 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
 - (b) Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction and alcoholism.
- (2) Major life activities means functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.
- (3) Has a record of such an impairment means has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- (4) Is regarded as having an impairment means:
 - (a) Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit one or more major life activities but that is treated by a recipient as constituting such a limitation
 - (b) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment
 - (c) Has none of the impairments defined in paragraph (a) of this section but is treated by a recipient as having such an impairment

Chapter 4

APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Part III: Tenant Selection. This part describes the policies that guide BHA in selecting families from the waiting list as units become available. It also specifies how in-person interviews will be used to ensure that BHA 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 BHA'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 BHA's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process.

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

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

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

4-I.B. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE

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

BHA Policy

When applications are being accepted online, BHA 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. If the family needs assistance in applying online, BHA will help the family apply. The family will be required to provide all of the information necessary to establish family eligibility and the amount of rent the family will pay when selected from the waiting list.

When BHA opens the Public Housing Waitlist, the waitlist will be based on bedroom size specific to maintain a healthy list to pull from as units become available. An online application will be made available via the BHA website. BHA will offer technical support upon request for applicants who request it.

If an application is incomplete or illegible, BHA will notify the family of the additional information required and inform the applicant that failure to provide information may result in denial.

4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

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

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

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

Limited English Proficiency

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

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST

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

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

Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List

BHA Policy

If BHA determines from the information provided that a family is ineligible or incomplete, the family will not be placed on the waiting list. When a family is determined to be ineligible, BHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 10 business days of receipt of the completed application. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal hearing and explain the process for doing so (see Chapter 14).

Eligible for Placement on the Waiting List

BHA Policy

BHA will send written notification of the preliminary eligibility determination within 10 business days of receiving a completed application. If applicable, the notice will also indicate the waiting list preference(s) for which the family appears to qualify.

Applicants will be placed on the site-specific waiting list according to BHA preference(s) and the date and time their complete application is received by BHA.

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

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

PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

4-II.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

4-II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST

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

BHA Policy

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

- Name and social security number of head of household
- Number of family members
- Amount and source of annual income
- Accessibility requirement, if any
- Date and time of application or application number
- Household type (family, elderly, disabled)
- Admission preference, if any
- Race and ethnicity of the head of household
- The specific site(s) selected

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

BHA Policy

BHA will maintain a community wide list for its developments. Applicants will be placed on the list based on bedroom size.

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA will not merge the public housing waiting list with the waiting list for any other programs that BHA operates.

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

Closing the Waiting List

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

BHA Policy

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

Reopening the Waiting List

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

BHA Policy

BHA will announce the reopening of the waiting list at least 10 business days prior to the date applications will first be accepted. If the list is only being reopened for certain categories of families, this information will be contained in the notice.

The notice will inform applicants of the date, time, method, and place applications can be obtained and submitted, how blank applications may be obtained (e.g., from what addresses, community sites, and websites), all methods by which applications will be accepted (e.g., in person, by phone, by fax, by email), a point of contact who can answer questions, any limitations on who may apply, and any other information the applicant may need to successfully submit the application. BHA will describe its prioritization system or whether it uses a lottery and will clearly state that this system will be used to place applicants on the waiting list.

To ensure that public notices broadly reach potential applicants in all communities

throughout the housing market area, BHA will distribute public notices to local community-based organizations, such as social service agencies and religious institutions; distribute the notice online through BHA's website or social media platforms and other online platforms for local housing news; and make use of any local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable means.

BHA will give public notice by publishing the relevant information Using the following media outlet:

- Kitsap Sun
- Bremerton Housing Website

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

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

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

BHA 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

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA will monitor the characteristics of the population being served and the characteristics of the population as a whole in BHA'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

BHA Policy

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

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

4-II.F. UPDATING THE WAITING LIST

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

Purging the Waiting List

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

BHA Policy

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

To update the waiting list, BHA will send an update request via email or 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.

As part of the initial pre-application or application, the PHA will ask the family for their preferred methods of communication, which may include mail, phone, text message, email, or contact through a representative or service provider.

This update request will be sent to the last address that BHA has on record for the family as well as any additional contact methods identified by the family. The update request will provide a deadline by which the family must respond and will state that failure to respond will result in the applicant's name being removed from the waiting list.

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

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

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

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

When a family is removed from the waiting list during the update process for failure to respond, BHA will contact an unresponsive applicant through all means available, which may include via mail, phone, email, and text message. BHA will give that family a reasonable period of time to respond with their interest so as to not inadvertently remove an applicant who remains interested but may have moved, changed their contact information, or otherwise are difficult to reach. No informal hearing will be offered in such cases. Such failures to act on the part of the applicant prevent BHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore no informal hearing is required.

If a family is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, BHA may reinstate the family if the lack of response was due to BHA error, to circumstances beyond the family's control, as a result of a family member's disability, or as a direct result of status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking including an adverse factor resulting from such abuse.

Removal from the Waiting List

BHA Policy

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

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

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

PART III: TENANT SELECTION

4-III.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

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

BHA Policy

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

4-III.B. SELECTION METHOD

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

Local Preferences [24 CFR 960.206]

BHA 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 BHA to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the BHA plan and the consolidated plan, and must be based on local housing needs and priorities that can be documented by generally accepted data sources [24 CFR 960.206(a)].

BHA Policy

BHA will use the following local preferences:

1. Families that include victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking who have either been referred by a partnering agency or who are seeking an emergency transfer under VAWA from BHA's Housing Choice Voucher program or other covered program operated by BHA.

2. Families of federally declared disasters who are Section 8 voucher holders or displaced public housing residents in another jurisdiction will receive preference over other waiting list placeholders for public housing.
3. Property specific set-asides or subsidy eligibility requirements.

Income Targeting Requirement [24 CFR 960.202(b)]

HUD requires that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 40 percent of the families admitted to public housing during BHA'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 [*Federal Register* notice 6/25/14]. To ensure this requirement is met, BHA may skip non-ELI families on the waiting list in order to select an ELI family.

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

BHA Policy

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

Mixed Population Developments [24 CFR 960.407]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA has designated elderly and disabled units. In the event a unit cannot be rented to designated population, BHA will offer the unit to the most appropriate applicant on the waitlist. New tenants will be asked to sign the “accessible unit occupied by household not needing unit feature” form.

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

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

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

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

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

To implement the statutory requirement to deconcentrate poverty and provide for income mixing

in covered developments, BHA must comply with the following steps:

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

BHA Policy

BHA will determine the average income of all families in all covered developments on an annual basis.

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

BHA Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

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

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

Order of Selection [24 CFR 960.206(e)]

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

BHA Policy

Families will be selected from the waiting list, based on preference points. Among applicants with the same preference points, families will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis according to the date and time their complete application is received by BHA.

When selecting applicants from the waiting list, BHA will match the characteristics of the available unit (unit size, accessibility features, unit type, unit set-aside requirements) to the needs of applicants on the waiting list. BHA will offer the unit to the highest ranking applicant who qualifies for that unit size or type, or that requires the accessibility features.

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

For each vacant unit, the next 3 to 5 applicants on the waiting list will be pulled and processed concurrently. Of those applicants, the applicant who completes the process first will be placed in the unit.

Tenants currently on the transfer list at properties will take precedence over applicants on the waiting list. See Chapter 12 for a full discussion of transfer procedures.

Factors such as deconcentration or income mixing and income targeting will also be considered in accordance with HUD requirements and BHA policy.

4-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

When the family has been selected from the waiting list, BHA must notify the family. [24 CFR 960.208].

BHA Policy

BHA will notify the family by first class mail when it is selected from the waiting list.

The notice will inform the family of the following:

- Date, time, and location of the scheduled application interview, including any procedures for rescheduling the interview
- Who is required to attend the interview
- Documents that must be provided at the interview to document the legal identity of household members, including information about what constitutes acceptable documentation
- Documents that must be provided at the interview to document eligibility for a preference, if applicable
- Other documents and information that should be brought to the interview

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

4-III.D. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW

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

Assistance cannot be provided to the family until all SSN documentation requirements are met. However, if BHA 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 BHA [Notice PIH 2018-24].

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

BHA Policy

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

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

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

Pending disclosure and/or documentation of all eligibility certification requirements, BHA will allow the family to retain its place on the waiting list for seven (7) days. If not all documentation has been received at the time a unit becomes available, BHA will offer a unit to the next eligible applicant family on the waiting list.

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

The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility, including suitability, and to determine the appropriate amount of rent the family will pay. The family must also complete required forms, provide required signatures, and submit required documentation. If any materials are missing, BHA 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 7 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 as long as the request is received before the 7 days expires. 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).

BHA will continue to move forward with processing other applicants for the vacant unit during the time frame allowed for a family to provide requested documentation.

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, BHA will provide translation services in accordance with BHA's LEP plan.

A family will be considered to have missed the appointment if it is more than fifteen (15) minutes late for any scheduled appointment

A family that neither requests a rescheduled appointment in writing within the time specified below nor appears for the appointment will be subject to termination of housing assistance or denial of subsidy.

If a family is unable to attend a scheduled appointment they must:

- Contact BHA by mail, fax, email, or hand-delivery at least two working days before the date of the originally scheduled appointment; and
- Provide documentation verifying the reason the family is unable to attend the appointment (e.g. verification of hospitalization or imprisonment, police report, etc); and

- In the case of a briefing session or other group meeting, confirm that BHA has another briefing session or other group meeting, as appropriate, already scheduled, and with adequate space to which to reschedule the family.

BHA will reschedule the appointment at a date and time specified by BHA. BHA will only reschedule the appointment one time. BHA will move forward with processing those applicants who attended their scheduled appointments and will place an applicant who completes the process successfully.

The decision to reschedule will be made at the sole discretion of BHA. BHA will take into consideration extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the family that prevent it from attending a scheduled appointment (for example, a death or medical emergency in the immediate family or a serious traffic accident) and/or the household's history of missed appointments. The participant must provide documentation verifying the reason the family was unable to attend the scheduled appointment or to request a rescheduled appointment (for example, a funeral announcement, verification of hospitalization or imprisonment, or a police report).

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

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

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

BHA Policy

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

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

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

BHA Policy

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

BHA will move forward with processing other applicants on the waiting list.

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

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

Chapter 5

OCCUPANCY STANDARDS AND UNIT OFFERS

INTRODUCTION

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

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

Policies in this chapter are organized in two parts.

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

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

PART I: OCCUPANCY STANDARDS

5-I.A. OVERVIEW

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

5-I.B. DETERMINING UNIT SIZE

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA will use the same occupancy standards for each of its developments per the table on page 98.

BHA will assign one bedroom for each two persons within the household.

An unborn child will not be counted as a person in determining unit size.

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

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

Children related to a household member by birth, adoption or court awarded custody will be considered when determining unit size.

Foster children will be considered when determining unit size. The family may add foster children to the household as long as it does not overcrowd the unit based on BHA's occupancy standards.

Children away at school, but for whom the unit is considered the primary residence, and children temporarily placed outside the home, will be considered when determining unit size.

Children in the process of being adopted will be considered when determining unit size.

Children who will live in the unit less than 50 percent of the time will not be considered when determining unit size.

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

BEDROOM SIZE	MINIMUM NUMBER OF PERSONS	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERSONS
0	1	1
1	1	2
2	2	4
3	3*	6
4	4	8
5	6	10
6	8	12

* If LIHTC property specifies a large-family set-aside, minimum number of persons is 4.

5-I.C. EXCEPTIONS TO OCCUPANCY STANDARDS

Types of Exceptions

BHA Policy

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

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

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

Requests from applicants to be placed on the waiting list for a unit size smaller than designated by the occupancy standards will be approved as long as the unit is not overcrowded according to local code, and the family agrees not to request a transfer for a

period of two years from the date of admission, unless they have a subsequent change in family size or composition.

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

Processing of Exceptions

BHA Policy

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

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

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

BHA will notify the family of its decision within 10 business days of receiving the family's request.

PART II: UNIT OFFERS

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

5-II.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

BHA Policy

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

5-II.B. NUMBER OF OFFERS

BHA Policy

Under this plan, the first qualified applicant in sequence of the waiting list will be made one offer of a unit of the appropriate size per waitlist.

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

BHA Policy

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

Offers made by telephone will be confirmed by letter.

If the applicant fails to respond to the unit offer within the allowed timeframe, BHA will consider the lack of response a refusal of the unit. The unit will be offered to the next approved applicant.

5-II.D. REFUSALS OF UNIT OFFERS

Good Cause for Unit Refusal

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

BHA Policy

Applicants may refuse to accept a unit offer for "good cause." *Good cause* includes situations in which an applicant is willing to move but is unable to do so at the time of the unit offer, or the applicant demonstrates that acceptance of the offer would cause undue

hardship not related to considerations of the applicant's race, color, national origin, etc. [PH GB, p. 104]. Examples of good cause for refusal of a unit offer include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The family demonstrates to BHA's satisfaction that accepting the unit offer will require an adult household member to quit a job, drop out of an educational institution or job training program, or take a child out of day care or an educational program for children with disabilities.
- The family demonstrates to BHA's satisfaction that accepting the offer will place a family member's life, health or safety in jeopardy. The family should offer specific and compelling documentation such as restraining orders; other court orders; risk assessments related to witness protection from a law enforcement agency; or documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking in accordance with Section 16-VII.D of this ACOP. Reasons offered must be specific to the family.
- Refusals due to location alone do not qualify for this good cause exemption.
- A health professional verifies temporary hospitalization or recovery from illness of the principal household member, other household members (as listed on final application) or live-in aide necessary to the care of the principal household member.
- The unit is inappropriate for the applicant's disabilities, or the family does not need the accessible features in the unit offered and does not want to be subject to a 30-day notice to move.
- The unit has lead-based paint and the family includes children under the age of six.

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

BHA will require documentation of good cause for unit refusals.

Unit Refusal without Good Cause

BHA Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BHA Policy

Families requiring an accessible unit may be over-housed in such a unit if there are no resident or applicant families of the appropriate size who also require the accessible features of the unit.

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

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

5-II.F. DESIGNATED HOUSING

When applicable, BHA's policies for offering units designated for elderly families only or for disabled families only are described in BHA's designated housing criteria.

Chapter 6

INCOME AND RENT DETERMINATIONS

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

INTRODUCTION

A family's annual income is used to determine their income eligibility for the public housing program and is also used to calculate the amount of the family's rent payment. BHA will use the policies and methods described in this chapter to ensure that only income-eligible families receive assistance and that no family pays more or less rent than is required under the regulations.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and BHA 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 BHA 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 PHA policies for calculating income from assets are found in Part II.

Part III: Adjusted Income. Once annual income has been established, HUD regulations require BHA to subtract from annual income any of five mandatory deductions for which a family qualifies and all BHA to adopt additional permissive deductions. These requirements and BHA policies for calculating adjusted income are found in Part III.

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

PART I: ANNUAL INCOME

6-I.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 5.609]

- All amounts, not specifically excluded in 24 CFR 5.609(b);
- All amounts 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;
- Unearned income 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 version 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 [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 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 BHA policies in Chapter 9. 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 income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included.
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.

* LIHTC requirements count income on prorated basis. The income of a 17 year old who will turn 18 in the certification year will be counted on a prorated basis.

Temporarily Absent Family Members

The current regulations governing annual income do not specifically address temporarily absent family members. The regulations also do not define “temporarily” or “permanently” absent or specify a timeframe associated with a temporary versus a permanent absence.

BHA Policy

Unless specifically excluded by the regulations, the income of all family members approved to live in the unit will be counted, even if the family member is temporarily absent from the unit.

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

BHA Policy

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

Absences Due to Placement in Foster Care

Children temporarily absent from the home as a result of placement in foster care (as confirmed by the state child welfare agency) are considered members of the family [24 CFR 5.403].

BHA Policy

If a child has been placed in foster care, BHA 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 Co-head

BHA Policy

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

Family Members Confined for Medical Reasons

If a family member is confined to a nursing home or hospital on a permanent basis, PHAs may determine that that person is no longer a member of the assisted household, and the income of that person is not counted [New PH OCC GB, *Income Determinations*, p. 12].

BHA Policy

BHA 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 Children

BHA Policy

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

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

Caretakers for a Child

BHA Policy

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

- If a responsible agency has determined that another adult is to be brought into the unit to care for a child for an indefinite period, the designated caretaker will not be considered a family member until a determination of custody or legal guardianship is made.
- If a caretaker has assumed responsibility for a child without the involvement of a responsible agency or formal assignment of custody or legal guardianship, the caretaker will be treated as a visitor for 90 days. After the 90 days has elapsed, the caretaker will be considered a family member unless information is provided that would confirm that the caretaker's role is temporary. In such cases BHA will extend the caretaker's status as an eligible visitor.
- At any time that custody or guardianship legally has been awarded to a caretaker, the lease will be transferred to the caretaker, as head of household.
- During any period that a caretaker is considered a visitor, the income of the caretaker is not counted in annual income and the caretaker does not qualify the family for any deductions from income.
- A non-live-in caretaker doesn't count in the occupancy standard.

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, BHA is required to use anticipated income (current income) for the upcoming 12-month period following the new admission or interim reexamination effective date.

BHA Policy

When BHA 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), BHA 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 BHA 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 BHA annualized projected income.

Known Changes in Income

If BHA verifies an upcoming increase or decrease in income, 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, BHA would calculate annual income as follows: $(\$8/\text{hour} \times 40 \text{ hours} \times 7 \text{ weeks}) + (\$8.25 \times 40 \text{ hours} \times 45 \text{ weeks})$.

The family may present information that demonstrates that implementing a change before its effective date would create a hardship for the family. In such cases, BHA will calculate annual income using current circumstances and then, should the change in income require BHA to conduct an interim reexamination, conduct an interim reexamination in accordance with BHA policy in Chapter 9.

Calculating Annual Income at Annual Reexamination [24 CFR.609(c)(2); Notice PIH 2023-27]

At annual reexamination, BHA 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 BHA policies in Chapter 9 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 rent. Income from assets is always anticipated, irrespective of the income examination type. Policies related to conducting annual reexaminations are located in Chapter 9.

6-I.D. EARNED INCOME

Wages and Related Compensation [24 CFR 5.609(a)]

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)].

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].

BHA Policy

BHA 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, BHA will verify and then average amounts received for the two years preceding admission or reexamination. If only a one-year history is available, BHA will use the prior year amounts. In either case, the family may provide, and BHA 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, BHA 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 except 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)].

* For LIHTC properties, one-time payments for reenlistment will be treated as an asset.

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)]. Full-time status is defined by the educational or vocational institution the student is attending [New PH OCC GB, *Lease Requirements*, p. 5].

In calculating the incremental difference, BHA 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 BHA's interim reporting requirements (see Chapter 11).

6-I.E. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE [24 CFR 960.255; 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 12-month exclusion period, the full amount (100 percent) of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings is excluded. The 12 months are cumulative and need not be consecutive.

BHA Policy

The initial EID exclusion period will begin on the first of the month following the date an eligible member of a qualified family is first employed or first experiences an increase in earnings.

Second 12-Month Exclusion and Phase-In

During the second 12-month exclusion period, the exclusion is reduced to half (50 percent) of any increase in income attributable to employment or increased earnings. The 12 months are cumulative and need not be consecutive.

Lifetime Limitation

The EID has a four-year (48-month) lifetime maximum. The four-year eligibility period begins at the same time that the initial exclusion period begins and ends 48 months later. The one-time eligibility for the EID applies even if the eligible individual begins to receive assistance from another housing agency, if the individual moves between public housing and Section 8 assistance, or if there are 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.

Individual Savings Accounts [24 CFR 960.255(d)]

BHA may, but is not required to, establish a policy to offer a qualified family paying income-based rent an ISA instead of being given the EID.

BHA Policy

BHA chooses not to establish a system of individual savings accounts (ISAs) for families who qualify for the EID.

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."

BHA Policy

To determine business expenses that may be deducted from gross income, BHA 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 2.609 (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)].

Business Expansion

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

BHA Policy

Business expansion is defined as any capital expenditures made to add new business activities, to expand current facilities, or to operate the business in additional locations. For example, purchase of a street sweeper by a construction business for the purpose of adding street cleaning to the services offered by the business would be considered a business expansion. Similarly, the purchase of a property by a hair care business to open at a second location would be considered a business expansion.

Capital Indebtedness

HUD regulations do not permit BHA to deduct from gross income the amortization of capital indebtedness.

BHA Policy

Capital indebtedness is defined as the principal portion of the payment on a capital asset such as land, buildings, and machinery. This means BHA 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 BHA 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.

BHA Policy

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

BHA Policy

If a business is co-owned with someone outside the family, the family must document the share of the business it owns. If the family's share of the income is lower than its share of ownership, the family must document the reasons for the difference.

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].

H 2023-27].

6-I.G. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9)]

The regulations 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)]. *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 education 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 the PHA.

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.

BHA Policy

If a student only receives financial assistance under Title IV of the HEA and does not receive any other student financial assistance, BHA will exclude the full amount of the assistance received under Title IV from the family's annual income. BHA 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, BHA will first calculate the actual covered costs to the student in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609(b)(ii). BHA will then subtract the total amount of the student's financial assistance from the student's actual covered costs. BHA 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, BHA 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, BHA 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 *[Notice PIH 2023-27]*

Periodic payments are forms of income received on a regular basis. HUD regulations specify periodic payments that are and are not included in annual income. Regulations do not specify which types of periodic payments are included in 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. 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. 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 for workers' compensation are included in annual income. Payments received in lieu of wages for worker's compensation are excluded, even if paid in periodic payments, if the income will last for a period of less than one year.

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.

BHA Policy

BHA 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 during the period in which BHA is processing an annual reexamination, BHA 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 BHA is processing an annual reexamination, then BHA will consider whether the amount meets the threshold to conduct an interim reexamination. If so, BHA will conduct an interim in accordance with BHA policies in Chapter 9. If not, BHA will consider the amount when processing the family's next annual recertification.

Retirement Accounts [24 CFR 5.609(b)(26); Notice PIH 2023-27]

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 2023-27]

BHA 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, BHA 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, BHA must use the gross amount of the income, prior to the reduction, to determine a family's annual income.

BHA Policy

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 and individual, resulting in withholding or deduction from their benefit amount until the overpayment is paid in full, BHA must use the reduced benefit amount after deducting only the amount of the overpayment withholding from the gross benefit amount.

Alimony and Child Support

Annual income includes "all amounts received," not the amount that a family may be legally entitled to receive but which they do 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 [Notice PIH 2023-27].

BHA Policy

BHA will count all regular payments of alimony or child support awarded as part of a divorce or separation agreement.

BHA will count court-awarded amounts for alimony and child support unless the family certifies and BHA verifies that the payments are not being made.

In order to verify that payments are not being made, BHA will review child support payments over the last three months.

If payments are being made regularly, BHA 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, BHA 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, BHA 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 BHA 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 BHA 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, BHA 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]

Nonrecurring income, which is income that will not be repeated beyond the coming year (e.g., 12 months following the effective date of the certification) based on information provided by the family, is excluded from annual income. BHA may accept a self-certification from the family stating that the income will not be repeated in the coming year. See Chapter 7 for BHA policies related to verification of nonrecurring income.

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.

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, BHA is prohibited from assigning monetary value to 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.

- 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]

BHA 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 a public housing resident at the time the sanction was imposed.

Covered Families

The families covered by 24 CFR 5.615 are those “who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance benefits (‘welfare benefits’) from a State or other public agency (‘welfare agency’) under a program for which Federal, State or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for such assistance” [24 CFR 5.615(b)]

Imputed Income

When a welfare agency imposes a sanction that reduces a family’s welfare income because the family commits fraud or fails to comply with the agency’s economic self-sufficiency program or work activities requirement, BHA must include in annual income “imputed” welfare income. BHA must request that the welfare agency provide the reason for the reduction of benefits and the amount of the reduction of benefits. The imputed welfare income is the amount that the benefits were reduced as a result of the sanction.

This requirement does not apply to reductions in welfare benefits: (1) at the expiration of the lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits, (2) if a family member is unable to find employment even though the family member has complied with the welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements, or (3) because a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements [24 CFR 5.615(b)(2)].

For special procedures related to grievance hearings based upon BHA’s denial of a family’s request to lower rent when the family experiences a welfare benefit reduction, see Chapter 14.

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)]

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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)]

Other exclusions contained in 24 CFR 5.609(b) 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 for workers' compensation 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 in HUD programs that adopt the definitions of annual income in 24 CFR 5.609, the Census Long Form, and the IRS Form 1040, including the programs affected by Notice PIH 2023-27.
- 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, child care, etc.) and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program [24 CFR 5.609(c)(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(c)(8)(ii)]
- 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 5.600(b)(12)(iii)].
- 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)].

BHA Policy

BHA 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].

BHA 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, BHA will use as the pre-enrollment income the total annualized amount of the family member’s welfare assistance and earnings reported on the family’s most recently completed HUD-50058.

End of participation in a training program must be reported in accordance with the PHA’s interim reporting requirements (see Chapter 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)]
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- 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 [24 CFR 5.609(b)(22)]. HUD publishes an updated list of these exclusions periodically. The most recent list of exclusions was published in the Federal Register on May 20, 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))
 - (b) Benefits under Section 1780 of the School Lunch Act and Child Nutrition Act of 1966, including WIC.
 - (c) Payments to Volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5044(g), 5058)
 - (d) Payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(c))
 - (e) Income derived from certain submarginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes (25 U.S.C. 459e)
 - (f) Payments or allowances made under the Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 8624(f))
 - (g) Payments received under programs funded in whole or in part under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2931)
 - (h) Deferred disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, whether received as a lump sum or in monthly prospective amounts
 - (i) Income derived from the disposition of funds to the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians (Pub. L. 94-540, 90 Stat. 2503-04)
 - (j) Payments, funds, or distributions authorized, established, or directed by the Seneca Nation Settlement Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 1774f(b))
 - (k) A lump sum or periodic payment received by an individual Indian pursuant to the Class Action Settlement Agreement in the United States District Court case entitled *Elouise Cobell et al. v. Ken Salazar et al.*, for a period of one year from the time of receipt of that payment as provided in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010.
 - (l) The first \$2,000 of per capita shares received from judgment funds awarded by the Indian Claims Commission or the U. S. Claims Court, the interests of individual Indians in trust or restricted lands, including the first \$2,000 per year of income received by individual Indians from funds derived from interests held in such trust or restricted lands (25 U.S.C. 1407-1408)
 - (m) Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1985 (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.)
 - (o) Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (25 U.S.C.

- 1721)
- (p) Payments received under 38 U.S.C. 1833(c) to children of Vietnam veterans born with spinal bifida, children of women Vietnam veterans born with certain birth defects, and children of certain Korean service veterans born with spinal bifida.
 - (q) Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (25 U.S.C. 1721)
 - (r) The value of any child care provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858q)
 - (s) Earned income tax credit (EITC) refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991 (26 U.S.C. 32(j))
 - (t) Payments by the Indian Claims Commission to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakima Indian Nation or the Apache Tribe of Mescalero Reservation (Pub. L. 95-433)
 - (u) Amounts of scholarships funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, including awards under federal work-study programs or under the Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs (20 U.S.C. 1087 uu). For Section 8 programs, the exception found in § 237 of Public Law 109-249 applies and requires that the amount of financial assistance in excess of tuition shall be considered income in accordance with the provisions codified at 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9), except for those persons with disabilities as defined by 42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)(3)(E) (Pub. L. 109-249)
 - (v) Allowances, earnings and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12637(d))
 - (w) Any amount of crime victim compensation (under the Victims of Crime Act) received through crime victim assistance (or payment or reimbursement of the cost of such assistance) as determined under the Victims of Crime Act because of the commission of a crime against the applicant under the Victims of Crime Act (42 U.S.C. 10602)
 - (x) Any amounts in an “individual development account” as provided by the Assets for Independence Act, as amended in 2002
 - (y) Payments made from the proceeds of Indian tribal trust cases as described in Notice PIH 2013-30, “Exclusion from Income of Payments under Recent Tribal Trust Settlements” (25 U.S.C. 117b(a))
 - (z) Major disaster and emergency assistance received under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and comparable disaster assistance provided by states, local governments, and disaster assistance organizations.
 - (aa) Distributions from an ABLE account, and actual or imputed interest on the ABLE account balance [See also Notice PIH 2019-09]

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.

BHA Policy

BHA generally will use current circumstances to determine both the value of an asset and the anticipated income from the asset. BHA 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) BHA 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, BHA can take into consideration past rental income along with the prospects of obtaining a new tenant.

Any time current circumstances are not used to determine asset income, a clear rationale for the decision will be documented in the file. In such cases, the family may present information and documentation to BHA 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)]

BHA 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

HUD does not specify a minimum threshold for counting assets disposed of for less than fair market value. BHA may establish a policy to ignore small amounts such as charitable contributions [New PH OCC GB, Income Determinations, p. 24].

BHA Policy

BHA 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.

BHA Policy

All assets disposed of as part of a separation or divorce settlement will be considered assets for which important consideration not measurable in monetary terms has been received. In order to qualify for this exemption, a family member must be subject to a formal separation or divorce settlement agreement established through arbitration, mediation, or court order.

Foreclosure or Bankruptcy

Assets are not considered disposed of for less than fair market value when the disposition is the result of a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale. 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.

Asset 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].

Family Declaration

BHA Policy

Families must sign a declaration form at initial certification and each annual recertification identifying all assets that have been disposed of for less than fair market

value or declaring that no assets have been disposed of for less than fair market value. BHA may verify the value of the assets disposed of if other information available to BHA does not appear to agree with the information reported by the family.

6-II.C. ASSET INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

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. BHA 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.

BHA Policy

BHA 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, BHA will use the value of the account on the most recent investment report.

Necessary and Non-Necessary Personal Property [24 CFR 5.603(b)(3)(i)]

erty [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.

ecessary 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). 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	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.

disabilities Equipment used for exercising (e.g., treadmill, stationary bike, kayak, paddleboard, ski equipment)	
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BHA Policy

In determining the value of non-necessary personal property, BHA will use the family’s estimate of the value. BHA 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.

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. BHA 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 9. 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 BHA 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.

BHA Policy

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

Jointly Owned Assets [Notice PIH 2023-27]

For assets owned jointly by the family and one or more individuals outside of the assisted family, BHA 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.

BHA Policy

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. amount, the lump sum will not be counted toward net family assets.

Trusts [24 CFR 5.609(b)(2) and 5.603(b)(4)] **.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 following types of trust distributions are excluded from annual income:

- Distributions of the principal or corpus of the trust; and
- Distributions of income from the trust when the distributions are used to pay the costs of health and medical care expenses for a minor.

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. Irrevocable trusts not under the control of any member of the family or household are not assets. Typically, special needs trusts are considered irrevocable. The value of the trust is not included in 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)]. Where an irrevocable trust is excluded from net family assets, the PHA 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. If the value of the trust is not considered part of the family's net assets, then distributions from the trust are treated as follows:

is excluded from net family assets, the PHA 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. If the value of the trust is not considered part of the family's net assets, then distributions from the trust are treated as follows:

s excluded from net family assets, the PHA 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. If the value of the trust is not considered part of the family's net 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.

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.

The value of revocable trusts that are not under the control of the family are 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. If this is the case, then distributions from the trust are treated as follows:

ue 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.

If this is the case, then distributions from the trust are treated as follows:

trustee. If this is the case, 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.

Revocable trusts under the control of the family or household (e.g., the grantor is a member of the assisted family or household) are considered assets and must be included in net family assets.

If the value of the trust is considered part of the family's net assets, then distributions from the trust are not considered income to the family. BHA must count all actual returns (e.g., interest earned) from the trust as income or, if the trust has no actual returns (e.g., if the trust is

comprised of farmland that is not in use) and the total value of the combined net family assets exceeds \$50,000 (as that amount is updated for inflation), as imputed returns, as applicable.

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 the account in which the federal tax refund or refundable tax credits were deposited. When the subtraction results in a negative number, then the balance of the asset is considered \$0.

If the tax refund or refundable tax credit is deposited into another excluded asset, such as a retirement account or a Coverdell Education Savings Account, then the deposit will have no effect on the balance of the asset (i.e., there is no need for BHA to subtract the amount of the deposit from the value of the excluded asset).

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)]; 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.

BHA Policy

Reasonable costs that would be incurred when disposing of an asset include, but are not limited to, penalties for premature withdrawal, broker and legal fees, and settlement costs incurred in real estate transactions such as settlement costs and transfer taxes [New PH OCC GB, Income Determinations, p. 24].

The calculation of asset income sometimes requires BHA 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.

BHA 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.

BHA 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), BHA may not rely on self-certification. If actual returns can be calculated, BHA 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, BHA 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). If BHA can compute actual income from some but not all assets, BHA 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 BHA to deduct from annual income any of five mandatory deductions for which a family qualifies and allow BHA to deduct other permissive deductions in accordance with PHA 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) \$525 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 child care expenses necessary to enable a member of the family to be employed or to further their education.

This part covers policies related to these mandatory deductions. Verification requirements related to these deductions are found in Chapter 7.

Anticipating Expenses

BHA Policy

Generally, BHA will use current circumstances to anticipate expenses. When possible, for costs that are expected to fluctuate during the year (e.g., child care during school and non-school periods and cyclical medical expenses), BHA will estimate costs based on historic data and known future costs.

If a family has an accumulated debt for medical or disability assistance expenses, BHA 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. BHA may require the family to provide documentation of payments made in the preceding year.

When calculating health and medical care expenses, BHA will include those expenses anticipated to be incurred during the 12 months following the certification date reexam 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, BHA 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 co-head 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 \$400 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, co-head, or sole member is 62 years of age or older, and a *disabled family* is a family whose head, spouse, co-head, or sole member is a person with disabilities* [24 CFR 5.403].

* For LIHTC properties, deductions or allowances are not allowed for determining income eligibility.

6-III.D. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(i)]

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 co-head is at least 62 or is a person with disabilities. If a family is eligible for a medical expense deduction, the medical expenses of all family members are counted].

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.”

Medical insurance premiums continue to be eligible health and medical care expenses. Health and medical care expenses may be deducted from annual income only if they are eligible and not otherwise reimbursed and may only be deducted for elderly or disabled families.

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 BHA to specifically align their policies with IRS Publication 502 for determining which expenses are included in HUD’s mandatory deduction for health and medical care expenses. BHA must review each expense to determine whether it is eligible in accordance with HUD’s definition of health and medical care expenses.”

Families That Qualify for Both Health and Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses

BHA Policy

This policy applies only to families in which the head, spouse, or co-head 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, BHA 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-II.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.

BHA Policy

The family must identify the family members enabled to work as a result of the disability assistance expenses. In evaluating the family’s request, BHA 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 BHA determines that the disability assistance expenses enable more than one family member to work, the disability assistance expenses will be capped by the sum of the family members’ incomes [New PH OCC GB, Income Determination, p. 28].

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.

BHA Policy

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, BHA will prorate the cost and allow only that portion of the expenses attributable to attendant care that enables a family member to work. For example, if the care provider also cares for a child who is not the person with disabilities, the cost of care must be prorated. Unless otherwise specified by the care provider, the calculation will be based upon the number of hours spent in each activity and/or the number of persons under care.

Payments to Family Members

No disability expenses may be deducted for payments to a member of a tenant family [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. However, expenses paid to a relative who is not a member of the tenant family may be deducted if they are not reimbursed by an outside source.

Necessary and Reasonable Expenses

The family determines the type of care or auxiliary apparatus to be provided and must describe how the expenses enable a family member to work. The family must certify that the disability assistance expenses are necessary and are not paid or reimbursed by any other source.

BHA Policy

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

BHA Policy

This policy applies only to families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 or older or is a person with disabilities.

When expenses anticipated by a family could be defined as either health and medical care or disability assistance expenses, BHA 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-II.F. CHILD CARE EXPENSE DEDUCTION

HUD defines *child care expenses* at 24 CFR 5.603(b) as "amounts anticipated to be paid by the family for the care of children under 13 years of age (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 their education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. The amount deducted shall reflect reasonable charges for child care. In the case of child care necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.”

Child care expenses do not include child support payments made to another on behalf of a minor who is not living in an assisted family’s household [VG, p. 26]. However, child care expenses for foster children that are living in the assisted family’s household are included when determining the family’s child care expenses.

Qualifying for the Deduction

Determining Who Is Enabled to Pursue an Eligible Activity

BHA Policy

The family must identify the family member(s) enabled to pursue an eligible activity. The term *eligible activity* in this section means any of the activities that may make the family eligible for a child care deduction (seeking work, pursuing an education, or being gainfully employed).

In evaluating the family’s request, BHA 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

BHA Policy

If the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to seek employment, the family must provide evidence of the family member’s efforts to obtain employment at each reexamination. The deduction may be reduced or denied if the family member’s job search efforts are not commensurate with the child care expense being allowed by BHA.

Furthering Education

BHA Policy

If the child care 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 child care claimed.

Being Gainfully Employed

BHA Policy

If the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to be gainfully employed, the family must provide evidence of the family member’s employment during the

time that child care is being provided. Gainful employment is any legal work activity (full- or part-time) for which a family member is compensated.

Earned Income Limit on Child Care Expense Deduction

When a family member looks for work or furthers their education, there is no cap on the amount that may be deducted for child care – although the care must still be necessary and reasonable. However, when child care enables a family member to work, the deduction is capped by “the amount of employment income that is included in annual income” [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

The earned income used for this purpose is the amount of earned income verified after any earned income disallowances or income exclusions are applied.

When the person who is enabled to work is a person who receives the earned income disallowance (EID) or a full-time student whose earned income above \$480 is excluded, child care costs related to enabling a family member to work may not exceed the portion of the person’s earned income that actually is included in annual income. For example, if a family member who qualifies for the EID makes \$15,000 but because of the EID only \$5,000 is included in annual income, child care expenses are limited to \$5,000.

BHA must not limit the deduction to the least expensive type of child care. If the care allows the family to pursue more than one eligible activity, including work, the cap is calculated in proportion to the amount of time spent working [HCV GB, p. 5-30 and PH GB, p. 123].

BHA Policy

When the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to work, only one family member’s income will be considered for a given period of time. When more than one family member works during a given period, BHA generally will limit allowable child care expenses to the earned income of the lowest-paid member. The family may provide information that supports a request to designate another family member as the person enabled to work.

Eligible Child Care Expenses

The type of care to be provided is determined by the tenant family. BHA may not refuse to give a family the child care expense deduction because there is an adult family member in the household that may be available to provide child care [VG, p. 26].

Allowable Child Care Activities

BHA Policy

For school-age children, costs attributable to public or private school activities during standard school hours are not considered. Expenses incurred for supervised activities after school or during school holidays (e.g., summer day camp, after-school sports league) are allowable forms of child care.

The costs of general housekeeping and personal services are not eligible. Likewise, child care expenses paid to a family member who lives in the family’s unit are not eligible; however, payments for child care to relatives who do not live in the unit are eligible.

If a child care provider also renders other services to a family or child care is used to enable

a family member to conduct activities that are not eligible for consideration, BHA will prorate the costs and allow only that portion of the expenses that is attributable to child care for eligible activities. For example, if the care provider also cares for a child with disabilities who is 13 or older, the cost of care will be prorated. Unless otherwise specified by the child care provider, the calculation will be based upon the number of hours spent in each activity and/or the number of persons under care.

Necessary and Reasonable Costs

Child care expenses will be considered necessary if: (1) a family adequately explains how the care enables a family member to work, actively seek employment, or further their education, and (2) the family certifies, and the child care provider verifies, that the expenses are not paid or reimbursed by any other source.

BHA Policy

Child care expenses will be considered for the time required for the eligible activity plus reasonable transportation time. For child care that enables a family member to go to school, the time allowed may include not more than one study hour for each hour spent in class.

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

6-III.G. HARDSHIP EXEMPTIONS [24 CFR 5.611(c), (d), and (e)]

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. 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.

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, the PHA 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.

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.

BHA 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 public 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 BHA 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 the PHA.

BHA Policy

BHA will not continue the phased-in relief for families who move from the HCV program to public housing. 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 BHA 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 BHA to develop policies defining what constitutes a hardship for purposes of this exemption.

BHA must obtain third-party verification of the hardship or must document in the file the reason third-party verification was not available. BHA must attempt to obtain third-party verification prior

to the end of the 90-day hardship exemption period.

BHA Policy

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) or that the family's financial hardship is a result of a change in circumstances. BHA 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 reexam in accordance with BHA 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 BHA.

The family must provide third-party verification of the hardship with the request. If third-party verification is not available, BHA 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.

BHA 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)].

BHA Policy

The BHA will make a determination of whether the family qualifies within 30 calendar days and will notify the family in writing of the result within 10 business days of the determination.

If BHA denies the hardship exemption request, BHA notice will also state that if the family does not agree with BHA's determination, the family may request a hearing.

If the family qualifies for an exemption, BHA 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, BHA may, at its discretion, extend the relief for one or more additional 90-day periods while the family's hardship condition continues. BHA is not limited to a maximum number of 90-day extensions. BHA 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. BHA must develop policies requiring families to report if the circumstances that made the family eligible for the hardship exemption are no longer applicable.

BHA Policy

The family may request an extension either orally or in writing prior to the end of the hardship exemption period. BHA will extend relief for an additional 90-days if the family demonstrates to BHA's satisfaction that the family continues to qualify for the hardship exemption based on circumstances described above. BHA 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, BHA may terminate the hardship exemption if BHA determines that the family no longer qualifies for the exemption.

Child Care Expense Hardship Exemption [24 CFR 5.611(d) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

A family whose eligibility for the child care expense deduction is ending may request a financial hardship exemption to continue receiving the deduction. If the family demonstrates to BHA satisfaction that the family is unable to pay their rent because of the loss of the child care expense deduction, and that the child care expense is still necessary even though the family member is not working, looking for work, or seeking to further their education BHA must recalculate the family's adjusted income and continue the child care deduction.

BHA must develop a policy to define what constitutes a hardship, which includes the family's inability to pay rent. BHA must obtain third-party verification of the hardship or must document in the file the reason third-party verification was not available. BHA must attempt to obtain third-party verification prior to the end of the 90-day hardship exemption period.

BHA Policy

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. BHA defines this hardship as a potential decrease in income or increase in other expenses that would result from the loss of the child care 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 (child care 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 child care expense is still necessary even though the family member is no longer employed or furthering their education. BHA 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, BHA 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.

BHA 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 BHA denies the request, the notice must specifically state the reason for the denial. BHA must provide families 30 days' notice of any increase in rent.

If BHA 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 BHA 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].

BHA Policy

BHA will make a determination of whether the family qualifies within 30 calendar days and will notify the family in writing of the result within 10 business days of the determination.

If BHA denies the hardship exemption request, BHA notice will also state that if the family does not agree with BHA's determination, the family may request a grievance hearing.

If the family qualifies for an exemption, BHA 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.

BHA may, at its discretion, extend the hardship exemptions for additional 90-day periods based on family circumstances and as stated in BHA policies. BHA is not limited to a maximum number of 90-day extensions. . BHA must develop policies requiring families to report if the circumstances that made the family eligible for the hardship exemption are no longer applicable.

BHA 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 BHA denies the request, the notice must specifically state the reason for the denial.

BHAs 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.

BHA Policy

The family may request an extension either orally or in writing prior to the end of the hardship exemption period. BHA will extend relief for an additional 90-days if the family demonstrates to BHA's satisfaction that the family continues to qualify for the hardship exemption. BHA 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, BHA may terminate the hardship exemption if BHA determines that the family no longer qualifies for the exemption.

6-II.H. PERMISSIVE DEDUCTIONS [24 CFR 5.611(b)(1)(i)]

BHA may adopt additional permissive deductions from annual income if they establish a policy in the ACOP. 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 BHA offers permissive deductions, they must be granted to all families that qualify for them and should complement existing income exclusions and deductions [PH GB, p. 128 Permissive deductions may be used to incentivize or encourage self-sufficiency and economic mobility.

If BHA chooses to adopt permissive deductions, BHA is not eligible for an increase in Capital Fund and Operating Fund formula grants based on the application of those deductions. BHA must establish a written policy for such deductions.

The *Form HUD-50058 Instruction Booklet* states that the maximum allowable amount for total permissive deductions is less than \$90,000 per year.

BHA Policy

BHA has opted not to use permissive deductions.

PART IV: CALCULATING RENT

6-IV.A. OVERVIEW OF INCOME-BASED RENT CALCULATIONS

The first step in calculating income-based rent is to determine each family's total tenant payment (TTP). Then, if the family is occupying a unit that has tenant-paid utilities, the utility allowance is subtracted from the TTP. The result of this calculation, if a positive number, is the tenant rent. If the TTP is less than the utility allowance, the result of this calculation is a negative number, and is called the utility reimbursement, which may be paid to the family or directly to the utility company by BHA.

TTP Formula [24 CFR 5.628]

HUD regulations specify the formula for calculating the total tenant payment (TTP) for a tenant family. TTP is the highest of the following amounts, rounded to the nearest dollar:

- 30 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income (adjusted income is defined in Part II)
- 10 percent of the family's monthly gross income (annual income, as defined in Part I, divided by 12)
- The welfare rent (in as-paid states only)
- A minimum rent between \$0 and \$50 that is established by BHA

BHA has authority to suspend and exempt families from minimum rent when a financial hardship exists, as defined in Section 6-IV.B.

Welfare Rent [24 CFR 5.628]

BHA Policy

Welfare rent does not apply in this locality.

Minimum Rent [24 CFR 5.630]

BHA Policy

The minimum rent for this locality is \$50.00

Optional Changes to Income-Based Rents [24 CFR 960.253(c)(2) and PH GB, pp. 131-134]

BHA has been given very broad flexibility to establish its own, unique rent calculation system as long as the rent produced is not higher than that calculated using the TTP and mandatory deductions. At BHA's discretion, rent policies may structure a system that uses combinations of permissive deductions, escrow accounts, income-based rents, and the required flat and minimum rents.

BHA's minimum rent and rent choice policies still apply to affected families. Utility allowances are applied to BHA designed income-based rents in the same manner as they are applied to the regulatory income-based rents.

The choices are limited only by the requirement that the method used not produce a TTP or tenant rent greater than the TTP or tenant rent produced under the regulatory formula.

BHA Policy

BHA chooses not to adopt optional changes to income-based rents.

Ceiling Rents [24 CFR 960.253 (c)(2) and (d)]

Ceiling rents are used to cap income-based rents. They are part of the income-based formula. If the calculated TTP exceeds the ceiling rent for the unit, the ceiling rent is used to calculate tenant rent (ceiling rent/TTP minus utility allowance). Increases in income do not affect the family since the rent is capped. The use of ceiling rents fosters upward mobility and income mixing.

Because of the mandatory use of flat rents, the primary function of ceiling rents now is to assist families who cannot switch back to flat rent between annual reexaminations and would otherwise be paying an income-based tenant rent that is higher than the flat rent.

Ceiling rents must be set to the level required for flat rents (which will require the addition of the utility allowance to the flat rent for properties with tenant-paid utilities) [PH GB, p. 135].

BHA Policy

BHA chooses not to use ceiling rents.

Utility Reimbursement [24 CFR 960.253(c)(4)]

Utility reimbursement occurs when any applicable utility allowance for tenant-paid utilities exceeds the TTP. HUD permits BHA to pay the reimbursement to the family or directly to the utility provider.

BHA Policy

BHA will make utility reimbursements to the family.

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

BHA Policy

BHA will issue all utility reimbursements quarterly.

6-IV.B. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AFFECTING MINIMUM RENT [24 CFR 5.630]

BHA Policy

The financial hardship rules described below do not apply in this jurisdiction because BHA has established a minimum rent of \$50.00.

Overview

If BHA establishes a minimum rent greater than zero, BHA will 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 BHA determines that a hardship exists, the TTP is the highest of the remaining components of the family's calculated TTP.

HUD-Defined Financial Hardship

Financial hardship includes the following situations:

- (1) The family has lost eligibility for or is awaiting an eligibility determination for a federal, state, or local assistance program. This includes a family member who is a noncitizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act who would be entitled to public benefits but for Title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996.

BHA Policy

A hardship will be considered to exist only if the loss of eligibility has an impact on the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.

For a family waiting for a determination of eligibility, the hardship period will end as of the first of the month following: (1) implementation of assistance, if approved, or (2) the decision to deny assistance. A family whose request for assistance is denied may request a hardship exemption based upon one of the other allowable hardship circumstances.

- (2) The family would be evicted because it is unable to pay the minimum rent;

BHA Policy

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

- (3) Family income has decreased because of changed family circumstances, including the loss of employment;
- (4) A death has occurred in the family;

BHA Policy

In order to qualify under this provision, a family must describe how the death has created a financial hardship (e.g., because of funeral-related expenses or the loss of the family member's income).

- (5) The family has experienced other circumstances determined by BHA.

BHA Policy

BHA has not established any additional hardship criteria.

Implementation of Hardship Exemption

Determination of Hardship

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

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

BHA Policy

BHA 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.

BHA may not evict the family for nonpayment of minimum rent during the 90-day period beginning the month following the family's request for a hardship exemption.

When the minimum rent is suspended, the TTP reverts to the highest of the remaining components of the calculated TTP. The example below demonstrates the effect of the minimum rent exemption.

<i>Assume BHA has established a minimum rent of \$50</i>	
TTP – No Hardship	TTP – 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

BHA Policy

To qualify for a hardship exemption, a family must submit a request for a hardship exemption in writing. The request must explain the nature of the hardship and how the hardship has affected the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.

BHA will make the determination of hardship within 30 days.

No Financial Hardship

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

For procedures pertaining to grievance hearing requests based upon BHA's denial of a hardship exemption, see Chapter 14.

BHA Policy

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

Temporary Hardship

If BHA determines that a qualifying financial hardship is temporary, BHA must reinstate the minimum rent from the beginning of the first of the month following the date of the family's request for a hardship exemption.

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

For procedures pertaining to grievance hearing requests based upon BHA's denial of a hardship exemption, see Chapter 14.

BHA Policy

BHA will enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with BHA's repayment agreement policy (see Chapter 16).

Long-Term Hardship

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

BHA Policy

The hardship period ends when any of the following circumstances apply:

- (1) At an interim or annual reexamination, the family's calculated TTP is greater than the minimum rent.
- (2) For hardship conditions based on loss of income, the hardship condition will continue to be recognized until new sources of income are received that are at least equal to the amount lost. For example, if a hardship is approved because a family no longer receives a \$60/month child support payment, the hardship will continue to exist until the family receives at least \$60/month in income from another source or once again begins to receive the child support.
- (3) For hardship conditions based upon hardship-related expenses, the minimum rent exemption will continue to be recognized until the cumulative amount exempted is equal to the expense incurred.

6-IVC. UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 965, Subpart E]

Overview

Utility allowances are provided to families paying income-based rents when the cost of utilities is not included in the rent. When determining a family's income-based rent, BHA must use the utility allowance applicable to the type of dwelling unit leased by the family.

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

Reasonable Accommodation and Individual Relief

On request from a family, BHA must approve a utility allowance that is higher than the applicable amount for the dwelling unit if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family with a disability [24 CFR 8 and 100, PH GB, p. 172].

Likewise, residents with disabilities may not be charged for the use of certain resident-supplied appliances if there is a verified need for special equipment because of the disability [PH GB, p. 172].

See Chapter 2 for policies related to reasonable accommodations.

Further, the PHA may grant requests for relief from charges in excess of the utility allowance on reasonable grounds, such as special needs of the elderly, ill, or residents with disabilities, or special factors not within control of the resident, as the PHA deems appropriate. The family must request the higher allowance and provide the PHA with an explanation about the additional allowance required.

PHAs 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 [Utility Allowance GB, p. 19; 24 CFR 965.508].

BHA Policy

The family must request the higher allowance and provide BHA with information about the amount of additional allowance required.

BHA 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, BHA 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 BHA 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 residents at move-in and with any notice of proposed allowances, schedule surcharges, and revisions. BHA 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.

The family must request the higher allowance and provide BHA with information about the amount of additional allowance required.

At its discretion, BHA may reevaluate the need for the increased utility allowance as a reasonable accommodation at any regular reexamination.

If the excessive consumption is caused by a characteristic of the unit or BHA-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 [24 CFR 965.507]

BHA must review at least annually the basis on which utility allowances have been established and, if reasonably required in order to continue adherence to standards described in 24 CFR 965.505, must establish revised allowances.

BHA must revise the utility allowance schedule if there is a rate change that by itself or together with prior rate changes not adjusted for, results in a change of 10 percent or more from the rate on which such allowances were based. Adjustments to resident payments as a result of such changes must be retroactive to the first day of the month following the month in which the last rate change taken into account in such revision became effective. Such rate changes are not subject to the 60-day notice [PH Occ GB, p. 17124 CFR 965.507(b)].

The tenant rent calculations must reflect any changes in BHA's utility allowance schedule [24 CFR 960.253(c)(3)].

BHA Policy

Between annual reviews of utility allowances, BHA will only revise its utility allowances due to a rate change, when required to by the regulation.

6-IV.D. PRORATED RENT FOR MIXED FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.520]

HUD regulations prohibit assistance to ineligible family members. A *mixed family* is one that includes at least one U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible family members. BHA must prorate the assistance provided to a mixed family. BHA will first determine TTP as if all family members were eligible and then prorate the rent based upon the number of family members that actually are eligible. To do this, BHA must:

- (1) Subtract the TTP from the flat rent applicable to the unit. The result is the maximum subsidy for which the family could qualify if all members were eligible.
- (2) Divide the family maximum subsidy by the number of persons in the family to determine the maximum subsidy per each family member who is eligible (member maximum subsidy).
- (3) Multiply the member maximum subsidy by the number of eligible family members.
- (4) Subtract the subsidy calculated in the last step from the flat rent. This is the prorated TTP.
- (5) Subtract the utility allowance for the unit from the prorated TTP. This is the prorated rent for the mixed family.

BHA Policy

Revised public housing flat rents will be applied to a mixed family's rent calculation at the first annual reexamination after the revision is adopted.

- (6) When the mixed family's TTP is greater than the applicable flat rent, use the TTP as the prorated TTP. The prorated TTP minus the utility allowance is the prorated rent for the mixed family.

6-IV.E. FLAT RENTS AND FAMILY CHOICE IN RENTS [24 CFR 960.253]

Flat Rents [24 CFR 960.253(b)]

The flat rent is designed to encourage self-sufficiency and to avoid creating disincentives for continued residency by families who are attempting to become economically self-sufficient.

Changes in family income, expenses, or composition will not affect the flat rent amount because it is outside the income-based formula.

Policies related to the reexamination of families paying flat rent are contained in Chapter 9, and policies related to the establishment and reviews of flat rents are contained in Chapter 16.

Family Choice in Rents [24 CFR 960.253(a) and (e)]

Once each year, BHA must offer families the choice between a flat rent and an income-based rent. The family may not be offered this choice more than once a year. BHA must document that flat rents were offered to families under the methods used to determine flat rents for BHA.

BHA Policy

The annual BHA offer to a family of the choice between flat and income-based rent will be conducted upon admission and upon each subsequent annual reexamination.

A tenant who has chosen income-based rent at their annual reexamination may request to be switched to flat rent once between annual reexaminations.

BHA will require families to submit their choice of flat or income-based rent in writing and will maintain such requests in the tenant file as part of the admission or annual reexamination process.

BHA must provide sufficient information for families to make an informed choice. This information must include BHA's policy on switching from flat rent to income-based rent due to financial hardship and the dollar amount of the rent under each option. However, if the family chose the flat rent for the previous year, BHA is required to provide an income-based rent amount only in the year that a reexamination of income is conducted or if the family specifically requests it and submits updated income information.

Switching from Flat Rent to Income-Based Rent Due to Hardship [24 CFR 960.253(f)]

A family can opt to switch from flat rent to income-based rent at any time if they are unable to pay the flat rent due to financial hardship. If BHA determines that a financial hardship exists, BHA must immediately allow the family to switch from flat rent to the income-based rent.

BHA Policy

Upon determination by BHA that a financial hardship exists, BHA will allow a family to switch from flat rent to income-based rent effective the first of the month following the family's request.

Reasons for financial hardship include:

- The family has experienced a decrease in income because of changed circumstances, including loss or reduction of employment, death in the family, or reduction in or loss of earnings or other assistance
- The family has experienced an increase in expenses, because of changed circumstances, for medical costs, child care, transportation, education, or similar items
- Such other situations determined by BHA to be appropriate

BHA Policy

BHA considers payment of flat rent to be a financial hardship whenever the switch to income-based rent would be lower than the flat rent [PH Occ GB, p. 137].

Flat Rents and Earned Income Disallowance [A&O FAQs]

Because the EID is a function of income-based rents, a family paying flat rent cannot qualify for the EID even if a family member experiences an event that would qualify the family for the EID. If the family later chooses to pay income-based rent, they would only qualify for the EID if a new qualifying event occurred.

Under the EID original calculation method, a family currently paying flat rent that previously qualified for the EID while paying income-based rent and is currently within their exclusion period would have the exclusion period continue while paying flat rent as long as the employment that is the subject of the exclusion continues. A family paying flat rent could therefore see a family member's exclusion period expire while the family is paying flat rent.

Under the EID revised calculation method, a family currently paying flat rent that previously qualified for the EID while paying income-based rent and is currently within their exclusion period would have the exclusion period continue while paying flat rent regardless whether the employment that is the subject of the exclusion continues. A family paying flat rent could therefore see a family member's exclusion period expire while the family is paying flat rent.

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

(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, child care, 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 nonnecessary 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 960.259, 24 CFR 5.230, Notice PIH 2017-12]

INTRODUCTION

BHA must verify all information that is used to establish the family's eligibility and level of assistance and is required to obtain written authorization from the family in order to collect the information. Applicants and program participants must cooperate with the verification process as a condition of receiving assistance. BHA must not pass on the cost of verification to the family.

BHA will follow the verification guidance provided by HUD in PIH Notice 2010-19 and any subsequent guidance issued by HUD. This chapter summarizes those requirements and provides supplementary BHA policies.

Part I describes the general verification process. Part II provides more detailed requirements related to family information. Part III provides information on income and assets, and Part IV covers mandatory deductions.

Verification policies, rules and procedures will be modified as needed to accommodate persons with disabilities. All information obtained through the verification process will be handled in accordance with the records management policies established by BHA.

PART I: GENERAL VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

7-I.A. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 960.259; 24 CFR 5.230; and Notice PIH 2023-27]

Consent Forms

The family must supply any information that BHA or HUD determines is necessary to the administration of the program and must consent to BHA verification of that information [24 CFR 960.259(a)(1)]. All adult family members must sign consent forms as needed to collect information relevant to the family's eligibility and level of assistance. While BHA must use form HUD-9886, this form does not release all the information necessary to the administration of the program. BHA must also develop its own release forms to cover all other necessary information.

Form HUD-9886 [24 CFR 5.230(b)(1), (b)(2), (c)(4), and (c)(5); Notice PIH 2023-27]

All adult applicants and tenants must sign form HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information. All adult family members (and the head and spouse/cohead regardless of age) are required to sign the Form HUD-9886 at admission. Participants, prior to January 1, 2024, signed and submitted Form HUD-9886 at each annual reexamination. HOTMA eliminated this requirement and instead required that the Form HUD-9886 be signed only once. On or after January 1, 2024 (regardless of BHA's HOTMA compliance date), current program participants must sign and submit a new Form HUD-9886 at their next interim or annual reexamination. This form will only be signed once. Another Form HUD-9886 will not be submitted to BHA except under the following circumstances:

- When any person 18 years or older becomes a member of the family;
- When a current member of the family turns 18; or
- As required by HUD or the PHA in administrative instructions.

BHA has the discretion to establish policies around when family members must sign consent forms when they turn 18. BHA must establish these policies stating when family members will be required to sign consent forms at intervals other than at reexamination.

BHA Policy

Family members turning 18 years of age between annual recertifications will be notified in writing that they are required to sign the required Consent to the Release of Information Form HUD-9886 at the family's next annual or interim reexamination, whichever is earlier.

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 BHA 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).

The PHA may obtain any financial record from any financial institution, as the terms financial record and financial institution are defined in the Right to Financial Privacy Act ([12 U.S.C. 3401](#)), whenever the PHA determines the record is needed to determine an applicant's or participant's eligibility for assistance or level of benefits [24 CFR 5.230(c)(4)].

The executed form will remain effective until the family is denied assistance, assistance is terminated, or the family provides written notification to the PHA to revoke consent.

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, BHA will deny admission to applicants and terminate the lease of tenants. The family may request a hearing in accordance with BHA's grievance procedures.

However, this does not apply if the applicant, participant, or any member of their family, revokes their consent with respect to the ability of BHA to access financial records from financial institutions, unless BHA establishes a policy that revocation of consent to access financial records will result in denial or termination of assistance or admission [24 CFR 5.232(c)]. PHAs may not process interim or annual reexaminations of income without the family's executed consent forms.

BHA Policy

BHA has established a policy that revocation of consent to access financial records will result in denial of admission or termination of assistance in accordance with BHA policy.

In order for a family to revoke their consent, the family must provide written notice to BHA.

Within 10 business days of the date the family provides written notice, BHA will send the family a notice acknowledging receipt of the request and explaining that revocation of consent will result in denial or termination of assistance, as applicable. At the same time, BHA will notify the local HUD office.

7-I.B. USE OF OTHER PROGRAMS' INCOME DETERMINATIONS [24 CFR 5.609(c)(3) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

BHA may, but are not required to, determine a family's annual income, including income from assets, prior to the application of any deductions, based on income determinations made within the previous 12-month period, using income determinations from means-tested federal public assistance programs. BHA is not required to accept or use determinations of income from other federal means-tested forms of assistance. If BHA adopts a policy to accept this type of verification, BHA must establish in policy when they will accept Safe Harbor income determinations and from which programs. BHAs must also create policies that outline the course of action when families present multiple verifications from the same or different acceptable Safe Harbor programs. Means-tested federal public assistance programs include:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (42 U.S.C. 601, et seq.);
- Medicaid (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);

- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (26 U.S.C. 32);
- Low-Income Housing Credit (LIHTC) program (26 U.S.C. 42);
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) (42 U.S.C. 1786);
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.);
- Other programs administered by the HUD Secretary;
- Other means-tested forms of federal public assistance for which HUD has established a memorandum of understanding; and
- Other federal benefit determinations made in other forms of means-tested federal public assistance that the Secretary determines to have comparable reliability and announces through the *Federal Register*.

If BHA elects to use the annual income determination from one of the above-listed forms of means-tested federal public assistance, then they must obtain the income information by means of a third-party verification. The third-party verification must state the family size, must be for the entire family, and must state the amount of the family's annual income. The annual income need not be broken down by family member or income type. Annual income includes income earned from assets, therefore when using Safe Harbor to verify a family's income, BHA will neither further inquire about a family's net family assets, nor about the income earned from those assets, except with respect to whether or not the family owns assets that exceed the asset limitation in 24 CFR 5.618. The Safe Harbor documentation will be considered acceptable if any of the following dates fall into the 12-month period prior to the receipt of the documentation by BHA:

- Income determination effective date;
- Program administrator's signature date;
- Family's signature date;
- Report effective date; or
- Other report-specific dates that verify the income determination date.

The only information that BHA is permitted to use to determine income under this method is the total income determination made by the federal means-tested program administrator. Other federal programs may provide additional information about income inclusions and exclusions in their award letters; however, these determinations and any other information must not be considered by BHA. BHA is not permitted to mix and match Safe Harbor income determinations and other income verifications.

If BHA is unable to obtain Safe Harbor documentation or if the family disputes the other program's income determination, BHA must calculate the family's annual income using traditional methods as outlined in Notice PIH 2023-27 and this chapter.

If BHA uses a Safe Harbor determination to determine the family's income, the family is obligated to report changes in income that meet BHA's reporting requirement and occur after the effective date of the transaction.

The amounts of unreimbursed reasonable attendant care expenses and child-care expenses deducted from a family's annual income, except for when a family is approved for a child-care expense hardship exemption, must still be capped by the amount earned by any family member who is enabled to work as a result of the expense. BHA is therefore required to obtain third-party verification of the applicable employment income and cap the respective expense deductions accordingly.

BHA Policy

When available and applicable, BHA will accept other programs' Safe Harbor determinations of income at annual reexamination to determine the family's total annual income. BHA will still require third-party verification of all deductions such as the health and medical care expense or child care expense deductions. Further, if the family is eligible for and claims the disability assistance expense or child care expense deductions, where applicable, BHA will obtain third-party verification of the amount of employment income of the individual(s) enabled to work in order to cap the respective expenses as required.

Prior to using any Safe Harbor determination from another program, BHA will ask the family if they agree with the income amounts listed. If the family disputes the income amounts on the Safe Harbor determination, BHA will obtain third-party verification of all sources of income and assets (as applicable).

BHA will not accept other programs' determinations of income for any new admission or interim reexamination.

With the exception of income determinations made under the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, BHA will accept Safe Harbor determinations from any of the programs listed above.

In order to be acceptable, the income determination must:

Be dated within 12 months of the dates listed above;

State the family size;

Be for the entire family (i.e., the family members listed in the documentation must match the family's composition in the assisted unit, except for household members); and

Must state the amount of the family's annual income.

The determination need not list each source of income individually. If BHA does not receive any acceptable income determination documentation or is unable to obtain documentation, then BHA will revert to third-party verification of income for the family.

When families present multiple verifications from the same or different acceptable Safe Harbor programs, BHA will use the most recent income determination, unless the family presents acceptable evidence that BHA should consider an alternative verification from a different Safe Harbor source.

When BHA uses a Safe Harbor income determination from another program, and the family's income subsequently changes, the family is required to report the change to BHA. Depending on when the change occurred, the change may or may not impact BHA's calculation of the family's total annual income. Changes that occur between the time BHA receives the Safe Harbor documentation and the effective date of the family's annual reexam will not be considered. If the family has a change in income that occurs after the annual reexam effective date, BHA will conduct an interim reexam if the change meets the requirements for performing an interim reexamination as outlined in Chapter 9. In this case, BHA will use third-party verification to verify the change.

7-I.C. STREAMLINED INCOME DETERMINATIONS [24 CFR 960.257(c); Notice PIH 2023-27]

HUD permits BHA 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, BHA may determine income from fixed sources by applying a verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or other inflationary adjustment factor. Streamlining policies are optional. BHA may, however, obtain third-party verification of all income, regardless of the source. Further, upon request of the family, BHA must perform third-party verification of all income sources.

Fixed sources of income include Social Security and SSI benefits, pensions, annuities, disability or death benefits, and other sources of income subject to a COLA or rate of interest. The determination of fixed income may be streamlined even if the family also receives income from other non-fixed sources.

Two streamlining options are available, depending upon the percentage of the family's income that is received from fixed sources.

When 90 percent or more of a family's unadjusted income is from fixed sources, BHA may apply the inflationary adjustment factor to the family's fixed-income sources, provided that the family certifies both that 90 percent or more of their unadjusted income is fixed and that their sources of fixed income have not changed from the previous year. Sources of non-fixed income are not required to be adjusted and must not be adjusted by a COLA, but BHA may choose to adjust sources of non-fixed income based on third-party verification. BHA has the discretion to either

adjust the non-fixed income or carry over the calculation of non-fixed income from the first year to years two and three.

When less than 90 percent of a family's unadjusted income consists of fixed income, BHA may apply a COLA to each of the family's sources of fixed income. BHA must determine all other income using standard verification requirements as outlined in Notice PIH 2023-27.

BHA Policy

When BHA does not use a Safe Harbor income determination from a federal assistance program to determine the family's annual income as outlined above, then BHA will use a streamlined income determinations where applicable.

If 90 percent or more of a family's unadjusted income is from fixed income sources:

BHA will streamline the annual reexamination process by applying the verified inflationary adjustment factor to fixed-income sources.

The family will be required to sign a self-certification stating that 90 percent or more of their unadjusted income is fixed income and that their sources of fixed income have not changed from the previous year.

BHA will document in the file how the determination that a source of income was fixed was made.

Third-party verification of non-fixed income will be obtained annually regardless of the percentage of family income received from fixed sources.

If the family's sources of fixed income have changed from the previous year, BHA will obtain third-party verification of any new sources of fixed income.

When less than 90 percent of a family's unadjusted income consists of fixed income:

BHA will apply a COLA to each of the family's sources of fixed income.

All other income will be verified using third-party verification as outlined in Notice PIH 2023-27 and Chapter 7 of this policy.

In the following circumstances, regardless of the percentage of income received from fixed sources, BHA will obtain third-party verification as outlined in Notice PIH 2023-27 and Chapter 7 of this policy:

Of all assets when net family assets exceed \$50,000;

Of all deductions and allowances from annual income;

If a family member with a fixed source of income is added;

If verification of the COLA or rate of interest is not available;

During the intake process and at least once every three years thereafter.

7-I.D. VERIFICATION HIERARCHY [Notice PIH 2023-27]

When BHA does not use a streamlined determination of income or an income determination from a means-tested federal assistance program, HUD requires BHA to obtain third-party verification of:

- Reported family annual income;
- The value of net family assets when the net value exceeds \$50,000 (as adjusted annually);
- Expenses related to deductions from annual income; and
- Other factors that affect the determination of adjusted income.

HUD mandates the use of the EIV system and offers administrative guidance on the use of other methods to verify family information and specifies the circumstances in which each method will be used. In general, HUD requires BHA to use the most reliable form of verification that is available and to document the reasons when BHA uses a lesser form of verification.

HUD developed a hierarchy that described verification documentation from most acceptable to least acceptable. BHA must demonstrate efforts to obtain third party verification prior to accepting self-certification except instances when self-certification is explicitly allowed.

In order of priority, the hierarchy is:

- Highest: Level 6: Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using HUD’s Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system
- Highest: Level 5: Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using a non-EIV system
- High: Level 4:
 - Written third-party verification from the source, also known as “tenant-provided verification”
 - Or EIV plus self-certification
- Medium: Level 3: Written third-party verification form
- Medium: Level 2: Oral third-party verification
- Low: Level 1: Self-certification (not third-party verification)

Each of the verification methods is discussed in subsequent sections below.

File Documentation

BHA 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 BHA has followed all of the verification policies set forth in this ACOP. The record should be sufficient to enable a staff member or HUD reviewer to understand the process followed and conclusions reached.

7-I.E. LEVEL 5 AND 6 VERIFICATION: UP-FRONT INCOME VERIFICATION (UIV)

Up-front income verification (UIV) refers to BHA's use of the verification tools available from independent sources that maintain computerized information about earnings and benefits. BHA may use IUV sources before or during a family reexamination. UIV will be used to the extent that these systems are available to BHA.

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 BHA has independently verified the UIV information and the family has been granted the opportunity to contest any adverse findings through BHA's informal review/hearing processes.

Upfront Income Verification Using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System

BHA must use HUD's EIV system in its entirety as a third-party source to verify tenant employment and income information during mandatory reexaminations or recertifications of family composition and income in accordance with 24 CFR 5.236 and Notice PIH 2023-27.

HUD's EIV system contains data showing earned income, unemployment benefits, social security benefits, and SSI benefits for participant families.

The income validation tool (IVT) in EIV provides projections of discrepant income for wages, unemployment compensation, and SSA benefits pursuant to HUD's data sharing agreements with other departments.

The following policies apply to the use of HUD's EIV system.

EIV Income and IVT Reports

BHA is required to obtain an EIV Income and IVT report for each family any time BHA conducts an annual reexamination. However, BHA is not required to use the EIV Income and IVT reports:

- At annual reexamination if BHA used Safe Harbor verification from another means-test federal assistance program to determine the family's income; or
- During any interim reexaminations.

The EIV Income and IVT Reports are also not available for program applicants at admission.

When required to use the EIV Income Report, in order for the report to be considered current, BHA must pull the report within 120 days of the effective date of the annual reexamination.

The EIV Income Report may be used to verify and calculate income at annual reexamination if the family self-certifies that the amount is accurate and representative of current income. The family must be provided with the information in EIV.

BHA Policy

Except for when Safe Harbor verification from another means-tested federal assistance program is used to determine the family's annual income, BHA will obtain EIV Income and IVT reports for all annual reexaminations for all families on a monthly basis. Reports will be generated as part of the regular reexamination process. BHA will ensure that all EIV Income Reports are pulled within 120 days of the effective date of the annual reexamination.

Income and IVT reports will only be used for interim reexaminations as necessary. For example, EIV may be used to verify that families claiming zero income are not receiving income from any sources listed in EIV.

Income and IVT reports will be retained in resident files with the applicable annual documents or interim reexamination documents (if applicable) for the duration of tenancy.

When BHA 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 15, Program Integrity.

New Hires Report [Notice PIH 2023-27]

The New Hires Report identifies participant families who have new employment within the last six months. The report is updated monthly.

BHA must review this information at annual reexamination except when BHA uses Safe Harbor verification from another means-tested federal assistance program to determine the family's income.

PHAs that do not require families to undergo interim reexaminations for earned income increases after an interim decrease are not required to review this report between a family's annual reexamination. If BHA requires an interim for increases in earned income after an interim decrease, then BHA must review the report quarterly after the family's interim decrease.

BHA Policy

In accordance with BHA policies in Chapter 9, BHA does not process interim reexaminations for families who have increases in earned income. Except for instances in which BHA uses Safe Harbor income determinations to determine a family's annual income BHA will only review the New Hires Report at annual reexamination.

No Income Reported by HHS or SSA Report

This report is a tool for BHA to identify participants who passed the SSA identity test, but no income information was reported by either HHS or SSA records. This scenario does not mean that they tenant does not have any income. BHA must obtain written, third-party verification of any income reported by the tenant. BHA must identify in its policies and procedures when this report will be pulled [Notice PIH 2023-27].

BHA Policy

BHA will generate the No Income Reported by HHS or SSA Report quarterly and will retain the report.

BHA will re-verify the status of tenants identified on the report quarterly. Based on the information provided by the family and in EIV, BHA may require that family members provide verifications or sign release forms in order to obtain additional verification.

When BHA determines through this report and third-party verification that a family has concealed or under-reported income, corrective action will be taken pursuant to the policies in Chapter 15, Program Integrity.

EIV Identity Verification

The EIV system verifies resident identities against Social Security Administration (SSA) records. These records are compared to HUD data for a match on Social Security number, name, and date of birth.

BHA is required to use EIV's *Identity Verification Report* monthly basis to improve the availability of income information in EIV [Notice PIH 2023-27].

When identity verification for a resident fails, a message will be displayed within the EIV system and no income information will be displayed.

BHA Policy

BHA will identify residents whose identity verification has failed by reviewing EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis.

BHA will attempt to resolve discrepancies by obtaining appropriate documentation from the tenant. When BHA determines that discrepancies exist due to BHA errors, such as spelling errors or incorrect birth dates, the errors will be corrected promptly.

Deceased Tenants Reports [Notice PIH 2012-4 and Notice PIH 2023-27]

The Deceased Tenant Report identifies residents that have been reported by the SSA as deceased. BHA is required to review the report at least quarterly.

BHA Policy

BHA will review the Deceased Tenants Report on a monthly basis.

When the Deceased Tenants Report identifies an individual as being deceased, BHA must immediately send a letter to the head of household or emergency contact person (if the head of household is deceased and there is no other adult household member) to confirm the death of the listed household member. BHA must conduct a home visit to determine if anyone is residing in the unit.

BHA is required to list the move-out date for the family as of the date on which the family or designee of the deceased tenant's estate returned the keys and signed a vacate notice; the date the

public housing lease was terminated; or the date BHA legally regained possession of the unit, whichever occurs first.

When the only remaining household member is the live-in aide, the live-in aide is not entitled or eligible for continued occupancy. BHA may not designate the live-in aide as the new head of household or change the relation code on the Form HUD-50058.

Other EIV Reports [Notice PIH 2023-27]

BHA is required to review the Multiple Subsidy Report at least quarterly and the Failed EIV Pre-Screening and Failed Verification (Failed SSA Identity Test) reports at least monthly.

Upfront Income Verification Using Non-HUD Systems

HUD encourages BHA to utilize other upfront verification sources such as the Work Number and web-based state benefits systems.

BHA Policy

BHA will inform all applicants and residents of its use of the following UIV resources:

Work Number

7-I.F. LEVEL 4 VERIFICATION [Notice PIH 2023-27]

HUD identifies two types of Level 4 verification: written-third party verification from the source and EIV + self-certification.

EIV + Self-Certification

EIV may be used as written third-party verification and may be used to calculate income if the family agrees with the information in EIV and self-certifies that the amount is accurate and representative of current income. This practice is known as *EIV + self-certification*. When calculating income using this method, BHA may use its discretion to determine which method of calculation is reasonable: the last four quarters combined or an average of any number of quarters. The family must be provided with the information from EIV.

BHA Policy

At annual reexamination, if BHA is unable to use a determination of income from a means-tested federal assistance program and if there are no reported changes to an income source, BHA will use EIV + self-certification as verification of employment income, provided the family agrees with the amounts listed in EIV.

BHA will use an average of the last two quarters of income listed in EIV to determine income from employment. BHA will provide the family with the information in EIV. The family will be required to sign a self-certification stating that the amount listed in EIV is accurate and representative of current income. If the family disagrees with the amount in EIV, the amount is not reflective of current income, or if less than two quarters are available in EIV, BHA will use written third-party verification from the source as outlined below.

BHA will not use this method of verification at new admission since EIV is not available

for applicant families or at interim reexamination since the income information in EIV is not current.

Written Third-Party Verification from the Source

Written, third-party verification from the source is also known as “tenant-provided verification.” In order to qualify as written-third party verification from the source, the documents must be original or authentic and (generally) dated within 120 days of the date received by BHA. For fixed-income sources, a statement dated within the appropriate benefit year is acceptable documentation. Documents 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. Income tax returns with corresponding official tax forms and schedules attached and including third-party receipt of transmission for income tax return filed (i.e., tax preparer’s transmittal receipt, summary of transmittal from online source, etc.) are an acceptable form of written, third-party verification.

BHA is required to obtain, at minimum, two current and consecutive pay stubs when calculating income using third-party verification from the source. For new income sources or when two pay stubs are not available, BHA should determine income based on the information from a traditional written, third-party verification form or the best available information.

When the family disputes EIV-reported employment income, BHA uses written third-party verification.

When verification of assets is required, BHA is required to obtain a minimum of one statement that reflects the current balance of banking/financial accounts.

BHA Policy

In general, BHA will use third-party verification from the source in the following circumstances:

- At annual reexamination when EIV + self-certification is not used;
- For all new admissions; and
- For all interim reexaminations.

BHA will not use this method if the PHA is able to use an income determination from a means-tested federal assistance program or if BHA uses EIV + self-certification as outlined above.

In general, third-party documents provided by the family or the source must be dated within 120 days of the date received by BHA. However, for fixed-income sources, a statement dated within the appropriate benefit year is acceptable documentation.

BHA 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. If BHA determines that third-party documents provided by the family are not acceptable, BHA will explain the reason to the family and request additional documentation from the

family or will use a lower form of verification such as a written third-party verification form.

When verification of assets held by a banking or financial institution is required, BHA will obtain one statement that reflects the current balance of the account.

When pay stubs are used, BHA will require the family to provide the two most current, consecutive pay stubs. At BHA's discretion, if additional paystubs are needed due to the family's circumstances (e.g., sporadic income, fluctuating schedule, etc.), BHA may request additional paystubs or a payroll record.

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 BHA by the family. If written third-party verification is not available, BHA 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.

BHA is required to obtain, at minimum, two current and consecutive pay stubs for determining annual income from wages.

BHA 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.

BHA Policy

Third-party documents provided by the family must be dated within 60 days of BHA request date.

If BHA determines that third-party documents provided by the family are not acceptable, BHA will explain the reason to the family and request additional documentation.

As verification of earned income, BHA will require the family to provide the two most current, consecutive pay stubs. At BHA's discretion, if additional paystubs are needed due to the family's circumstances (e.g., sporadic income, fluctuating schedule, etc.), BHA may request additional paystubs or a payroll record.

7-I.G. LEVEL 3 VERIFICATION: WRITTEN, THIRD-PARTY FORM
[Notice PIH 2023-27]

This type of verification is a form developed by BHA and used uniformly for all families when needed to collect information from a third-party source. This is known as “traditional third-party verification.” BHA sends a BHA-developed form directly to the third-party source by mail, fax, or email and the source completes the form by hand (in writing or typeset).

BHA may use this method when higher forms are unavailable or are rejected by BHA or when the family is unable to provide acceptable verification. BHA may skip this level of verification and may instead substitute oral third-party verification before moving to self-certification.

BHA Policy

Typically, the BHA will attempt to send written third-party verification forms to the verification source whenever higher forms of verification are unavailable.

However, on a case-by-case basis, BHA may choose to obtain oral third-party verification without first attempting, and in lieu of, a written-third party verification form.

7-I.H. LEVEL 2: ORAL THIRD-PARTY VERIFICATION [Notice PIH 2023-27]

For third-party oral verification, BHA contacts sources, identified by UIV techniques or by the family, by telephone or in person.

Third-party oral verification may be used when requests for written third-party verification forms have not been returned within a reasonable time—e.g., 10 business days.

BHA must 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.

BHA may skip this level of verification if they attempted written third-party verification via a form and the source did not respond and move directly to self-certification.

BHA Policy

In general, BHA will attempt to obtain written third-party verification via a form from the verification source. If written third-party verification forms are not returned within 10 business days, BHA will accept self-certification from the family without attempting to obtain oral third-party verification.

However, if BHA chooses to obtain oral third-party verification, BHA will document in the file the date and time of the telephone call or visit, the name of the person contacted and the telephone number, as well as the information confirmed.

When Third-Party Verification is Not Required [Notice PIH 2023-27]

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.

BHA Policy

If the family cannot provide original documents, BHA 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.

7-I.I. LEVEL 1: NON-THIRD-PARTY VERIFICATION TECHNIQUE: SELF-CERTIFICATION [Notice PIH 2023-27]

Non-third-party verification consists of a signed statement of reported income and/or expenses. This verification method should be used as a last resort when BHA has not been successful in obtaining information via all other required verification techniques.

Self-certification, however, is an acceptable form of verification when:

- A source of income is fully excluded;
- Net family assets total \$50,000 or less and BHA has adopted a policy to accept self-certification;
- The family declares that they do not have any present ownership in any real property;
- A family states that they have non-recurring income that will not be repeated in the coming year; and/or
- BHA has adopted a policy to implement streamlined annual recertifications for fixed sources of income.

When BHA was required to obtain third-party verification but instead relies on self-certification, the family's file must be documented to explain why third-party verification was not available.

HUD does not require that a self-certification be notarized; however, HUD recommends including language on any self-certification to ensure the certifier understands the consequences of knowingly providing false information.

BHA Policy

When information cannot be verified by a third party or by review of documents, family members will be required to submit self-certifications attesting to the accuracy of the information they have provided to BHA.

BHA 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 BHA and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified.

All self-certifications will include the following language:

“I/We, the undersigned, certify under penalty of perjury that the information provided here is true and correct, to the best of my knowledge and recollection. **WARNING:** Anyone who knowingly submits a false claim or knowingly makes a false statement is subject to criminal and/or civil penalties, including confinement for up to five years, fines, and civil and administrative penalties (18 U.S.C. 287, 1001, 1010, 1012; 31 U.S.C. 3279, 3802).”

PART II: VERIFYING FAMILY INFORMATION

7-II.A. VERIFICATION OF LEGAL IDENTITY

BHA Policy

BHA 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 Vehicle identification card U.S. military discharge (DD 214) Current U.S. passport Current government employer identification card with picture	Certificate of birth Adoption papers Custody agreement Health and Human Services ID Certified school records

If a document submitted by a family is illegible for any reason or otherwise questionable, more than one of these documents may be required.

If none of these documents can be provided and at BHA’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 BHA and be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified.

Legal identity will be verified for all applicants at the time of eligibility determination and in cases where BHA has reason to doubt the identity of a person representing themselves to be a tenant or a member of a tenant family.

7-II.B. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216 and Notice Notice PIH 2023-27]

The family must provide documentation of a valid social security number (SSN) for each member of the household, with the exception of individuals who do not contend eligible immigration status. Exemptions also include existing residents who were at least 62 years of age as of January 31, 2010, and had not previously disclosed an SSN.

BHA 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

BHA may only reject documentation of an SSN provided by an applicant or resident if the document is not an original document, if the original document has been altered, mutilated, or is illegible, or if the document appears to be forged.

While BHA must attempt to gather third-party verification of SSNs prior to admission as listed above, BHA also has the option of accepting a self-certification and a third-party document (such as a bank statement, utility or cell phone bill, or benefit letter) with the applicant's name printed on it to satisfy the SSN disclosure requirement if BHA has exhausted all other attempts to obtain the required documentation. If verifying an individual's SSN using this method, BHA must document why the other SSN documentation was not available.

If the tenant's SSN becomes verified in EIV, then no further verification is required. If the tenant's SSN fails the SSA identity match, then BHA must obtain a valid SSN card issued by the SSA or an original document issued by a federal or state government agency that contains the name of the individual and the SSN of the individual, along with other identifying information of the individual. The tenant's assistance must be terminated if they fail to provide the required documentation.

BHA Policy

BHA will verify an individual's SSN in the situations described above using the method described above as a last resort when no other forms of verification of the individual's SSN are available.

BHA may only reject documentation of an SSN provided by an applicant or resident if the document is not an original document, if the original document has been altered, mutilated, is illegible, or if the document appears to be forged.

BHA Policy

BHA will explain to the applicant or resident the reasons the document is not acceptable and request that the individual obtain and submit acceptable documentation of the SSN to BHA within 90 days.

If an applicant family includes a child under 6 years of age who joined the household within the 6 months prior to the date of program admission, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted and must provide documentation of the child's SSN within 90 days. A 90-day extension will be granted if BHA determines that the resident's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the resident's control.

BHA Policy

BHA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the applicant's control, such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency.

When a resident requests to add a new household member who is at least 6 years of age, or who is under the age of 6 and has an SSN, the resident must provide the complete and accurate SSN assigned to each new member at the time of reexamination or recertification, in addition to the documentation required to verify it. BHA may not add the new household member until such documentation is provided.

When a resident requests to add a new household member who is under the age of 6 and has not been assigned an SSN, the resident must provide the SSN assigned to each new child and the required documentation within 90 days of the child being added to the household. A 90-day extension will be granted if BHA determines that the resident's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the resident's control. During the period BHA is awaiting documentation of the SSN, the child will be counted as part of the assisted household.

BHA Policy

BHA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the resident's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency.

Social security numbers must be verified only once during continuously assisted occupancy.

BHA Policy

BHA will verify each disclosed SSN by:

- Obtaining documentation from applicants and residents that is acceptable as evidence of social security numbers
- Making a copy of the original documentation submitted, returning it to the individual, and retaining a copy in the file folder

Once the individual's verification status is classified as "verified," BHA 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.

BHA Policy

Once an individual's status is classified as "verified" in HUD's EIV system, BHA will not remove and destroy copies of documentation accepted as evidence of social security numbers.

7-II.C. DOCUMENTATION OF AGE

A birth certificate or other official record of birth is the preferred form of age verification for all family members. For elderly family members an original document that provides evidence of the receipt of social security retirement benefits is acceptable.

BHA Policy

If an official record of birth or evidence of social security retirement benefits cannot be provided, BHA will require the family to submit other documents that support the reported age of the family member (e.g., school records, driver's license if birth year is recorded) and to provide a self-certification.

Age must be verified only once during continuously assisted occupancy.

7-II.D. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Applicants and tenants are required to identify the relationship of each household member to the head of household. Definitions of the primary household relationships are provided in Eligibility chapter.

BHA Policy

Family relationships are verified only to the extent necessary to determine a family's eligibility and level of assistance. Certification by the head of household normally is sufficient verification of family relationships.

Marriage

BHA Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If BHA has reasonable doubts about a marital relationship, BHA will require the family to document the marriage with a marriage certificate or other documentation to verify that the couple is married.

In the case of a common law marriage, the couple must demonstrate that they hold themselves to be married (e.g., by telling the community they are married, calling each other husband and wife, using the same last name, filing joint income tax returns).

Separation or Divorce

BHA Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If BHA has reasonable doubts about divorce or separation, BHA will require the family to provide documentation of the divorce or separation with a certified copy of a divorce decree, signed by a court officer; a copy of a court-ordered maintenance or other court record; or other documentation that shows a couple is divorced or separated.

If no court document is available, documentation from a community-based agency will be accepted.

Absence of Adult Member

BHA Policy

If an adult member who was formerly a member of the household is reported to be permanently absent, the family must provide evidence to support that the person is no longer a member of the family (e.g., documentation of another address at which the person resides such as a lease or utility bill), if BHA so requests.

Foster Children and Foster Adults

BHA Policy

Third-party verification from the state or local government agency responsible for the placement of the individual with the family is required.

7-II.E. VERIFICATION OF STUDENT STATUS

BHA Policy

BHA requires families to provide information about the student status of all students who are 18 years of age or older. This information will be verified only if:

- The family claims full-time student status for an adult other than the head, spouse, or co-head.
- The family claims a child care deduction to enable a family member to further their education.
- For LIHTC properties, the household must comply with the Washington State Housing Finance Commission and IRS Tax Credit full-time student rules.

7-II.F. DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY

BHA must verify the existence of a disability in order to allow certain income disallowances and deductions from income. BHA is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability [24 CFR 100.202(c)]. BHA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If BHA receives a verification document that provides such information, BHA will not place this information in the tenant file. Under no circumstances will BHA request a participant's medical record(s). For more information on health care privacy laws, see the Department of Health and Human Services' Web site at www.os.dhhs.gov.

BHA may make 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 about whether an applicant for a dwelling is a current illegal abuser or addict of a controlled substance
- Inquiring about whether an applicant has been convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance

Family Members Receiving SSA Disability Benefits

Verification of 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 or certain income disallowances and deductions [VG, p. 23].

BHA Policy

For family members claiming disability who receive disability benefits from the SSA, BHA will attempt to obtain information about disability benefits through the HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system. If documentation is not available through HUD's EIV System, BHA will request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member claiming disability status. If a family is unable to provide the document(s), BHA will ask the family to obtain a benefit verification letter by either calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213, or by requesting it from www.ssa.gov. Once the family receives the benefit verification letter, they will be required to provide it to BHA.

Family Members Not Receiving SSA Disability Benefits

Receipt of veteran's disability benefits, worker's compensation, or other non-SSA benefits based on the individual's claimed disability are not sufficient verification that the individual meets HUD's definition of disability in 24 CFR 5.403, necessary to qualify for waiting list preferences or certain income disallowances and deductions.

BHA Policy

For family members claiming disability who do not receive SSI or other disability payments from the SSA, a knowledgeable professional must provide third-party verification that the family member meets the HUD definition of disability. See the Eligibility chapter for the HUD definition of disability. The knowledgeable professional will verify whether the family member does or does not meet the HUD definition.

7-II.G. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5.508]

Overview

Housing assistance is not available to persons who are not citizens, nationals, or eligible immigrants. Prorated assistance is provided for "mixed families" containing both eligible and ineligible persons. Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of eligibility requirements. This

chapter discusses HUD and BHA 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.

BHA may request verification of the declaration by requiring presentation of a birth certificate, United States passport or other appropriate documentation.

BHA Policy

Family members who claim U.S. citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless BHA 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.

BHA 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 Section 7-II.C. of this ACOP. No further verification of eligible immigration status is required.

For family members under the age of 62 who claim to be eligible immigrants, BHA must verify immigration status with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

BHA will follow all USCIS protocols for verification of eligible immigration status.

7-II.H. VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCE STATUS

BHA must verify any preferences claimed by an applicant that determined their placement on the waiting list.

BHA Policy

BHA offers a preference for working families, described in Section 4-III.B.

BHA may verify that the family qualifies for the working family preference based on the family's submission of the working member's most recent paycheck stub indicating that the working member works at least 20 hours per week. The paycheck stub must have been issued to the working member within the last thirty days.

BHA may also seek third party verification from the employer of the head, spouse, cohead or sole member of a family requesting a preference as a working family.

BHA also offers a preference for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking as described in Section 4-III.B. To verify that applicants qualify for the preference, the PHA will follow documentation requirements outlined in Section 16-VII.D.

PART III: VERIFYING INCOME AND ASSETS

Chapter 6 of this ACOP describes in detail the types of income that are included and excluded and how assets and income from assets are handled. Any assets and income reported by the family must be verified. This part provides BHA policies that supplement the general verification procedures specified in Part I of this chapter.

7-III.A. EARNED INCOME

Tips

BHA Policy

Unless tip income is included in a family member's W-2 by the employer, persons who work in industries where tips are standard will be required to sign a certified estimate of tips received for the prior year and tips anticipated to be received in the coming year.

Wages

BHA Policy

For wages other than tips, the family must provide originals of the two most current, consecutive pay stubs or a current w-2.

7-III.B. BUSINESS AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME

BHA must obtain written, third-party verification when the income type is not available in EIV. This includes income from self-employment.

BHA Policy

Business owners and self-employed persons will be required to provide:

Income tax returns with corresponding official tax forms and schedules attached and including third-party receipt of transmission for income tax return filed (i.e., tax preparer's transmittal receipt, summary of transmittal from online source, etc.).

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.

For self-employed individuals who claim they do not have to file tax returns, BHA will obtain a completed copy of IRS Form 4506-T to verify that no return has been filed.

For those employed in "gig employment" (i.e., those in formal agreements with on-demand companies such as Uber, Lyft, or DoorDash), BHA will provide a format for the individual to declare their income and expenses. BHA will also review the printed statement of monthly income from the applicable app for all hours worked and pay received as well as Schedule C of the individual's tax return and the corresponding IRS Form 1099 or 1099k.

BHA 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 BHA may request documents that support submitted financial statements such as manifests, appointment books, cash books, or bank statements.

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

7-III.C. PERIODIC PAYMENTS AND PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS

For policies governing streamlined income determinations for fixed sources of income, please see Chapter 9.

Social Security/SSI Benefits

Verification requirements for Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits differ for applicants and participants.

For applicants, since EIV does not contain SS or SSI benefit information, BHA must ask applicants to provide a copy of their current SS and/or SSI benefit letter (dated within the last 120 calendar days) for each family member that receives SS and/or SSI benefits. If the family is unable to provide the document or documents, BHA should help the applicant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's website at www.ssa.gov or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. BHA must obtain the original benefit letter from the applicant, make a photocopy of the document for the file, and return the original to the family.

For participants, the PHA must obtain information through the HUD EIV system and confirm with the participants that the current listed benefit amount is correct.

- If the participant agrees with the amount reported in EIV, BHA must use the EIV-reported gross benefit amount to calculate annual income from Social Security. BHA is required to use the EIV-reported SS and SSI benefit amounts when calculating income unless the tenant disputes the EIV-reported amount. For example, an SSA benefit letter may list the monthly benefit amount as \$450.80 and EIV displays the amount as \$450.00. BHA must use the EIV-reported amount unless the participant disputes the amount.
- If the participant disputes the EIV-reported benefit amount, or if benefit information is not available in EIV, BHA must request a current SSA benefit verification letter (dated within the last 120 calendar days) from each family member that receives SS and/or SSI benefits. If the family is unable to provide the document or documents, BHA should help the participant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's website at www.ssa.gov or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. BHA must obtain the original benefit letter from the participant, make a photocopy of the document for the file, and return the original to the family.
- Photocopies of social security checks or bank statements are not acceptable forms of verification for SS/SSI benefits.

7-III.D. ALIMONY OR CHILD SUPPORT

Annual income includes “all amounts received,” not the amount that a family may be legally entitled to receive but which they do 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. A copy of a court order or other written payment agreement alone may not be sufficient verification of amounts received by a family.

BHA Policy

The methods BHA will use to verify alimony and child support payments differ depending on whether the family declares that it receives regular payments.

If the family declares that it **receives regular payments**, verification will be obtained in the following order of priority:

Copies of the receipts and/or payment stubs for the 12 months prior to BHA request

Third-party verification form from the state or local child support enforcement agency

Third-party verification form from the person paying the support

Family's self-certification of amount received

If the family declares that it **receives irregular or no payments**, in addition to the verification process listed above, the family must provide evidence that it has taken all reasonable efforts to collect amounts due. This may include:

- A statement from any agency responsible for enforcing payment that shows the family has requested enforcement and is cooperating with all enforcement efforts
- If the family has made independent efforts at collection, a written statement from the attorney or other collection entity that has assisted the family in these efforts

Note: Families are not required to undertake independent enforcement action.

7-III.E. NONRECURRING INCOME [Notice PIH 2023-27]

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. BHA may accept a self-certification from the family stating that the income will not be repeated in the coming year.

BHA Policy

BHA will accept self-certification from the family stating that income will not be repeated in the coming year. However, BHA may choose, on a case-by-case basis, to require third-party verification that income sources will not be repeated in the coming year.

7-III.F. ASSETS AND INCOME FROM ASSETS

Net Family Assets [24 CFR 5.603]

At admission and reexam, for families with net assets totaling \$50,000 or less (adjusted annually), BHA may, but is not required to, accept the family's self-certification that the family's assets do not exceed \$50,000 without taking any additional steps to verify the accuracy of the declaration. The declaration must include the amount of income the family expects to receive from assets which must be included in the family's income. This includes declaring income from checking and savings accounts which, although excluded from the calculation of net family assets (because the combined value of non-necessary personal property does not exceed \$50,000), may generate asset income. BHA must clarify during the self-certification process which assets are included/excluded from net family assets.

For PHAs that choose to accept self-certification, the PHA is required to obtain third-party verification of all assets, regardless of the amount, at least once every three years.

PHAs who choose not to accept self-certifications of assets must verify all families' assets on an annual basis.

When net family assets have a total value over \$50,000, BHA may not rely on the family's self-certification. Third-party verification of assets is required when net family assets exceed \$50,000, adjusted annually by HUD.

When verification of assets is required, BHA is required to obtain a minimum of one statement that reflects the current balance of banking/financial accounts.

BHA Policy

For families with net assets totaling \$50,000 or less, BHA will accept the family's self-certification of the value of family assets and anticipated asset income. 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. BHA reserves the right to require additional verification in situations where the accuracy of the declaration is in question. Any income the family expects to receive from assets will be included in the family's annual income. The family will be required to provide third-party verification of net family assets every three years.

When verification is required, in determining the value of checking or savings accounts, BHA will use the current balance.

In determining the anticipated income from an interest-bearing checking or savings account when verification is required and the rate of return is known, BHA will multiply the current balance of the account by the current rate of interest paid on the account. If a checking account does not bear interest, the anticipated income from the account is zero.

Self-Certification of Real Property Ownership [24 CFR 5.618(b)(2)]

BHA must determine whether a family has present ownership in real property that is suitable for occupancy for purposes of determining whether the family is compliant with the asset limitation described in Chapters 3 and 13. At admission and reexam, BHA may accept a self-certification from the family that the family does not have any present ownership in any real property that is suitable for occupancy. If the family declares they have present ownership in real property, BHA must obtain third-party verification.

BHA Policy

Both at admission and reexam, BHA will accept self-certification from the family that the family does not have any present ownership in any real property. The certification will state that the family does not have any present ownership interest in any real property and must be signed by all family members 18 years of age and older. BHA reserves the right to require additional verification in situations where the accuracy of the declaration is in question.

If the family declares they have a present ownership in real property, BHA will obtain third-party verification of the following factors: whether the family has the legal right to reside in the property; whether the family has effective legal authority to sell the property; and whether the property is suitable for occupancy by the family as a residence. However, in cases where a family member is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, BHA will comply with confidentiality requirements under 24 CFR 5.2007 and will accept a self-certification.

7-III.G. 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. HUD permits BHA 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]. BHA needs to verify only those certifications that warrant documentation [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

BHA Policy

BHA will accept a self-certification from a family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value.

BHA will verify the value of assets disposed of only if:

- BHA 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 BHA verified this amount. Now the person reports that she has given this \$10,000 to her son. BHA has a reasonable estimate of the value of the asset; therefore, re-

verification 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, BHA will verify the value of this asset.

7-III.H. NET INCOME FROM RENTAL PROPERTY

BHA Policy

The family must provide:

- A current executed lease for the property that shows the rental amount or certification from the current tenant
- A self-certification from the family members engaged in the rental of property providing an estimate of expenses for the coming year and the most recent IRS Form 1040 with Schedule E (Rental Income).
- If Schedule E was not prepared, BHA 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.I. FEDERAL TAX REFUNDS OR REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS [Notice PIH 2023-27]

BHA not required to verify the amount of the family's federal tax refund or refundable tax credit(s) if the family's net assets are equal to or below \$50,000 (adjusted annually for inflation), even in years when full verification of assets is required or if BHA does not accept self-certification of assets. BHA must verify the amount of the family's federal tax refund or refundable tax credits if the family's net assets are greater than \$50,000.

7-III.J. RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

BHA Policy

BHA 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.K. INCOME FROM EXCLUDED SOURCES

A detailed discussion of excluded income is provided in Chapter 6, Part I.

HUD guidance on verification of excluded income draws a distinction between income which is fully excluded and income which is only partially excluded.

For fully excluded income, BHA is not required to follow the verification hierarchy, document why third-party verification is not available, or report the income on the 50058. Fully excluded income is defined as income that is entirely excluded from the annual income determination (for example, food stamps, earned income of a minor, or foster care funds)

BHA may accept a family's signed application or reexamination form as self-certification of fully excluded income. BHA does not have to require additional documentation. However, if there is any doubt that a source of income qualifies for fully exclusion, BHA has the option of requiring additional verification.

For partially excluded income, BHA **is** required to follow the verification hierarchy and all applicable regulations, and to report the income on the 50058. Partially excluded income is defined as income where only a certain portion of what is reported by the family qualifies to be excluded and the remainder is included in annual income (for example, the income of an adult full-time student).

BHA Policy

BHA will accept the family's self-certification as verification of fully excluded income. BHA may request additional documentation if necessary to document the income source.

BHA will verify the source and amount of partially excluded income as described in Part I of this chapter.

7-III.L. ZERO ANNUAL INCOME STATUS

A *zero income review* is an assessment, sometimes periodic, performed by BHA of the income of a family who claims that they do not receive income from any source, including from assets. During such reviews, it is common for BHA to request that families complete and sign a worksheet explaining how they pay for the household's expenses. HUD does not require BHA to conduct periodic zero income reviews. In calculating annual income, BHA must not assign monetary value to nonmonetary in-kind donations from a food bank or similar organization received by the family [24 CFR 5.609(b)(24)(vi)]. PHAs that perform zero income reviews must update local discretionary policies, procedures, and forms. Families who begin receiving income which does not trigger an interim reexamination should no longer be considered zero income even though the family's income is not reflected on the Form HUD-50058.

BHA Policy

BHA will check UIV sources and/or request information from third-party sources to verify that certain forms of income such as unemployment benefits, TANF, SS, SSI, earned income, child support, etc., are not being received by families claiming to have zero annual income.

Families reporting zero income will be required to complete a BHA-approved zero income worksheet and income certification on a quarterly basis.

BHA will only conduct interims in accordance with PHA policy in Chapter 9.

7-III.M. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE [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. 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)]. 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)].

BHA Policy

BHA will request written third-party verification of both the source and the amount of student financial assistance. 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, unless the student's only source of assistance is assistance under Title IV of the HEA, BHA will request written verification of the cost of the student's tuition, books, supplies, room and board, and other required fees and charges to the student from the educational institution.

If BHA is unable to obtain third-party written verification of the requested information, BHA will pursue other forms of verification following the verification hierarchy in section 7-I.B.

PART IV: VERIFYING MANDATORY DEDUCTIONS

7-IV.A. DEPENDENT AND ELDERLY/DISABLED HOUSEHOLD DEDUCTIONS

The dependent and elderly/disabled family deductions require only that BHA 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 for a full discussion of this deduction. BHA will verify that:

- Any person under the age of 18 for whom the dependent deduction is claimed is not the head, spouse or co-head of the family and is not a foster child
- Any person age 18 or older for whom the dependent deduction is claimed is not a foster adult or live-in aide, and is a person with a disability or a full time student

Elderly/Disabled Family Deduction

See the Eligibility chapter for a definition of elderly and disabled families and Section 6-II.C. for a discussion of the deduction. BHA will verify that the head, spouse, or co-head is 62 years of age or older or a person with disabilities.

7-IV.B. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE EXPENSE DEDUCTION

Policies related to medical expenses are found in Chapter 6. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I.

BHA must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) ([Pub. L. 104-191](#), 110 Stat. 1936) and the Privacy Act of 1974 (Pub. L. 93-579, 88 Stat. 1896) when requesting documentation to determine unreimbursed health and medical care expenses. BHA may not request documentation beyond what is sufficient to determine anticipated health and medical care costs. Before placing bills and documentation in the tenant file, BHA must redact all personally identifiable information [FR Notice 2/14/23].

Amount of Expense

BHA Policy

Medical expenses will be verified through:

- Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as pharmacy printouts or receipts.
- BHA will make a best effort to determine what expenses from the past are likely to continue to occur in the future. BHA 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 verification is not possible, written family certification as to costs anticipated to be incurred during the upcoming 12 months.

- Obtain third-party verification form signed by the provider, when possible.
- Written third-party verification forms, if the family is unable to provide acceptable documentation.
- If third-party verification or document review is not possible, written family certification as to costs anticipated to be incurred during the upcoming 12 months

• Before placing bills and documentation in the tenant file, BHA will redact all personally identifiable information.

If BHA receives documentation from a verification source that contains the individual's specific diagnosis, information regarding the individual's treatment, and/or information regarding the nature or severity of the person's disability, BHA will immediately dispose of this confidential information; this information will never be maintained in the individual's file. If the information needs to be disposed of, BHA will note in the individual's file that verification was received, the date received, and the name and address of the person/organization that provided the verification. Under no circumstances will BHA include an applicant's or resident's medical records in the file [Notice PIH 2010-26].

In addition, BHA 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 health and medical care expense deduction is permitted only for households in which the head, spouse, or cohead is at least 62 or a person with disabilities. BHA will verify that the family meets the definition of an elderly or disabled family provided in the Eligibility chapter, and as described in Chapter 7 (7-IV.A) of this plan.

Qualified Expenses

To be eligible for the health and medical care expense deduction, the costs must qualify as medical expenses. See Chapter 6 for BHA's policy on what counts as a medical expense.

Unreimbursed Expenses

To be eligible for the health and medical care expense deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

BHA Policy

The family will be required to certify that the medical expenses are not paid or reimbursed to the family from any source. If expenses are verified through a third party, the third party must certify that the expenses are not paid or reimbursed from any other source.

Expenses Incurred in Past Years

BHA Policy

When anticipated costs are related to on-going payment of medical bills incurred in past years, BHA 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

Expenses Incurred in Past Years

BHA Policy

When anticipated costs are related to on-going payment of medical bills incurred in past years, BHA 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 Section 6-II.E. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I.

BHA must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) ([Pub. L. 104-191](#), 110 Stat. 1936) and the Privacy Act of 1974 (Pub. L. 93-579, 88 Stat. 1896) when requesting documentation to determine unreimbursed auxiliary apparatus or attendance care costs. BHA may not request documentation beyond what is sufficient to determine anticipated reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus costs. Before placing bills and documentation in the tenant file, BHA must redact all personally identifiable information [FR Notice 2/14/23].

Amount of Expense

Attendant Care

BHA Policy

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.

Before placing bills and documentation in the tenant file, BHA will redact all personally identifiable

information.

If BHA receives documentation from a verification source that contains the individual's specific diagnosis, information regarding the individual's treatment, and/or information regarding the nature or severity of the person's disability, BHA will immediately dispose of this confidential information; this information will never be maintained in the individual's file. If the information needs to be disposed of, BHA will note in the individual's file that verification was received, the date received, and the name and address of the person/organization that provided the verification. Under no circumstances will BHA include an applicant's or resident's medical records in the file [Notice PIH 2010-26].

Auxiliary Apparatus

BHA Policy

Expenses for auxiliary apparatus will be verified through:

- Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as billing statements for purchase of auxiliary apparatus, or other evidence of monthly payments or total payments that will be due for the apparatus during the upcoming 12 months.
- Third-party verification form signed by the provider if family-provided documents are not available.
- If third-party verification or document review is not possible, written family certification of estimated apparatus costs for the upcoming 12 months.

In addition, BHA must verify that:

- The family member for whom the expense is incurred is a person with disabilities (as described in Section 7-II.F above).
- The expense permits a family member, or members, to work (as described in Chapter 6.).
- The expense is not reimbursed from another source (as described in Chapter 6.).

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. BHA will verify that the expense is incurred for a person with disabilities (See Section 7-II.F.).

Family Member(s) Permitted to Work

BHA must verify that the expenses claimed actually enable a family member, or members, (including the person with disabilities) to work.

BHA Policy

BHA 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 Section 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.

BHA Policy

The family will be required to certify that attendant care or auxiliary apparatus expenses are not paid by or reimbursed to the family from any source.

7-IV.D. CHILD CARE EXPENSES

Policies related to child care expenses are found in Chapter 6. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I. In addition, BHA must verify that:

- The child is eligible for care (12 years or younger).
- The costs claimed are not reimbursed.
- The costs enable a family member to work, actively seek work, or further his or her education.
- The costs are for an allowable type of child care.
- The costs are reasonable.

Eligible Child

To be eligible for the child care deduction, the costs must be incurred for the care of a child under the age of 13. BHA will verify that the child being cared for (including foster children) is under the age of 13 (See 7-II.C.).

Unreimbursed Expense

To be eligible for the child care deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

BHA Policy

The family and the child care provider will be asked to certify that, to the best of the provider's knowledge, the child care expenses are not paid by or reimbursed to the family from any source.

Pursuing an Eligible Activity

BHA 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.

BHA Policy

Information to be Gathered

BHA 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, BHA will use documentation from a state or local agency that monitors work-related requirements (e.g. welfare or unemployment). In such cases BHA will request family-provided verification from the agency of the member's job seeking efforts to date and require the family to submit to BHA any reports provided to the other agency.

In the event third-party verification is not available, BHA will provide the family with a form on which the family member must record job search efforts. BHA will review this information at each subsequent reexamination for which this deduction is claimed.

Furthering Education

BHA will request third-party documentation to verify that the person permitted to further their education by the child care is enrolled and provide information about the timing of classes for which the person is registered. The documentation may be provided by the family.

Gainful Employment

BHA will seek third-party verification of the work schedule of the person who is permitted to work by the child care. In cases in which two or more family members could be permitted to work, the work schedules for all relevant family members may be verified. The documentation may be provided by the family.

Allowable Type of Child Care

The type of care to be provided is determined by the family, but must fall within certain guidelines, as discussed in Chapter 6.

BHA Policy

BHA will verify that the type of child care selected by the family is allowable, as described in Chapter 6.

BHA 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).

BHA will verify that the child care provider is not an assisted family member. Verification will be made through the head of household's declaration of family members who are expected to reside in the unit.

Reasonableness of Expenses

Only reasonable child care costs can be deducted.

BHA Policy

The actual costs the family incurs will be compared with BHA'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, BHA 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)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All noncitizens claiming eligible status must sign a declaration of eligible immigrant status on a form acceptable to PHA. • Except for persons 62 or older, all noncitizens must sign a verification consent form • Additional documents are required based upon the person's status. 	
<p>Elderly Noncitizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<p>All other Noncitizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noncitizens that claim eligible immigration status also must present the applicable USCIS document. Acceptable USCIS documents are listed below. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card (for permanent resident aliens) • Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record annotated with one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “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” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record with no annotation accompanied by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-688 Temporary Resident Card annotated “Section 245A” or “Section 210” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-688B Employment Authorization Card annotated “Provision of Law 274a. 12(11)” or “Provision of Law 274a.12”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <i>Federal Register</i> 	

Chapter 8

LEASING AND INSPECTIONS

[24 CFR 5, Subpart G; 24 CFR 966, Subpart A]

INTRODUCTION

Public housing leases are the contractual basis of the legal relationship between BHA and the tenant. All units must be occupied pursuant to a dwelling lease agreement that complies with HUD regulations.

HUD regulations also require BHA to inspect each dwelling unit prior to move-in, at move-out, and annually during the period of occupancy. In addition, BHA may conduct additional inspections in accordance with BHA policy.

This chapter is divided into two parts as follows:

Part I: Leasing. This part describes pre-leasing activities and BHA's policies pertaining to lease execution, lease modification, and payments under the lease.

Part II: Inspections. This part describes BHA's policies for inspecting dwelling units and notifying families of HUD REAC NSPIRE inspections .

PART I: LEASING

8-I.A. OVERVIEW

An eligible family may occupy a public housing dwelling unit under the terms of a lease. The lease must meet all regulatory requirements, and must also comply with applicable state and local laws and codes.

The term of the lease must be for a period of 12 months. The lease must be renewed automatically for another 12-month term, except that the PHA may not renew the lease if the family has violated the community service requirement and if the family is determined to be over income for 24 consecutive months [24 CFR 966.4(a)(2)].

BHA must adopt smoke-free policies, which must be implemented no later than July 30, 2018. The policy is attached as Exhibit 8-1.

Part I of this chapter contains regulatory information on leasing, where applicable, as well as BHA's leasing policies.

For policies on lease requirements for families whose incomes have exceeded the over-income limit for 24 consecutive months, see 13-III.C., Over-Income Families.

8-I.B. LEASE ORIENTATION

BHA Policy

After unit acceptance but prior to occupancy, a BHA representative will conduct a lease orientation with the family. The head of household or spouse is required to attend.

Orientation Agenda

BHA Policy

When families attend the lease orientation, they will be provided with:

- A copy of the lease
- A copy of BHA's grievance procedure
- A copy of the house rules
- A copy of BHA's schedule of maintenance charges
- A copy of "Is Fraud Worth It?" (form HUD-1141-OIG), which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse
- A copy of "What You Should Know about EIV," a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2017-12
- A copy of the form HUD-5380, VAWA Notice of Occupancy Rights
- A copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking
- A copy of BHA's smoke-free policy

- A notice that includes the procedures for requesting relief and BHA's criteria for granting requests for relief for excess utility surcharges
- The HUD pamphlet on lead-based paint entitled, "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home."

Topics to be discussed and explained to all families include:

- Applicable deposits and all other charges
- Review and explanation of lease provisions
- Unit maintenance requests and work orders
- BHA's interim reporting requirements
- Review and explanation of occupancy forms
- Community service requirements
- Family choice of rent
- VAWA protections
- Smoke-free policies

8-I.C. EXECUTION OF LEASE

The lease must be executed by the tenant and BHA, except for automatic renewals of a lease [24 CFR 966.4(a)(3)].

A lease is executed at the time of admission for all new residents. A new lease is also executed at the time of transfer from one BHA unit to another.

The lease must state the composition of the household as approved by BHA (family members and any BHA-approved live-in aide) [24 CFR 966.4(a)(1)(v)]. See Section 8-I.D. for policies regarding changes in family composition during the lease term.

BHA Policy

The head of household, spouse or co-head, and all other adult (18 and over) members of the household will be required to sign the public housing lease prior to admission. An appointment will be scheduled for the parties to execute the lease. The head of household will be provided a copy of the executed lease and BHA will retain a copy in the resident's file.

Files for households that include a live-in aide will contain file documentation, signed by the live-in aide, that the live-in aide is not a party to the lease and is not entitled to BHA assistance. The live-in aide is only approved to live in the unit while serving as the care attendant for the family member who requires care.

8-I.D. MODIFICATIONS TO THE LEASE

The lease may be modified at any time by written agreement of the tenant and BHA [24 CFR

966.4(a)(3)].

Modifications to the Lease Form

BHA may modify its lease from time to time. However, BHA must give residents 60 days advance notice of the proposed changes and an opportunity to comment on the changes. BHA must also consider any comments before formally adopting a new lease [24 CFR 966.3].

After proposed changes have been incorporated into the lease and approved by the Board, each family must be notified at least 60 days in advance of the effective date of the new lease or lease revision. A resident's refusal to accept permissible and reasonable lease modifications that are made in accordance with HUD requirements, or are required by HUD, is grounds for termination of tenancy [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(iii)(E)].

BHA Policy

The family will have 60 days to accept and sign the revised lease. If the family does not accept the offer of the revised lease within that 60 day timeframe, the family's tenancy will be terminated for other good cause in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

Schedules of special charges and rules and regulations are subject to modification or revision. Because these schedules are incorporated into the lease by reference, residents and resident organizations must be provided at least thirty days written notice of the reason(s) for any proposed modifications or revisions, and must be given an opportunity to present written comments. The notice must be delivered directly or mailed to each tenant; or posted in at least three conspicuous places within each structure or building in which the affected dwelling units are located, as well as in a conspicuous place at the project office, if any, or if none, a similar central business location within the project. Comments must be taken into consideration before any proposed modifications or revisions become effective [24 CFR 966.5].

After the proposed revisions become effective they must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the project office and must be furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

BHA Policy

When BHA proposes to modify or revise schedules of special charges or rules and regulations, BHA will post a copy of the notice at the leasing office, and will mail a copy of the notice to each resident family. Documentation of proper notice will be included in each resident file.

Other Modifications

BHA Policy

The lease will be amended to reflect all changes in family composition.

If, for any reason, any member of the household ceases to reside in the unit, the lease will be amended by drawing a line through the person's name. The head of household and BHA will be required to initial and date the change.

If a new household member is approved by BHA to reside in the unit, the person's name and birth date will be added to the lease. The head of household and BHA will be required to initial and date the change. If the new member of the household is an adult, s/he will also be

required to sign and date the lease.

Policies governing when and how changes in family composition must be reported are contained in Chapter 9.

8-I.E. SECURITY DEPOSITS [24 CFR 966.4(b)(5)]

At the option of BHA, the lease may require security deposits. The amount of the security deposit cannot exceed one month's rent or a reasonable fixed amount as determined by BHA. BHA may allow for gradual accumulation of the security deposit by the family, or the family may be required to pay the security deposit in full prior to occupancy. Subject to applicable laws, interest earned on security deposits may be refunded to the tenant after vacating the unit, or used for tenant services or activities.

BHA Policy

Residents must pay a security deposit to the PHA at the time of admission. The amount of the security deposit will be equal to the family's total tenant payment at the time of move-in, and must be paid in full prior to occupancy. If resident is leasing a LIHTC unit, the amount of security deposit will be specified in the lease.

BHA will hold the security deposit for the period the family occupies the unit. BHA will not use the security deposit for rent or other charges while the resident is living in the unit.

Within 30 days of move-out, BHA will, at a minimum, send a disposition informing the resident of the amount of the security deposit including any interest earned on the security deposit, less any amount needed to pay the cost of unpaid rent, damages listed on the move-out inspection report that exceed normal wear and tear, and other charges due under the lease.

BHA will provide the resident with a written list of any charges against the security deposit within 14 days of the move-out. If the resident disagrees with the amount charged, BHA will provide a meeting to discuss the charges.

If the resident transfers to another unit, BHA will transfer the security deposit to the new unit. The tenant will be billed for any maintenance or other charges due for the "old" unit.

8-I.F. PAYMENTS UNDER THE LEASE

Rent Payments [24 CFR 966.4(b)(1)]

Families must pay the amount of the monthly tenant rent determined by BHA in accordance with HUD regulations and other requirements. The amount of the tenant rent is subject to change in accordance with HUD requirements.

The lease must specify the initial amount of the tenant rent at the beginning of the initial lease term, and BHA must give written notice stating any change in the amount of tenant rent and when the change is effective.

BHA Policy

The tenant rent is due and payable at the BHA-designated location on the first of every month.

If the first falls on a weekend or holiday, the rent is due and payable on the first business day thereafter.

If a family's tenant rent changes, BHA will notify the family of the new amount and the effective date by sending a notice of rent adjustment which will become an attachment to the lease.

Late Fees and Nonpayment [24 CFR 966.4(b)(3); Notice PIH 2021-29]

At the option of BHA, the lease may provide for payment of penalties when the family is late in paying tenant rent [24 CFR 966.4(b)(3)].

The lease must provide that late payment fees are not due and collectible until two weeks BHA gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action, and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right for a hearing under BHA grievance procedures. BHA must not take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired or, if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe, the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)].

BHA Policy

If the family fails to pay their rent by the fifth day of the month, and BHA has not agreed to accept payment at a later date, a 30-day Notice to Vacate (during nationwide emergency orders) or a 14-day Notice to Vacate (upon expiration of nationwide emergency orders) will be issued to the resident for failure to pay rent, demanding payment in full or the surrender of the premises. Payments made after the 14-day notice has been issued will only be accepted in the form of a money order or cashier's check.

In addition, if the resident fails to make payment by the end of office hours on the fifth day of the month, a late fee as determined by the lease will be charged. Notices of late fees will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse action. Rent and late fees are due and payable immediately but no later than 10 days after the notice of late fees. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, BHA may not take action for nonpayment of the fee until the conclusion of the grievance process. If the resident can document financial hardship, the late fee may be waived on a case-by-case basis.

When a check is returned for insufficient funds or is written on a closed account, the rent will be considered unpaid and a returned check fee as determined by the lease will be charged to the family. Notices of returned check/late fees will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse action. Rent and other fees are due and payable immediately but no later than 10 days after the notice of late fees.

Excess Utility Charges

If BHA charges the tenant for consumption of excess utilities, the lease must state the basis for the determination of such charges. The imposition of charges for consumption of excess utilities is permissible only if the charges are determined by an individual check meter servicing the leased unit or result from the use of major tenant-supplied appliances [24 CFR 966.4(b)(2)].

Schedules of special charges for utilities that are required to be incorporated in the lease by reference must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the development office and must be

furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

The lease must provide that charges for excess utility consumption are not due and collectible until two weeks after the PHA gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action, and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right to a hearing under BHA grievance procedures. BHA must not take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired or, if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe, the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)].

BHA Policy

When applicable, families will be charged for excess utility usage according to BHA's current posted schedule. Notices of excess utility charges will be mailed monthly and will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse actions. Charges are due and payable 14 days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, BHA may not take action for nonpayment of the charges until the conclusion of the grievance process.

Nonpayment of excess utility charges is a violation of the lease and is grounds for eviction.

BHA may grant requests for relief from surcharges from excess utility consumption of BHA-furnished utilities as a reasonable accommodation where BHA deems an exception is appropriate to meet the needs of elderly, ill or disabled residents. In determining whether to grant this request, BHA will consider special factors affecting utility usage that are not within the control of the resident, such as the need for medical equipment. Residents may request relief in accordance with Section 2-II.C. of this ACOP. BHA will process such requests in accordance with Section 2-II.E. of this ACOP.

Notice of the availability of procedures for requesting relief (including BHA's representative with whom initial contact may be made by the resident) and BHA's criteria for granting requests, will be included in each notice to resident of changes in utility allowances or surcharges as well as to new residents as part of the lease orientation.

Maintenance and Damage Charges

If BHA charges the tenant for maintenance and repair beyond normal wear and tear, the lease must state the basis for the determination of such charges [24 CFR 966.4(b)(2)].

Schedules of special charges for services and repairs which are required to be incorporated in the lease by reference must be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the development office and must be furnished to applicants and tenants on request [24 CFR 966.5].

The lease must provide that charges for maintenance and repair beyond normal wear and tear are not due and collectible until two weeks after BHA gives written notice of the charges. The written notice is considered an adverse action and must meet the requirements governing a notice of adverse action [24 CFR 966.4(b)(4)].

The notice of proposed adverse action must identify the specific grounds for the action and inform the family of their right for a hearing under BHA grievance procedures. BHA must not take the proposed action until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired or, if a hearing was requested within the required timeframe, the grievance process has been completed [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)].

BHA Policy

Maintenance and Damage charges will be reviewed annually and will be posted in the site manager's office. The schedule of charges will be furnished to applicants and tenants upon request.

When applicable, families will be charged for maintenance and/or damages according to BHA's current schedule. Work that is not covered in the schedule will be charged based on the actual cost of labor and materials to make needed repairs (including overtime, if applicable).

Notices of maintenance and damage charges will be mailed and will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse actions. Charges are due and payable 21 calendar days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, BHA may not take action for nonpayment of the charges until the conclusion of the grievance process.

Nonpayment of maintenance and damage charges is a violation of the lease and is grounds for eviction.

PART II: INSPECTIONS

8-II.A. OVERVIEW

BHA is obligated to maintain safe and habitable dwelling units and to make necessary repairs to dwelling units [24 CFR 966.4(e)]. The National Standards for the Inspection Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) are the standard under which HUD housing units, including those under the public housing program, are inspected. NSPIRE ensures that residents of public housing live in safe, habitable dwellings, and the items and components located inside, outside, and within the units are functionally adequate, operable, and free of health and safety hazards [24 CFR 5.703(a)]. Further, units must comply with state and local code requirements (such as fire, mechanical, plumbing, carbon monoxide, property maintenance, and residential code) [24 CFR 5.703(f)] as well as with all requirements related to the evaluation and control of lead-based paint hazards [24 CFR 5.703(e)(2)].

Under NSPIRE, public housing units are subject to three types of inspections: annual self-inspections, NSPIRE Inspections (which are used to assess and score BHA under the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS)), and NSPIRE Plus Inspections (which are triggered by poor property conditions). HUD regulations also require BHA to inspect each public housing unit prior to move-in, and at move-out. BHA may require additional inspections, in accordance with BHA Policy. This part contains BHA's policies governing inspections by BHA and HUD, notification of unit entry, and inspection repair timelines. This section discusses inspections conducted by BHA (including annual self-inspections) and inspections conducted by HUD REAC.

8-II.B. PHA CONDUCTED INSPECTIONS

BHA is obligated to maintain dwelling units and the project in safe and habitable condition and to make necessary repairs to dwelling units [24 CFR 966.4(e)].

Types of BHA-Conducted Inspections

Move-In Inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]

The lease must require BHA and the family to inspect the dwelling unit prior to occupancy in order to determine the condition of the unit and equipment in the unit. A copy of the initial inspection, signed by BHA and the tenant, must be provided to the tenant and retained in the resident file.

BHA Policy

Any adult family member may attend the initial inspection and sign the inspection form for the head of household.

Move-Out Inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]

BHA must inspect the unit at the time the resident vacates the unit and must allow the resident to participate in the inspection if they wish, unless the tenant vacates without notice to BHA. BHA must provide to the tenant a statement of any charges to be made for maintenance and damage beyond normal wear and tear.

The difference between the condition of the unit at move-in and move-out establishes the basis for any charges against the security deposit so long as the work needed exceeds that for normal wear

and tear.

BHA Policy

When applicable, BHA will provide the tenant with a statement of charges to be made for maintenance and damage beyond normal wear and tear, within 21 days of move-out inspection.

Self-Inspections [24 CFR 5.707]

Annually BHA is required to self-inspect their properties, including all units, to ensure units are maintained in accordance with NSPIRE standards in 24 CFR 5.703. As part of the self-inspection process, BHA must ensure that deficiencies previously cited and repaired as a result of an NSPIRE inspection have not subsequently failed.

BHA must maintain the results of self-inspections for three years and must provide the results to HUD upon request.

Quality Control Inspections

The purpose of quality control inspections is to assure that all defects were identified in the original inspection, and that repairs were completed and within an acceptable time frame.

BHA Policy

Supervisory quality control inspections will be conducted in accordance with BHA's maintenance plan.

Special Inspections

BHA Policy

BHA staff may conduct a special inspection for any of the following reasons:

- Housekeeping
- Unit condition
- Suspected lease violation
- Preventive maintenance
- Routine maintenance
- There is reasonable cause to believe an emergency exists
- Ownership required inspections

Other Inspections

BHA Policy

Building exteriors, grounds, common areas and systems will be inspected according to BHA's maintenance plan.

8-II.C. Notice of Entry

Notice of Entry

Non-emergency Entries [24 CFR 966.4(j)(1)]

BHA may enter the unit, with reasonable advance notification to perform routine inspections and maintenance, make improvements and repairs, or to show the unit for re-leasing. A written statement specifying the purpose of BHA entry delivered to the dwelling unit at least two days before such entry is considered reasonable advance notification.

BHA Policy

BHA will notify the resident in writing at least 48 hours prior to any non-emergency inspection.

For regular self-inspections, the family will receive at least 2 weeks written notice of the inspection to allow the family to prepare the unit for the inspection.

Entry for repairs requested by the family will not require prior notice. Resident-requested repairs presume permission for BHA to enter the unit.

Except for emergencies, management will not enter the dwelling unit to perform inspections

where a pet resides unless accompanied for the entire duration of the inspection by the pet owner or responsible person designated by the pet owner in accordance with the pet policies in Section 10-II.D.

Emergency Entries [24 CFR 966.4(j)(2)]

BHA may enter the dwelling unit at any time without advance notice when there is reasonable cause to believe that an emergency exists. If no adult household member is present at the time of an emergency entry, BHA must leave a written statement showing the date, time and purpose of the entry prior to leaving the dwelling unit.

Scheduling of PHA-Conducted Inspections

BHA Policy

Inspections will be conducted during business hours. If a family needs to reschedule an inspection, they must notify BHA at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled inspection. BHA will reschedule the inspection no more than once unless the resident has a verifiable good cause to delay the inspection. BHA may request verification of such cause.

Attendance at Inspections

Residents are required to be present for move-in inspections [24 CFR 966.4(i)]. There is no such requirement for other types of inspections.

BHA Policy

While the resident is required to be present for move-in inspections, the resident is not required to be present for other types of inspections. The resident may attend the inspection if they wish.

If no one is at home, the inspector will enter the unit and conduct the inspection.

A copy of the inspection report will be available upon request.

Repairs

Correction timeframes differ depending on whether repairs are considered emergency or non-emergency repairs.

Emergency Repairs [24 CFR 966.4(h)]

If the unit is damaged to the extent that conditions are created which are hazardous to the life, health, or safety of the occupants, the tenant must immediately notify BHA of the damage, and BHA must make repairs within a reasonable time frame. Under NSPIRE, BHA must correct all Life-Threatening and Severe deficiencies within 24 hours.

If the damage was caused by a household member or guest, BHA must charge the family for the reasonable cost of repairs. BHA may also take lease enforcement action against the family.

If BHA cannot make repairs quickly, BHA must offer the family standard alternative accommodations. If BHA can neither repair the defect within a reasonable time frame nor offer

alternative housing, rent shall be abated in proportion to the seriousness of the damage and loss in value as a dwelling. Rent shall not be abated if the damage was caused by a household member or guest, or if the resident rejects the alternative accommodations.

Non-emergency Repairs

BHA Policy

BHA will correct deficiencies resulting in a non-emergency work order identified during a PHA conducted inspection within 15 business days of the inspection date. If BHA is unable to make repairs within that period due to circumstances beyond BHA's control (e.g., required parts or services are not available, weather conditions, etc.), BHA will notify the family of an estimated date of completion.

The family must allow BHA access to the unit to make repairs.

Except for emergencies, management will not enter the dwelling unit to perform repairs where a pet resides unless accompanied for the entire duration of the repair by the pet owner or responsible person designated by the pet owner in accordance with the pet policies in Section 10-II.D.

Resident-Caused Damages

BHA Policy

Damages to the unit beyond normal wear and tear will be billed to the tenant in accordance with the policies in Section 8-I.F, Maintenance and Damage Charges.

Repeated or excessive damages to the unit beyond normal wear and tear will be considered a serious or repeated violation of the lease which may result in lease termination.

Housekeeping

BHA Policy

Residents whose housekeeping habits pose a non-emergency health or safety risk, encourage insect or rodent infestation, or cause damage to the unit are in violation of the lease. In these instances, BHA will provide proper notice of a lease violation.

A re-inspection will be conducted within 30 days to confirm that the resident has complied with the requirement to abate the problem. Failure to abate the problem or allow for a re-inspection is considered a violation of the lease and may result in termination of tenancy in accordance with Chapter 13.

Notices of lease violation will also be issued to residents who purposely disengage the unit's smoke detector and/or carbon monoxide alarm. Only one warning will be given. A second incidence will result in lease termination.

8-II.C. NSPIRE INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 5.705(c); Notice PIH 2023-16]

During an NSPIRE inspection, REAC inspectors will inspect areas and associated items or components that are listed in the regulations as affirmative requirements and those included within

the NSPIRE standards. For most properties, the frequency of NSPIRE inspections is determined by the date of the prior inspection and the score received.

Notice to Residents [Notice PIH 2023-16]

BHA must provide notice to all residents as described in 24 CFR 5.711(h) and the lease.

BHA Policy

BHA will provide all residents with at least seven days' notice of an NSPIRE inspection. Notice will be provided through multiple communication methods, including by posted notice on each resident's door and through email where applicable. All materials, notices, and communications to families regarding the inspection will be clearly communicated and provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other communication-related disabilities consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and HUD's Section 504 regulation, and Titles II or III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and implementing regulations.

24-Hour Corrections [24 CFR 5.711(c); Notice PIH 2023-16]

At the conclusion of the NSPIRE inspection, or at the end of the day on multi-day inspections, HUD provides BHA with a list of Life-Threatening and Severe deficiencies. BHA must correct all Life-Threatening and Severe deficiencies within 24 hours, with certification of correction submitted to HUD within two business days of receipt of notification of the deficiency.

If permanent repair will take longer than the allowable time in the relevant standard for the deficiency, BHA must provide HUD with a timeframe for completing permanent repairs and submit evidence that the repair is in progress. Any extension to the allowable time for rectifying the deficiency is allowed only upon HUD approval for good cause.

BHA Policy

BHA will correct all Life-Threatening and Severe deficiencies within 24 hours. Correcting the deficiency means BHA will resolve or sufficiently address the deficiency in a manner that it no longer poses a severe health or safety risk to residents or the hazard is blocked until permanent repairs can be completed. A correction could include controlling or blocking access to the hazard by performing a temporary relocation of the resident while repairs are made.

While BHA will complete all repairs expeditiously, if a permanent repair is not possible within 24-hours, BHA will correct the deficiency by performing an interim repair to remove the health and safety hazard. If the correction is temporary or professional services or materials are unavailable within 24 hours, BHA will provide a target date for permanent correction. Such interim repairs will be fully completed within a reasonable timeframe approved by HUD.

The family must allow BHA access to the unit to make repairs.

Non-emergency Repairs

Under NSPIRE, BHA must correct Moderate deficiencies within 30 days and Low deficiencies within 60 days, or as otherwise provided in the NSPIRE standards. Repairs should be permanent fixes, unless otherwise approved by HUD in writing. HUD may also prescribe timelines in

Corrective Action Plans as defined in 24 CFR 902.3 or Corrective Action Agreements as described in 24 CFR 902.105.

BHA Policy

If BHA is unable to make repairs within the periods identified in the NSPIRE standards due to circumstances beyond BHA's control (e.g., required parts or services are not available, weather conditions, etc.), BHA will provide HUD with a timeframe for completing permanent repairs and obtain HUD approval. BHA will also notify the family of an estimated date of completion.

The family must allow BHA access to the unit to make repairs.

Except for emergencies, management will not enter the dwelling unit to perform repairs where a pet resides unless accompanied for the entire duration of the repair by the pet owner or responsible person designated by the pet owner in accordance with the pet policies in Section 10-II.D.

EXHIBIT 8-1: SMOKE-FREE POLICY

In accordance with HUD regulations, the Housing Authority of the City of Bremerton (BHA) has adopted these smoke-free policies. The policies are effective as of January 22, 2018 and supersede all smoking policies previously implemented at BHA's residential properties.

Due to the increased risk of fire, increased maintenance costs, and the known health effects of secondhand smoke, smoking is prohibited in all living units and interior areas, including but not limited to hallways, rental and administrative offices, community centers, day care centers, laundry centers, and similar structures. Smoking is also prohibited in outdoor areas within 25 feet from public housing and administrative office buildings.

This policy applies to all employees, residents, household members, guests, and service persons. Residents are responsible for ensuring that household members and guests comply with this rule.

The term "smoking" means any inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, or other prohibited tobacco product in any manner or any form. Prohibited tobacco products include water pipes or hookahs.

Violation of the smoke-free policy constitutes a violation of the terms of the public housing lease. Consequences of lease violations include termination of tenancy.

BHA POLICIES

Designated Smoking Areas (DSA)

BHA has not designated any smoking areas on BHA's property. Residents may not discard smoking products on the property.

Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)

Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) include e-cigarettes, nicotine inhalers, and vaping devices.

Example policy 1: Use of ENDS is permitted in public housing units but is prohibited in common areas and in outdoor areas within 25 feet from housing and administrative buildings. That is, use of ENDS is prohibited in all common and outdoor areas in which smoking is prohibited.

Example policy 2: Use of ENDS is permitted in public housing units only as a reasonable accommodation approved by BHA that necessary for a person with disabilities. Use of ENDS is prohibited in common areas and in outdoor areas within 25 feet from housing and administrative buildings. That is, use of ENDS is prohibited in all areas in which smoking is prohibited.

Example policy 3: Use of ENDS is not permitted in public housing units, common areas, or in outdoor areas within 25 feet from housing and administrative buildings.

Effective Date

BHA's effective date(s) of this smoke-free policy is/are as follows:

Example 1: The smoke-free policy is effective for all residents, household members, employees, guests, and service persons as of January 22, 2018.

Example 2: The smoke-free policy is effective for all employees and service persons as of January 22, 2028.

Residents must execute a smoke-free lease addendum as part of the annual lease renewal process. All residents must have been in compliance with the smoke-free policy as of July 30, 2018.

Enforcement

BHA must enforce smoke-free policies when a resident violates this policy. When enforcing the lease, BHA will provide due process and allow residents to exercise their right to an informal settlement and formal hearing. BHA will not evict a resident for a single incident of smoking in violation of this policy. As such, BHA will implement a graduated enforcement framework that includes escalating warnings. Prior to pursuing eviction for violation of smoke-free policies, BHA will take specific, progressive monitoring and enforcement actions, while at the same time educating tenants and providing smoking cessation information. The lease will identify the actions that constitute a policy violation, quantify the number of documented, verified violations that warrant enforcement action, state any disciplinary actions that will be taken for persistent non-responsiveness or repeated noncompliance, and state how many instances of noncompliance will constitute a violation. Tenancy termination and eviction will be pursued only as a last resort. BHA may terminate tenancy at any time for violations of the lease and failure to otherwise fulfill household obligations if resident behavior disturbs other residents' peaceful enjoyment and is not conducive to maintaining the property in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition.

BHA will issue a 10-day Notice to Comply with Lease or Quit Premises for violation of the smoke-free policy. Repeated violation of the smoke-free policy may rise to the level of other good cause for termination of tenancy. Per Washington State Landlord-Tenant Law, if the tenant receives four Notices to Comply with Lease or Quit Premises for violation of the smoke-free policy within a 12-month period, the tenant is subject to termination of the lease. The months during this 12-month period are rolling months.

Reasonable Accommodation

While addiction to nicotine or smoking is not a disability, BHA will provide reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities who smoke that are in compliance with the requirements of this smoke-free policy.

Chapter 9

REEXAMINATIONS

[24 CFR 960.257, 960.259, 966.4]

INTRODUCTION

BHA is required to reexamine each family's income and composition periodically and to adjust the family's rent accordingly. BHA must adopt policies for conducting annual and interim reexaminations that are consistent with regulatory requirements, and must conduct reexaminations in accordance with such policies [24 CFR 960.257(c)].

The frequency with which BHA must reexamine the income and composition of a family depends on whether the family pays income-based rent or flat rent. HUD requires BHA to offer all families the choice of paying income-based rent or flat rent at least annually. BHA's policies for offering families a choice of rents are located in Chapter 6.

This chapter discusses both annual and interim reexaminations.

Part I: Annual Reexaminations for Families Paying Income Based Rents. This part discusses the requirements for annual reexamination of income and family composition. Full reexaminations are conducted at least once a year for families paying income-based rents.

Part II: Reexaminations for Families Paying Flat Rents. This part contains BHA's policies for conducting full reexaminations of family income and composition for families paying flat rents. These full reexaminations are conducted at least once every 3 years. This part also contains BHA's policies for conducting annual updates of family composition for flat rent families.

Part III: Interim Reexaminations. This part includes HUD requirements and BHA policies related to when a family may and must report changes that occur between annual reexaminations.

Part IV: Recalculating Tenant Rent. After gathering and verifying required information for an annual or interim reexamination, BHA must recalculate the tenant rent. While the basic policies that govern these calculations are provided in Chapter 6, this part describes the policies that affect these calculations during a reexamination.

Part V: Non-Interim Reexamination Transactions. This part describes transactions that do not entail changes to the family's adjusted income.

Policies governing reasonable accommodation, family privacy, required family cooperation and program abuse, as described elsewhere in this ACOP, apply to annual and interim reexaminations.

PART I: ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS FOR FAMILIES PAYING INCOME-BASED RENTS [24 CFR 960.257]

9-I.A. OVERVIEW

For those families who choose to pay income-based rent, BHA must conduct a reexamination of income and family composition at least annually [24 CFR 960.257(a)(1)]. With the exception of over-income families, who must have their income reviewed at 12 and 24 months, for flat rent families, BHA conduct a reexamination of family composition at least annually and must conduct a reexamination of family income at least once every 3 years [24 CFR 960.257(a)(2)]. For any non-public housing over income families, BHA may not conduct an annual reexamination of family income. Policies related to the reexamination process for families paying flat rent are located in Part II of this chapter.

For all residents of public housing, whether those residents are paying income-based or flat rents, BHA must conduct an annual review of community service requirement compliance. This annual reexamination is also a good time to have residents sign consent forms for criminal background checks in case the criminal history of a resident is needed at some point for the purposes of lease enforcement or eviction.

BHA is required to obtain all of the information necessary to conduct reexaminations. How that information will be collected is left to the discretion of BHA. Families are required to provide current and accurate information on income, assets, allowances and deductions, family composition and community service compliance as part of the reexamination process [24 CFR 960.259].

Unlike when performing an interim reexamination or at intake, at annual reexamination, BHA must determine the income of the family for the previous 12-month period, except where BHA uses a streamlined income determination. Income from assets, however, is always anticipated, irrespective of the income examination type [Notice PIH 2023-27]. BHA also have the option of using a “safe harbor” income verification from another federal means-tested program to verify gross annual income. Chapter 7 contains BHA’s policies related to streamlined income determinations and the use of safe harbor income verifications.

This part contains BHA’s policies for conducting annual reexaminations.

9-I.B. SCHEDULING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS

BHA must establish a policy to ensure that the annual reexamination for each family paying an income-based rent is completed within a 12-month period [24 CFR 960.257(a)(1)].

BHA Policy

Generally, BHA will schedule annual reexaminations to coincide with the family's anniversary date. BHA will begin the annual reexamination process approximately 120 days in advance of the scheduled effective date.

Anniversary date is defined as 12 months from the effective date of the family's last annual reexamination or, during a family's first year in the program, from the effective date of the family's initial examination (admission).

If the family transfers to a new unit, BHA will perform a new annual reexamination, and the anniversary date will be changed.

BHA may also schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the anniversary date for administrative purposes.

Notification of and Participation in the Annual Reexamination Process

BHA is required to obtain information needed to conduct annual reexaminations. How that information will be collected is left to the discretion of BHA. However, BHA should give tenants who were not provided the opportunity to provide contact information at the time of admission the option to complete Form HUD-92006 at this time. BHA should provide the family with the opportunity to update, change, or remove information from the HUD-92006 at the time of the annual reexamination [Notice PIH 2009-36].

BHA Policy

Families generally are required to participate in an annual reexamination interview, which must be attended by the head of household, spouse, or cohead. If participation in an in-person interview poses a hardship because of a family member's disability, the family should contact BHA to request a reasonable accommodation (See Chapter 2).

Notification of annual reexamination interviews will be sent by first-class mail and will contain the date, time, and location of the interview. In addition, it will inform the family of the information and documentation that must be brought to the interview.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact BHA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend the scheduled interview BHA will send a second notification with a new interview appointment time.

If a family fails to attend two scheduled interviews without BHA approval, the family will be in violation of their lease and may be terminated in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

An advocate, interpreter, or other assistant may assist the family in the interview process.

9-1.C. CONDUCTING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS

The terms of the public housing lease require the family to furnish information regarding income and family composition as may be necessary for the redetermination of rent, eligibility, and the appropriateness of the housing unit [24 CFR 966.4(c)(2)].

BHA Policy

Families will be asked to bring all required information (as described in the reexamination notice) to the reexamination appointment. The required information will include a BHA-designated reexamination form as well as supporting documentation related to the family's income, expenses, and family composition.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at the time of the interview or any stated deadline must be provided within 10 business days of the interview. If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension.

If the family does not provide the required documents or information within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be in violation of their lease and may be terminated in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

The information provided by the family generally must be verified in accordance with the policies in Chapter 7. Unless the family reports a change, or the agency has reason to believe a change has occurred in information previously reported by the family, certain types of information that are verified at admission typically do not need to be re-verified on an annual basis. These include:

- Legal identity
- Age
- Social security numbers
- A person's disability status
- Citizenship or immigration status

9-I.D. CALCULATING ANNUAL INCOME AT ANNUAL REEXAMINATION [24 CFR 5.609(c)(2) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

BHA must determine the income of the family for the previous 12-month period and use this amount as the family income for annual reexaminations, except where BHA uses a streamlined income determination as indicated in Chapter 7 of this policy. BHA may also use Safe harbor income determinations dated within the last 12 months from a means-tested federal public assistance program at annual reexamination as outlined in Chapter 7 of this policy.

Except when using streamlined or safe harbor income determinations, in determining the income of the family for the previous 12-month period, any change of income since the family's last annual reexamination, including those that did not meet the threshold to process an interim reexamination in accordance BHA policies and 24 CFR 5.657(c) or 960.257(b) must be considered.

Income from assets is always anticipated, irrespective of the income examination type.

A change in income may be a loss of income or the addition of a new source of income. Changing to a different employer in the prior year does not necessarily constitute a change if the income earned from either employer is substantially the same. BHA should look at the entirety of the family's unearned income and earned income from the prior year in which earned income may have been one constant job or many different jobs that start and stop.

Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) to Social Security income and Social Security disability income are always considered changes to income because the COLA is an adjustment that automatically occurs annually by law. See Chapter 6 for PHA policies on when the COLA is applied and Chapter 7 on streamlined determination of income for inflationary adjustments.

Notice PIH 2023-27 lists the following steps to calculate both earned and unearned income at annual reexamination.

Step 1: BHA determines annual income for the previous 12-month period by reviewing the following information:

- The EIV Income Report pulled within 120 days of the effective date of the annual reexamination;
- The income reported on the most recent HUD-50058; and
- The amount of prior-year income reported by the family on the BHA's annual reexamination paperwork.

Step 2: BHA takes into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination.

- If there was an interim reexamination performed, BHA must use the annual income from the interim to determine the family's total annual income, provided there are no additional changes.
- If BHA did not perform an interim or there have been changes since the last reexamination, BHA moves to Step 3.

Step 3: If there were changes in annual income not processed by BHA since the last reexamination, BHA must use current income. The family will be required to report their income for the prior year and whether there have been permanent changes.

If there are no reported changes to an income source, BHA may use documentation of prior-year income to calculate the annual income. For example, BHA may use the following documentation:

- EIV + self-certification (wages, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security, and unemployment)
- Current written third-party verification from the source verifying prior-year income that is dated within 120 days of receipt by the PHA, for example:
 - Year-end statements
 - Paycheck with year-to-date amounts
 - Tax forms (Form 1040, W2, 1099, etc.)

If there are reported changes by the family or BHA notes discrepancies between EIV and what the family reports, BHA must follow the verification hierarchy (described in Chapter 7) to document and verify income. Exhibit 9-1 provides detailed examples of how BHA calculates income from different sources at annual reexamination using the above method.

BHA Policy

When income is calculated using a streamlined income determination or Safe Harbor determination from a means-tested federal public assistance program in accordance with BHA policies in Chapter 7, the above is not applicable. However, where the family disagrees with BHA or other agency's determination of income or BHA has other reason to use third-party verification in these circumstances, then the above will apply.

9-I.E. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Change in Unit Size

Changes in family or household composition may make it appropriate to consider transferring the family to comply with occupancy standards. BHA may use the results of the annual reexamination to require the family to move to an appropriate size unit [24 CFR 960.257(a)(4)]. Policies related to such transfers are located in Chapter 12.

Criminal Background Checks

Information obtained through criminal background checks may be used for lease enforcement and eviction [24 CFR 5.903(e)(1)(ii)]. Criminal background checks of residents will be conducted in accordance with the policy in Section 13-IV.B.

BHA Policy

Each household member age 18 and over will be required to execute a consent form for a criminal background check as part of the annual reexamination process.

Additionally, HUD recommends that at annual reexaminations BHA asks 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].

BHA Policy

At the annual reexamination, BHA 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. BHA will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to verify the information provided by the tenant.

If BHA proposes to terminate assistance based on lifetime sex offender registration information, BHA must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy of the record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information prior to termination. [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)]. (See Chapter 13.)

Compliance with Community Service

For families who include nonexempt individuals, BHA must determine compliance with community service requirements once each 12 months [24 CFR 960.257(a)(3)].

See Chapter 11 for the BHA's policies governing compliance with the community service requirement.

9-I.F. EFFECTIVE DATES

As part of the annual reexamination process, BHA must make appropriate adjustments in the rent after consultation with the family and upon verification of the information [24 CFR 960.257(a)(1)].

BHA Policy

In general, an *increase* in the tenant rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date, and the family will be notified at least 30 days in advance.

If less than 30 days remain before the scheduled effective date, the increase will take effect on the first of the month following the end of the 30-day notice period.

If BHA 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 BHA, but will always allow for the 30-day notice period.

If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, *increases* in the tenant rent will be applied retroactively, to the scheduled effective date of the annual reexamination. The family will be responsible for any underpaid rent and may be offered a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.

In general, a *decrease* in the tenant rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date.

If BHA 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 BHA.

If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, *decreases* in the tenant 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 BHA by the date specified, and this delay prevents BHA from completing the reexamination as scheduled.

PART II: REEXAMINATIONS FOR FAMILIES PAYING FLAT RENTS

[24 CFR 960.253(f)]

9-II.A. OVERVIEW

HUD requires that BHA offer all families the choice of paying income-based rent or flat rent at least annually. BHA's policies for offering families a choice of rents are located in Chapter 6.

For families who choose flat rents, BHA must conduct a reexamination of family composition at least annually and must conduct a reexamination of family income at least once every 3 years [24 CFR 960.253(f)]. BHA is only required to provide the amount of income-based rent the family might pay in those years that BHA conducts a full reexamination of income and family composition, or upon request of the family after the family submits updated income information [24 CFR 960.253(e)(2)]. However, these regulations are not applicable to over-income families. Once an over-income determination is made, BHA must conduct an interim reexamination at 12 and 24 months, as applicable, to determine if the family remains over-income [Notice PIH 2023-03].

As it does for families that pay income-based rent, BHA must also review compliance with community service compliance requirements for families with nonexempt individuals.

This part contains BHA's policies for conducting reexaminations of families who choose to pay flat rents.

9-II.B. FULL REEXAMINATION OF FAMILY INCOME AND COMPOSITION

Frequency of Reexamination

BHA Policy

For families paying flat rents, BHA will conduct a full reexamination of family income and composition once every 3 years.

However, for flat rent families who become over-income, this policy will not apply. BHA will instead conduct an interim reexamination at 12 and 24 months following the initial over-income determination as needed to verify the family remains over-income. The family will continue to be given a choice between income-based and flat rent at each annual reexamination during the over-income grace period.

If the family is subsequently determined to no longer be over-income:

If the determination is the result of an annual reexamination, the family will be given a choice between income-based or flat rent at reexam. If the family selects flat rent, BHA will resume reexamination of family income and composition once every three years.

If determination is as a result of an interim reexamination, BHA will conduct an annual reexamination for the family at their next scheduled annual date. If the family selects flat rent, BHA will resume reexamination of family income and composition once every three years. Families will only be given the choice between income-based and flat rent at annual reexamination.

Reexamination Policies

BHA Policy

In conducting full reexaminations for families paying flat rents, BHA will follow the policies used for the annual reexamination of families paying income-based rent as set forth in Sections 9-I.B through 9-I.E above.

9-II.C. REEXAMINATION OF FAMILY COMPOSITION (“ANNUAL UPDATE”)

As noted above, if full reexaminations are conducted every 3 years for families paying flat rents, in the years between full reexaminations, regulations require BHA to conduct a reexamination of family composition (“annual update”) [24 CFR 960.257(a)(2)]. Over-income families who select the flat rent are not subject to annual update as their income must be reviewed, and an interim reexamination conducted, at 12 and 24 months as applicable.

The annual update process is similar to the annual reexamination process, except that BHA does not collect information about the family’s income and expenses, and the family’s rent is not recalculated following an annual update.

Scheduling

BHA must establish a policy to ensure that the reexamination of family composition for families choosing to pay the flat rent is completed at least annually [24 CFR 960.257(a)(2)].

BHA Policy

For families paying flat rents, annual updates will be conducted in each of the 2 years following the full reexamination.

In scheduling the annual update, BHA will follow the policy used for scheduling the annual reexamination of families paying income-based rent as set forth in Section 9-I.B. above.

Conducting Annual Updates

The terms of the public housing lease require the family to furnish information necessary for the redetermination of rent and family composition [24 CFR 966.4(c)(2)].

BHA Policy

Generally, the family will not be required to attend an interview for an annual update. However, if BHA determines that an interview is warranted, the family may be required to attend.

Notification of the annual update interviews will be sent by first-class mail and will contain the date, time, and location of the interview. In addition, it will inform the family of the information and documentation that must be brought To BHA. The family will have 10 business days to submit the required documentation by mail, by email, by fax or in person.

If the family’s submission is incomplete, or the family does not submit the information in the required time frame, BHA will send a second written notice to the family. The family will have 10 business days from the date of the second notice to provide the missing information or documentation to BHA.

If the family does not provide the required documents or information within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be in violation of their lease and may be terminated in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

Change in Unit Size

Changes in family or household composition may make it appropriate to consider transferring the family to comply with occupancy standards. BHA may use the results of the annual update to require the family to move to an appropriate size unit [24 CFR 960.257(a)(4)]. Policies related to such transfers are located in Chapter 12.

Criminal Background Checks

Information obtained through criminal background checks may be used for lease enforcement and eviction [24 CFR 5.903(e)]. Criminal background checks of residents will be conducted in accordance with the policy in Section 13-IV.B.

BHA Policy

Each household member age 18 and over will be required to execute a consent form for criminal background check as part of the annual update process.

Compliance with Community Service

For families who include nonexempt individuals, BHA must determine compliance with community service requirements once each 12 months [24 CFR 960.257(a)(3)].

See Chapter 11 for BHA's policies governing compliance with the community service requirement.

PART III: INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS

[24 CFR 960.257; 24 CFR 966.4]

9-III.A. OVERVIEW

Family circumstances may change during the period between annual reexaminations. HUD and BHA policies define the types of information about changes in family circumstances that must be reported, and under what circumstances BHA must process interim reexaminations to reflect those changes.

A family may request an interim determination of family income or composition because of any changes since the last determination. BHA must conduct any interim reexamination within a reasonable period of time after the family request or when BHA becomes aware of a change in the family's adjusted income that must be processed in accordance with HUD regulations. What qualifies as a "reasonable time" may vary based on the amount of time it takes to verify information, but BHA generally should conduct the interim reexamination not longer than 30 days after the PHA becomes aware of changes in income.

Notice PIH 2023-27 changes the conditions under which interim reexaminations must be conducted, codifies when interim reexaminations should be processed and made effective, and requires related changes for annual reexaminations and streamlined income determinations. When BHA determines that an interim reexamination of income is necessary, they must ask the family to report changes in all aspects of adjusted income.

9-III.B. CHANGES IN FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION REPORTING

BHA must require families to report household composition changes; however, BHA must determine the timeframe in which reporting happens [Notice PIH 2023-27]. BHA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in family composition [24 CFR 960.257(b)(5)].

Changes in family or household composition may make it appropriate to consider transferring the family to comply with occupancy standards. Policies related to such transfers are located in Chapter 12.

BHA Policy

All families, those paying income-based rent as well as flat rent, must report all changes in family and household composition that occur between annual reexaminations (or annual updates) within 10 business days of the change

BHA 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 BHA approval. However, the family is required to promptly notify BHA of the addition [24 CFR 966.4(a)(1)(v)].

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 BHA approval to add a new family member [24 CFR 966.4(a)(1)(v)] or other household member (live-in aide or foster child) [24 CFR 966.4(d)(3)].

BHA may adopt reasonable policies concerning residence by a foster child or a live-in aide, and defining the circumstances in which BHA consent will be given or denied. Under such policies, the factors considered by BHA may include [24 CFR 966.4(d)(3)(i)]:

- Whether the addition of a new occupant may necessitate a transfer of the family to another unit, and whether such units are available.
- BHA's obligation to make reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

BHA Policy

Families must request BHA approval to add a new family member, live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult. This includes any person not on the lease who is expected to stay in the unit for more than 14 consecutive days or a total of 30 cumulative calendar days during any 12-month period, and therefore no longer qualifies as a "guest." Requests must be made in writing and approved by BHA prior to the individual moving into the unit.

If adding a person to a household (other than a child by birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody) will require a transfer to a larger size unit (under the transfer policy in Chapter 12), BHA will approve the addition only if the family can demonstrate that there are medical needs or other extenuating circumstances, including reasonable accommodation, that should be considered by BHA. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

BHA will not approve the addition of a new family or household member unless the individual meets BHA's eligibility criteria (see Chapter 3) and documentation requirements (See Chapter 7, Part II).

If BHA determines that an individual does not meet BHA's eligibility criteria or documentation requirements, BHA 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.

BHA will make its determination within 10 business days of receiving all information required to verify the individual's eligibility.

Departure of a Family or Household Member

The family must promptly notify BHA if any household member (including a live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult) no longer lives in the unit. BHA must process an interim for all decreases in adjusted income when a family member permanently moves out of the unit.

BHA Policy

If a household member ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform BHA within 10 business days.

BHA will process an interim if the family's adjusted income will decrease as a result of a family member permanently moving out of the unit.

9-III.C. CHANGES AFFECTING INCOME OR EXPENSES

BHA Policy

This section only applies to families paying income-based rent. Families paying flat rent are not required to report changes in income or expenses.

Interim reexaminations for changes in income or expenses may be scheduled either because BHA has reason to believe that changes in income or expenses may have occurred, or because the family reports a change.

BHA must estimate the income of the family for the upcoming 12-month period to determine family income for an interim reexamination [24 CFR 5.609(c)(1)]. Policies for projecting income are found in Chapter 6.

Interim Decreases [24 CFR 960.257(b)(2) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

A family may request an interim determination of family income for any change since the last determination. However, BHA may decline to conduct an interim reexamination if BHA estimates the family's adjusted income will decrease by an amount that is less than 10 percent of the family's adjusted income. BHA may set a lower threshold in BHA policy such as performing an interim for any decreases in adjusted income, although HUD prohibits BHA from setting a dollar-figure threshold.

However, while BHA has some discretion, HUD requires that BHA perform an interim reexamination for a decrease in adjusted income of any amount in two circumstances:

- When there is a decrease in family size attributed to the death of a family member; or
- When a family member permanently moves out of the assisted unit during the period since the family's last reexamination.

In the above circumstances, BHA must perform an interim reexamination for any decrease in adjusted income.

If the net effect of the changes in adjusted income due to a decrease in family size results in no change or an increase in annual adjusted income, then BHA must process the removal of the household member(s) as a non-interim reexamination transaction without making changes to the family's annual adjusted income.

BHA Policy

BHA will conduct an interim reexamination any time the family's adjusted income has decreased by any amount.

Interim Increases [24 CFR 960.257(b)(3) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

Increases Less than 10 Percent

BHA must not process interim reexaminations for income increases that result in less than a 10 percent increase in annual adjusted income.

Increases 10 Percent or Greater

BHA must conduct an interim reexamination of family income when BHA becomes aware that the family's adjusted income has changed by an amount that BHA estimates will result in an increase of 10 percent or more in adjusted income, with the following exceptions:

- BHA may not consider any increases in earned income when estimating or calculating whether the family's adjusted income has increased, unless the family has previously received an interim reduction during the same reexamination cycle; and
- BHA may choose not to conduct an interim reexamination during the last three months

of a certification period if a family reports an increase in income within three months of the next annual reexamination effective date.

When the family previously received an interim reexamination for a decrease to adjusted income during the same annual reexamination cycle, BHA has the discretion whether to consider a subsequent increase in earned income.

BHA Policy

When a family reports an increase in their earned income between annual reexaminations, BHA will not conduct an interim reexamination, regardless of the amount of the increase, and regardless of whether there was a previous decrease since the family's last annual reexamination.

BHA will process an interim reexamination for any increases in unearned income of 10 percent or more in adjusted income.

BHA will not perform an interim reexamination when a family reports an increase in income (whether earned or unearned income) within three months of their annual reexamination effective date. However, families who delay reporting income increases until the last three months of their certification period may be subject to retroactive rent increases in accordance with the PHA policies in Chapter 15.

Concurrent Increases in Earned and Unearned Income [Notice PIH 2023-27]

When the family reports an increase in both earned and unearned income at the same time, BHA must look at the earned and unearned income changes independently of each other to determine if an interim reexamination is performed. BHA will only conduct an interim reexamination when the increase independently meets the 10 percent threshold and all other requirements for performing interim reexaminations. For example, if a family reported increases in both earned and unearned income that overall resulted in a 12 percent increase in their adjusted income, but the change in earned income represented a 7 percent increase and the change in unearned income represented a 5 percent increase, BHA may not perform an interim for either change since neither change meets the 10 percent threshold amount independently. If the change in unearned income met the 10 percent threshold in this case, BHA would be required to perform an interim. If the change in earned income met the 10 percent threshold in this case, BHA would refer to PHA policy to determine whether an interim was required.

Cumulative Increases [Notice PIH 2023-27]

A series of smaller reported increases in adjusted income may cumulatively meet or exceed the 10-percent increase threshold, at which point BHA must conduct an interim reexamination in accordance with BHA policy.

Public Housing Over-Income Families [24 CFR 960.507(c); Notice PIH 2020-3; and Notice PIH 2023-27]

Regardless of changes in adjusted income, in some circumstances BHA is required to conduct an interim reexamination to determine whether a family's income continues to exceed the public housing over-income limit. BHA is required to conduct income examinations of public housing families who have been determined to exceed the over-income limit at specific intervals. When a BHA makes an initial determination that a family is over-income during an interim reexamination, BHA must conduct a second interim reexamination 12 months after the over-income determination, and then again 12 months after the second over-income determination, unless the family's income falls below the over-income limit during the 24-month period. This continued evaluation of the family's over-income status requires BHA to notify any family that exceeds the over-income limit that they remain over the income limit, even if the family is paying the flat rent [24 CFR 960.253]. An interim income reexamination to determine if a public housing family remains over-income does not reset the family's normal annual reexamination date.

on to determine if a public housing family remains over-income does not reset the family's normal annual reexamination date.

Family Reporting

BHA must adopt policies consistent with HUD regulations prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report a change in family income or composition [24 CFR 960.257(b)(5)].

BHA policy may require families to report only changes that the family estimates meet the threshold for an interim reexamination or BHA may establish policies requiring that families report all changes in income and household composition, and BHA will subsequently determine if the change requires an interim reexamination [Notice PIH 2023-27].

When BHA determines that an interim reexamination of income is necessary, they must ask the family to report changes in all aspects of adjusted income. For example, if the family is reporting a decrease in adjusted income that is more than 10 percent, but the family also had a change in assets that would result in a change in income, the change in assets must also be reviewed [Notice PIH 2023-27].

BHA Policy

The family will be required to report all changes in income regardless of the amount of the change, whether the change is to earned or unearned income, or if the change occurred during the last three months of the certification period. Families must report changes in income within 10 business days of the date the change takes effect. The family may notify BHA of changes either orally or in writing. If the family provides oral notice, BHA may also require the family to submit the changes in writing.

Within 10 business days of the family reporting the change, BHA will determine whether the change will require an interim reexamination.

If the change will not result in an interim reexamination, BHA will note the information in the tenant file but will not conduct an interim reexamination. BHA will send the family written notification within 10 business days of making this determination informing the family that BHA will not conduct an interim reexamination.

If the change will result in an interim reexamination, BHA will determine the documentation the family will be required to submit based on the type of change reported and BHA policies in Chapter 7. BHA will ask the family to report changes in all aspects of adjusted income at this time. The family must submit any required information or documents within 10 business days of receiving a request from BHA. This time frame may be extended for good cause with BHA approval. BHA will accept required documentation by mail, email, fax, or in person. BHA will conduct the interim within a reasonable time period based on the amount of time it takes to verify the information.

Generally, the family will not be required to attend an interview for an interim reexamination. However, if BHA determines that an interview is warranted, the family may be required to attend.

Families may report changes in income or expenses at any time.

9-III.D. EFFECTIVE DATES

Changes Reported Timely [24 CFR 960.257(b)(6) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

If the family reports a change in family income or composition timely in accordance with BHA policies:

- For rent increases, BHA must provide the family with 30 days advance written notice. The rent increase is effective the first of the month after the end of that 30-day notice period.
- Rent decreases are effective on the first of the month after the date of the actual change leading to the interim reexamination of family income. This means the decrease will be applied retroactively.

Changes Not Reported Timely [24 CFR 960.257(b)(6)(ii) and (iii) and Notice PIH 2023-27]

If the family failed to report a change in family income or composition timely in accordance with BHA policies:

- For rent increases, BHA must implement any resulting rent increases retroactively to the first of the month following the date of the change leading to the interim reexamination of family income.
- For rent decreases, BHA must implement the change no later than the first rent period

following completion of the interim reexamination.

However, BHA may choose to adopt a policy that would make the effective date of the rent decrease retroactive to the first of the month following completion of the reexamination. BHA may choose to establish conditions or requirements for when such a retroactive application would apply. PHAs that choose to adopt such policies must ensure the earliest date that the retroactive decrease is applied is the later of:

- The first of the month following the date of the change that led to the interim reexamination; or
 - The first of the month following the most recent previous income examination.
- In applying a retroactive change in rent as the result of an interim reexamination, BHA must clearly communicate the effect of the retroactive adjustment to the family so that there is no confusion over the amount of the rent that is the family's responsibility.

BHA Policy

In general, when the family fails to report a change in income or family composition timely, and the change would lead to a rent decrease, BHA will apply the decrease the first of the month following completion of the interim reexamination.

However, BHA will apply the results of the interim reexamination retroactively where a family's ability to report a change in income promptly may have been hampered due to extenuating circumstances such as a natural disaster or disruptions to BHA management operations. BHA will decide to apply decreases retroactively on a case-by-case basis.

When BHA applies the results of interim decreases retroactively, BHA will clearly communicate the effect of the retroactive adjustment to the family and may enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with BHA policies.

PART IV: RECALCULATING TENANT RENT

9-IV.A. OVERVIEW

For those families paying income-based rent, BHA must recalculate the rent amount based on the income information received during the reexamination process and notify the family of the changes [24 CFR 966.4, 960.257]. While the basic policies that govern these calculations are provided in Chapter 6, this part lays out policies that affect these calculations during a reexamination.

9-IV.B. CHANGES IN UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 965.507, 24 CFR 966.4]

The tenant rent calculations must reflect any changes in BHA's utility allowance schedule [24 CFR 960.253(c)(3)]. Chapter 16 discusses how utility allowance schedules are established.

BHA Policy

Unless BHA is required to revise utility allowances retroactively, revised utility allowances will be applied to a family's rent calculations at the first annual reexamination after the allowance is adopted. unless

For LIHTC units, changes in the Utility Allowance must be implemented in compliance with Washington State Housing Finance Commission requirements upon publication by BHA.

9-IV.C. NOTIFICATION OF NEW TENANT RENT

The public housing lease requires BHA to give the tenant written notice stating any change in the amount of tenant rent, and when the change is effective [24 CFR 966.4(b)(1)(ii)].

When BHA re-determines the amount of rent (Total Tenant Payment or Tenant Rent) payable by the tenant, not including determination of BHA's schedule of Utility Allowances for families in BHA's Public Housing Program, or determines that the tenant must transfer to another unit based on family composition, BHA must notify the tenant that the tenant may ask for an explanation stating the specific grounds of BHA's determination, and that if the tenant does not agree with the determination, the tenant shall have the right to request a hearing under BHA's grievance procedure [24 CFR 966.4(c)(4)].

BHA Policy

The notice to the family will include the annual and adjusted income amounts that were used to calculate the tenant rent.

9-IV.D. DISCREPANCIES

During an annual or interim re-examination, BHA may discover that information previously reported by the family was in error, or that the family intentionally misrepresented information. In addition, BHA may discover errors made by BHA. When errors resulting in the overpayment or underpayment of rent are discovered, corrections will be made in accordance with the policies in Chapter 15.

Notice PIH 2023-27

Families may experience changes within the household that do not trigger an interim reexamination under BHA policy and HUD regulations but which HUD still requires BHA to report via Form HUD-50058. These are known as *non-interim reexamination transactions*. In these cases, BJA will submit a separate, new action code on Form HUD-50058. The following is a list of non-interim reexamination transactions:

- Adding or removing a hardship exemption for the child care expense deduction;
- Updating or removing the phased-in hardship relief for the health and medical care expense deduction and/or reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expense deduction (the phased-in relief will begin at an eligible family's first annual or interim reexamination, whichever is sooner, after January 1, 2024);
- Adding or removing general hardship relief for the health and medical care expense deduction and/or reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expense deduction;
- Adding or removing a minimum rent hardship;
- Adding or removing a non-family member (i.e., live-in aide, foster child, foster adult);
- Ending a family's EID or excluding 50 percent (decreased from 100 percent) of a family member's increase in employment income at the start of the second 12-month EID period.
- Adding a family member and the increase in adjusted income does not trigger an interim reexamination under the final rule;
- Removing a family member and the increase in adjusted income does not trigger an interim reexamination under the final rule;
- Adding/updating a family or household member's Social Security number; and
- Updating a family member's citizenship status from eligible to ineligible or vice versa, resulting in a change to the family's rent and/or utility reimbursement, if applicable (i.e., family begins receiving prorated assistance or previously prorated assistance becomes full assistance), or updating the prorated rent calculation due to the addition or removal of family members in household with an ineligible noncitizen(s).

BHA must make all other changes to assets, income, and deductions at the next annual or interim reexamination of income, whichever is sooner.

EXHIBIT 9-1: CALCULATING INCOME AT ANNUAL REEXAMINATION

Example 1: Calculating Annual Income at Annual Reexamination Using EIV

Staff are processing the 3/1/2024 annual reexamination for Ruby Myers and her minor daughter, Georgia. No interim reexaminations have been processed, and Ruby has not reported any changes to annual income to BHA since the 3/1/2023 annual reexamination. The SSA-published 2024 COLA is 7 percent.

<u>Last reexamination – 3/1/2023 Annual Reexamination</u>	
<u>Ruby:</u>	<u>Georgia:</u>
<u>Wages: \$30,000</u>	<u>SSI: \$10,980 (\$915 monthly)</u>

The EIV report pulled on 12/15/2023

<p>Ruby:</p> <p>Wages Total: \$33,651</p> <p>Quarter 3 of 2023: \$8,859 (City Public School)</p> <p>Quarter 2 of 2023: \$8,616 (City Public School)</p> <p>Quarter 1 of 2023: \$8,823 (City Public School)</p> <p>Quarter 4 of 2022: \$7,353 (City Public School)</p>	<p>Georgia:</p> <p>SSI Total: \$10,980</p> <p>2023 benefit \$915 monthly</p>
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<u>Income Reported on Reexamination Application</u>	
<p>Ruby:</p> <p><u>Wages at City Public School: \$32,000</u> (switched jobs but no permanent change to amount)</p>	<p>Georgia:</p> <p><u>SSI benefits: \$10,980 (no changes)</u></p>
<p><u>Calculating Ruby’s wages:</u></p> <p>Step 1: Determine prior annual income from EIV (i.e., Q4 2022 through Q3 of 2023: \$33,651).</p> <p>Step 2: Take into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination (in this case, there have been no interim reexaminations processed since the last annual reexamination).</p> <p>Step 3: Ruby certifies that the \$33,651 of wages in EIV is accurate and reflects her current annual income, so the PHA will use \$33,651 for annual wages for the 3/1/2024 annual reexamination given there have been no additional changes to annual income.</p>	<p><u>Calculating Georgia’s SSI benefit:</u></p> <p>Step 1: Determine the prior annual income from EIV (i.e., \$915 x 12 months: \$10,980).</p> <p>Step 2: Take into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination (in this case, there have been no interim reexaminations processed since the last annual reexamination).</p> <p>Step 3: Ruby certifies the SSI income in EIV is accurate and reflects Georgia’s current annual income. The PHA must adjust the prior-year income (2023 SSI benefit) by the 7- percent COLA and will use this amount to calculate annual SSI income for the 3/1/2024 annual reexamination:</p> <p>COLA: \$64.05 (\$915 x 0.07)</p> <p>New gross SSI benefit: \$11,748.60 (\$979.05 x 12 months)</p>
<p>If Ruby did not agree with the annual wages reported in EIV, the PHA/MFH Owner would be required to verify her current income in accordance with HUD’s verification hierarchy.</p>	
<u>Summary of Annual Income (as reported on the HUD-50058)</u>	
<p>Ruby (Head of Household):</p> <p>Other Wage: \$33,651</p> <p>Myers Family Total Annual Income: \$45,399</p>	<p>Georgia (Other Youth Under 18):</p> <p>SSI: \$11,748</p>

**Example 2: Calculating Annual Income at Annual Reexamination Using EIV:
Family Disagrees with EIV**

Staff are processing Paul Hewson’s 5/1/2024 annual reexamination. Since the last annual reexamination, Paul reported a decrease in annual income that exceeded 10 percent. Last year, Paul reported a decrease in earned income because he transferred from a full-time job at Sasha’s Sweets to a part-time job at Viking Bakery. Following HUD’s EIV verification hierarchy, staff confirmed Paul was no longer employed at Sasha’s Sweets and decreased his anticipated annual income from \$28,000 to \$7,500 resulting from his new part-time employment at Viking Bakery; an interim reexamination was processed effective 7/1/2023. After the 7/1/2023 interim, Paul worked briefly at two different jobs, but he says he is no longer working and is not planning to work.

5/1/2023 Annual Reexamination

Wages: \$28,000

The EIV report pulled on 1/15/2024

Wages Total: \$18,271

Quarter 3 of 2023: \$2,500 (Viking Bakery)

Quarter 3 of 2023: \$796 (Sweet Tooth Candy Bar)

Quarter 2 of 2023: \$1,300 (Sasha’s Sweets)

Quarter 2 of 2023: \$584 (Larry’s Concessions)

Quarter 2 of 2023: \$2,401 (Viking Bakery)

Quarter 1 of 2023: \$6,500 (Sasha’s Sweets)

Quarter 4 of 2022: \$600 (Sasha’s Sweets)

SS/SSI: No history of benefits

Income Reported on Reexamination Application

Wages: \$0 (permanent change; no longer receiving)

Social Security: \$14,400 (\$1,200 monthly)

Paul certified on the PHA's annual reexamination paperwork that he does not agree with the annual wages of \$18,271 reported in EIV and it is not reflective of his current anticipated annual income. He reported he is currently unemployed, and provided a copy of an award letter from the Social Security Administration to document that he will begin receiving a monthly disability benefit of \$1,200 effective 3/1/2024.

Calculating Wages and SS Benefit

Step 1: Determine prior annual income taking into consideration the 8/1/2023 interim reexamination (i.e., EIV wages reflected Q4 2022 through Q3 2023: \$18,271)

Step 2: Take into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination. In this case, there was a 7/1/2023 interim that reduced wages to \$7,500.

Step 3: Obtain documentation to verify current income and confirm Paul is no longer employed at Viking Bakery or The Sweet Tooth Candy Bar (the employers reported in the most recent quarter of EIV). This step is necessary, because Paul did not agree with the EIV income report or income reported on the last interim reexamination. Paul reported that he is no longer working at all.

Process the annual reexamination effective 5/1/2024 using annual SS income of \$14,400 and \$0 wages.

Summary of Annual Income (as reported on the HUD-50058)

Paul (Head of Household): \$14,400 (SS)

Hewson Family Total Annual Income: \$14,400

Example 3: Calculating Annual Income at Annual Reexamination

Staff are processing the 11/1/2024 annual reexamination for Samantha and Fergus Pool, head of household and spouse. On 2/14/2024 Samantha reported her monthly child support payment was reduced from \$200 to \$100 per month, but an interim reexamination was not processed because the reduction in child support income for Samantha’s daughter, Hailey, did not result in a decrease of 10 percent or more in annual adjusted income, and the PHA did not establish a lower threshold. Samantha did not report any additional changes to the PHA.

Last reexamination – 11/1/2023 Annual Reexamination

Samantha:

Business income: \$28,000
 VA disability pension: \$12,000
 Child support: \$2,400

Fergus:

Wages: \$8,250
 Other non-wage income: \$3,000 (Go Fund Me online fundraiser)

The EIV report pulled on 9/16/2024

Samantha:

Wages Total: \$0 (no wage data reported since Q1 2023)

Fergus:

Wages Total: \$8,600
 Quarter 1 of 2024: \$2,100 (Ian’s Fish ‘n’ Chips)
 Quarter 1 of 2024: \$500 (Claire’s Healthcare Supplies)
 Quarter 4 of 2023: \$1,000 (Claire’s Healthcare Supplies)
 Quarter 3 of 2023: \$1,800 (The Onion Garden Shop)
 Quarter 2 of 2023: \$3,200 (Ivar’s Fish Haus)

Current Family Circumstances: Income Reported on Reexamination Application

Samantha and Fergus reported how much income was earned/received in the previous 12-month period and noted permanent changes, where applicable, for each source of their income on PHA’s annual reexamination form. However, no information was reported by the family concerning other non-wage income. Fergus reported only wages and his current employment at Ian’s Fish ‘n’ Chips for the annual reexamination. The family supplied the supporting documentation noted below to the PHA for the 11/1/2024 annual reexamination.

Samantha:

Business income: \$28,750 (last year); has decreased to \$18,000 (permanent change)

VA disability benefit: \$12,000 (last year); has increased to \$12,300 (permanent change)

Child support: \$2,400 (last year); has decreased to \$1,200 (permanent change)

Fergus:

Wages: \$6,000

Calculating Samantha’s Net Business Income

Step 1: Determine prior annual net business income (i.e., \$28,000 on last HUD–50058).

Step 2: Take into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination. In this case, there have been no interim reexaminations processed since the last annual reexamination.

Step 3: Adjust to reflect current net business income. Samantha reported on the annual reexamination application that business income permanently decreased to \$18,000. The PHA must obtain supporting documentation from Samantha that demonstrates current net business income. Samantha provided documentation that supported the current annual net business income is \$18,000. Process the annual reexamination effective 11/1/2024 using annual net business income determined in Step 3.

Calculating Samantha’s VA Pension Income

Step 1: Determine prior annual VA pension income (i.e., \$12,000 supported by a VA award letter Samantha supplied that documents the prior year monthly VA pension was \$1,000).

Step 2: Take into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination. In this case, there have been no interim reexaminations processed since the last annual reexamination.

Step 3: The PHA needs to adjust to reflect current VA pension income. Samantha supplies a VA award letter showing a monthly pension of \$1,025, or \$12,300 annually. Process the annual reexamination effective 11/1/2024 using annual VA pension income determined in Step 3 (\$12,300 in this example).

Calculating Samantha’s Child Support Income

Step 1: Determine prior annual child support income (i.e., \$2,400 on the last HUD–50058).

Step 2: Take into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination. In this case, there have been no interim reexaminations processed since the last annual reexamination. The family reported a decrease from \$200 to \$100 monthly, but the change was not processed because it did not meet the threshold.

Step 3: The family reported changes, so the PHA must adjust to reflect current child support income. In this example, the family submitted a child support history report from the local child support office that documents regular \$100 monthly child supports payments beginning 3/1/2024 through the current month. Process the annual reexamination effective 11/1/2024 using current annual child support income determined in Step 3 (\$1,200 in this example).

Calculating Fergus’ Wages

Step 1: Determine prior annual income from wages in EIV (i.e., Q2 2023 through Q1 of 2024: \$8,600).

Step 2: Take into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination. In this case, there have been no interim reexaminations processed since the last annual reexamination.

Step 3: There is a discrepancy between what the family reported and EIV, so BHA must verify and adjust to reflect current annual income from wages. Fergus reported \$6,000 in annual income from wages on the annual reexamination from a single employer, Ian’s Fish ‘n’ Chips. BHA projected annual income of \$7,800 based on the two paystubs for this employer, and EIV shows \$8,600 earned in the most recent four quarters in EIV. To complete Step 3, BHA must do the following:

- Resolve the discrepancy between EIV wages, the \$6,000 annual income Fergus reported, and the \$7,800 projected based on the paystubs he provided, and
- Verify he is no longer employed at Claire’s Healthcare Supplies in accordance with HUD’s verification hierarchy and local policies.

BHA determined that Fergus reported his net vs. gross annual income from wages, which he corrected on the annual reexamination form to reflect his current gross annual income of \$9,000. BHA verified Fergus was no longer employed at Claire’s Healthcare Supplies and obtained two additional paystubs. Based on four current and consecutive paystubs, Fergus is now projected to earn \$9,360 annually. Process the annual reexamination effective 11/1/2024 using income from wages determined in Step 3 (\$9,360 in this example).

Calculating Fergus' Other Non-Wage Income

Step 1: Determine prior annual income from other non-wage income (i.e., \$3,000 on the last HUD– 50058).

Step 2: Take into consideration any interim reexamination of family income completed since the last annual reexamination. In this case, there have been no interim reexaminations processed since the last annual reexamination.

Step 3: The family did not report any non-wage income on the annual reexamination form, but it was included on the last HUD–50058. The PHA must verify and adjust to reflect current non-wage income. The PHA must verify no income was received through a “Go Fund Me” online fundraiser so that it may be excluded. Fergus provided a self-certification that he hasn’t solicited funds online and doesn’t plan to in the following year; he also provided records from the account that documented no fundraising activity in the prior 12-month period. Process the annual reexamination effective 11/1/2024 using annual non-wage income of \$0 determined in Step 3.

Summary of Annual Income (as reported on the HUD-50058)

Samantha (Head of Household): Own business: \$18,000 Pension: \$12,300 Child support: \$1,200	Fergus (Co-head): Wages: \$9,360
Poole Family Total Annual Income: \$40,860	

Chapter 10

PETS

[24 CFR 5, Subpart C; 24 CFR 960, Subpart G]

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains BHA's policies on the keeping of pets and describes any criteria or standards pertaining to the policies. The rules adopted are reasonably related to the legitimate interest of BHA to provide a decent, safe and sanitary living environment for all tenants, and to protect and preserve the physical condition of the property, as well as the financial interest of BHA.

The chapter is organized as follows:

Part I: Service Animals and Assistance Animals. This part explains the difference between service animals, assistance animals, and pets and contains policies related to the designation of an assistance animal as well as their care and handling.

Part II: Pet policies for all developments. This part includes pet policies that are common to both elderly/disabled developments and general occupancy developments.

Part III: Pet deposits and fees for elderly/disabled developments. This part contains policies for pet deposits and fees that are applicable to elderly/disabled developments.

Part IV: Pet deposits and fees for general occupancy developments. This part contains policies for pet deposits and fees that are applicable to general occupancy developments.

PART I: ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

[Section 504; Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C.); 24 CFR 5.303; 24 CFR 960.705;
Notice FHEO 2020-01]

10-I.A. OVERVIEW

This part discusses situations under which permission for an assistance animal, including service and support animals, may be denied, and also establishes standards for the care of assistance animals.

Notice FHEO 2020-01 was published January 28, 2020. The notice provides guidance to help PHAs and other housing providers distinguish between a person with a non-obvious disability who has a legitimate need for an assistance animal and a person without a disability who simply wants to have a pet or avoid the costs and limitations imposed by the PHA's pet policies. FHEO 2020-01 makes clear that the notice is guidance and a tool for PHAs and other housing providers to use at their discretion and provides a set of best practices for addressing requests for assistance animals. The guidance in FHEO 2020-01 should be read together with HUD's regulations prohibiting discrimination under the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and the HUD/Department of Justice (DOJ) Joint Statement on Reasonable Accommodation under the Fair Housing Act. Housing providers may also be subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and should therefore refer also to DOJ's regulations implementing Titles II and III of the ADA at 28 CFR Parts 35 and 36, in addition to DOJ's other guidance on assistance animals.

There are two types of assistance animals: (1) service animals, and (2) other animals that do work, perform tasks, provide assistance, and/or provide therapeutic emotional support for individuals with disabilities (i.e., support animals).

Assistance animals, including service and support animals, are not pets and thus are not subject to the PHA's pet policies described in Parts II through IV of this chapter [24 CFR 5.303; 960.705; Notice FHEO 2020-01].

10-I.B. APPROVAL OF ASSISTANCE ANIMALS [Notice FHEO 2020-01]

Service Animals

Notice FHEO 2020-01 states that BHA's should initially follow the Department of Justice (DOJ) analysis to assessing whether an animal is a service animal under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under the ADA, a service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

As a best practice, housing providers may use the following questions to help them determine if an animal is a service animal under the ADA:

- Is the animal a dog? If not, the animal is not a service animal but may be another

type of assistance animal for which an accommodation is needed (support animal).

- Is it readily apparent that the dog is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability? If yes, further inquiries are inappropriate because the animal is a service animal. If not, it is advisable that the PHA limit its inquiries to the following two questions: (1) Is the animal required because of the disability? and (2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

If the answer to question (1) is “yes” and work or a task is identified in response to question (2), grant the requested accommodation if otherwise reasonable. If the answer to either question is “no,” the animal does not qualify as a service animal but may be a support animal.

A service animal must be permitted in all areas of the facility where members of the public are allowed.

Support Animals (Assistance Animals other than Service Animals)

If the animal does not qualify as a service animal, BHA must next determine whether the animal would qualify as a support animal (other type of assistance animal). If the individual has indeed requested a reasonable accommodation to get or keep an animal in connection with a physical or mental impairment or disability, BHA may use the following questions to help them assess whether to grant the accommodation in accordance with the policies outlined in Chapter 2 (BHA is not required to grant a reasonable accommodation that has not been requested):

- Does the person have an observable disability or does BHA already have information giving them reason to believe that the person has a disability? If not, has the person requesting the accommodation provided information that reasonably supports that the person seeking the accommodation has a disability?
- If the person has an observable disability, BHA already has information giving them reason to believe the person has a disability, or the person has provided information supporting that they have a disability, then has the person provided information that reasonably supports that the animal does work, performs tasks, provides assistance, and/or provides therapeutic emotional support with respect to the individual’s disability?
- If yes, is the animal commonly kept in households? An animal commonly kept in households would be a dog, cat, small bird, rabbit, hamster, gerbil, other rodent, fish, turtle, or other small, domesticated animal that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial purposes. For purposes of this assessment, reptiles (other than turtles), barnyard animals, monkeys, kangaroos, and other non-domesticated animals are not considered common household animals.

If the individual is requesting to keep a unique animal not commonly kept in households, then the requestor has the substantial burden of demonstrating a disability-related therapeutic need for the specific animal or the specific type of animal. Such individuals are encouraged to submit documentation from a health care professional.

General Considerations

A person with a disability is not automatically entitled to have an assistance animal. Reasonable accommodation requires that there is a relationship between the person’s disability and their need for the animal [PH Occ GB, p. 179].

Before denying a reasonable accommodation request due to lack of information confirming an individual’s disability or disability-related need for an animal, BHA is encouraged to engage in a good-faith dialog with the requestor called the “interactive process” [FHEO 2020-01].

BHA may not refuse to allow a person with a disability to have an assistance animal merely because the animal does not have formal training. Some, but not all, animals that assist persons with disabilities are professionally trained. Other assistance animals are trained by the owners themselves and, in some cases, no special training is required. The question is whether or not the animal performs the assistance or provides the benefit needed by the person with the disability [PH Occ GB, p. 178].

BHA's refusal to permit persons with a disability to use and live with an assistance animal that is needed to assist them, would violate Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Fair Housing Act unless [PH Occ GB, p. 179]:

- There is reliable objective evidence that the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by a reasonable accommodation
- There is reliable objective evidence that the animal would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others

The Fair Housing Act does not require a dwelling to be made available to an individual whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others. BHA may therefore refuse a reasonable accommodation for an assistance animal if the specific animal poses a direct threat that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level through the actions the individual takes to maintain or control the animal (e.g., keeping the animal in a security enclosure).

While most requests for reasonable accommodations involve one animal, requests sometimes involve more than one animal (for example, a person has a disability-related need for both animals, or two people living together each have a disability-related need for a separate assistance animal). The decision-making process in Notice FHEO 2020-01 should be used in accordance with the reasonable accommodation policies in Chapter 2 for all requests for exceptions or modifications to BHA's rules, policies, practices, and procedures so that persons with disabilities can have assistance animals in the housing where they reside.

BHA has the authority to regulate service animals and assistance animals under applicable federal, state, and local law [24 CFR 5.303(b)(3); 960.705(b)(3)].

BHA Policy

For an animal to be excluded from the pet policy and be considered a service animal, it must be a trained dog, and there must be a person with disabilities in the household who requires the dog's services.

For an animal to be excluded from the pet policy and be considered a support animal, there must be a person with disabilities in the household, there must be a disability-related need for the animal, and the family must request BHA approve a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the criteria outlined in Notice FHEO 2020-01 and the policies contained in Chapter 2.

10-I.C. CARE AND HANDLING

HUD regulations do not affect any authority BHA may have to regulate service animals and assistance animals under federal, state, and local law [24 CFR 5.303; 24 CFR 960.705].

BHA Policy

- Residents are responsible for feeding, maintaining, providing veterinary care, and controlling their assistance animals. A resident may do this on their own or with the **270**

assistance of family, friends, volunteers, or service providers.

- Residents must ensure that service animals and assistance animals do not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or cause substantial physical damage to the development, dwelling unit, or property of other residents.
- Residents must care for service animals and assistance animals in a manner that complies with state and local laws, including anti-cruelty laws.
- Residents must comply with limited pet ownership requirements such as animal health maintenance, licensing, and disposal of animal waste.
- When a resident's care or handling of a service animal or assistance animal violates these policies, BHA will consider whether the violation could be reduced or eliminated by a reasonable accommodation. If BHA determines that no such accommodation can be made, BHA may withdraw the approval of a particular service or assistance animal.
- A disabled tenant must still register the animal with BHA.
- A disabled tenant is still responsible for the animal's behavior, care and sanitation so as to comply with the lease standards.

PART II: PET POLICIES FOR ALL DEVELOPMENTS

[24 CFR 5, Subpart C; 24 CFR 960, Subpart G]

10-II.A. OVERVIEW

The purpose of a pet policy is to establish clear guidelines for ownership of pets and to ensure that no applicant or resident is discriminated against regarding admission or continued occupancy because of ownership of pets. It also establishes reasonable rules governing the keeping of common household pets. This part contains pet policies that apply to all developments.

10-II.B. MANAGEMENT APPROVAL OF PETS

Registration of Pets

BHA may require registration of the pet with BHA [24 CFR 960.707(b)(5)].

BHA Policy

Pets (dogs and cats) must be registered with BHA before they are brought on the premises. Registration must be renewed annually at recertification.

The pet owner must enter into a pet agreement with BHA. The registration process consists of:

- Basic information about the pet
- Certificate signed by license veterinarian or state/local entity that the pet has received all inoculations required by local law and that the pet has no communicable disease(s) and is pest-free
- Proof of city licensing
- Proof of Spay/Neuter. All female dogs over the age of 6 months and female cats over the age of 5 months must be spayed. All male dogs over the age of 8 months and all male cats over the age of 10 months must be neutered. In the case of underage animals, the pet must be spayed or neutered within 30 days of the pet reaching age requirements outlined above. If health problems prevent such spaying or neutering, a veterinarian's certificate will be required to allow the pet to become a resident of the community.
- Color photo of the pet no less than 3x3 in size
- Execution of a pet agreement with BHA stating that the tenant acknowledges complete responsibility for the care and cleaning of the pet will be required.
- Residents must be in good standings with BHA before a pet agreement will be executed.
- Payment of a \$300.00 deposit or a signed payment plan for \$250.00 to be paid in full within 3 months.

No pet shall be approved or allowed onto the premises until completion of the registration requirements.

Failure to appropriately register a dog or cat and pay the required security deposit shall be cause for termination of the lease.

Refusal to Register Pets

BHA Policy

BHA will refuse to register the pet if:

- The pet is not a 'common household pet' as defined in this policy
- Keeping the pet would violate any pet restrictions listed in this policy
- The pet owner fails to provide complete pet registration information
- The pet owner fails to update the registration annually
- Complaints have been received by other tenants about the pet
- BHA reasonably determines that the pet owner is unable to keep the pet in compliance with the pet rules and other lease obligations. The pet's temperament and behavior may be considered as a factor in determining the pet owner's ability to comply with the provisions of the lease
- The applicant has previously been charged with animal cruelty under state or local law; or has been evicted, had to relinquish a pet or been prohibited from future pet ownership due to pet rule violations or a court order
- The notice of refusal may be combined with a notice of pet violation

If BHA refuses to register a pet, a written notification will be sent to the pet owner within 10 business days of BHA's decision. The notice will state the reason for refusing to register the pet and will inform the family of their right to appeal the decision in accordance with BHA's grievance procedures.

Pet Agreement

BHA Policy

Residents who have been approved to have a pet must enter into a Pet Agreement with BHA, or the approval of the pet will be withdrawn.

The pet agreement is the resident's certification that they have received a copy of BHA's pet policy and applicable house rules, that they have read the policies and/or rules, understands them, and agrees to comply with them.

The resident further certifies by signing the pet agreement that the resident understands that noncompliance with BHA's pet policy and applicable house rules may result in the withdrawal of BHA approval of the pet and/or termination of tenancy.

Finally, the resident further certifies that he or she will adhere to the following rules:

- The resident is responsible and liable for all damages caused by his or her pet(s);
- All complaints of cruelty and all dog bites will be referred to animal control or applicable agency for investigation and enforcement;
- All common household pets are to be fed inside the unit. Feeding is not allowed on porches, sidewalks, patios or other outside areas;
- Residents shall not feed any stray animals; doing so, or keeping stray or unregistered animals, will be considered having a pet without permission;

- No animals may be tethered or chained outside or inside the dwelling unit under any circumstances;
- Pets must be maintained within a resident's unit. When outside the dwelling unit, all pets must be on a leash or carried, in a cage or animal transport enclosure, and under the control of a responsible individual at all times;
- All fecal matter deposited by the pet(s) must be promptly and completely removed from any common area. Failure to do so will result in a Pet Waste Removal charge of \$25.00 per incident. All animal waste or the litter from litter boxes shall be picked up immediately by the pet owner, disposed of in sealed plastic trash bags, and placed in a trash bin. Litter shall not be disposed of by flushing through a toilet;
- Litter boxes shall be stored inside the resident's dwelling unit or in animal enclosures maintained within the dwelling units AND must be removed and/or replaced regularly. Failure to do so will result in a Pet Waste Removal charge of \$25.00 per incident;
- The Resident/ Pet Owner shall be responsible for the removal of waste from any animal or pet exercise area by placing it in a sealed plastic bag and disposing of it in an outside trash bin immediately;
- The resident/pet owner shall take adequate precautions to eliminate any animal or pet odors within or around the unit and to maintain the unit in a sanitary condition at all times;
- Mandatory implementation of effective flea control by measures that produce no toxic hazard to children who may come into contact with treated animals;
- The right of management to enter dwelling unit when there is evidence that an animal left alone is in danger or distress, or is creating a nuisance;
- The right of management to seek impoundment and sheltering of any animal found to be maintained in violation of House Rules, pending resolution of any dispute regarding such violation, at owner's expense. The resident shall be responsible for any impoundment fees, and BHA accepts no responsibility for pets so removed;
- Failure to abide by any animal-related requirement or restriction constitutes a violation of the "Resident Obligations" in the resident's Lease Agreement;
- Residents will prevent disturbances by their pets that interfere with the quiet enjoyment of the premises of other residents in their units or in common areas. This includes, but is not limited to, loud or continuous barking, howling, whining, biting, scratching, chirping, or other such activities;
- Residents/pet owners shall not alter their unit, patio, premises or common areas to create an enclosure for any animal. Installation of pet doors is prohibited;
- Pet owners may not alter their unit or patio to accommodate an animal.

10-II.C. STANDARDS FOR PETS [24 CFR 5.318; 960.707(b)]

BHA may establish reasonable requirements related to pet ownership including, but not limited to:

- Limitations on the number of animals in a unit, based on unit size

- Prohibitions on types of animals that BHA classifies as dangerous, provided that such classifications are consistent with applicable state and local law
- Prohibitions on individual animals, based on certain factors, including the size and weight of the animal
- Requiring pet owners to have their pets spayed or neutered

Cat declawing is not a requirement or condition of pet ownership in public housing and HUD encourages BHA to refrain from engaging in this practice [New PH OCC GB, Pet Ownership, p. 9].

BHA may not require pet owners to have any pet's vocal cords removed.

BHA may not require pet owners to obtain or carry liability insurance.

Definition of "Common Household Pet"

There is no regulatory definition of common household pet for public housing programs, although the regulations for pet ownership in both elderly/disabled and general occupancy developments use the term. The regulations for pet ownership in elderly/disabled developments expressly authorize BHA to define the term [24 CFR 5.306(2)].

BHA Policy

No types of pets other than the following may be kept by a resident. The following types and qualifications are consistent with the applicable State and local law.

Dogs

- Maximum Number: 1 (ONE)
- Maximum adult weight: 25 pounds
- Must be non-aggressive breed
- Must be spayed or neutered
- Must have all required inoculations
- Must be licensed as specified now or in the future by State law and local ordinance
- Any litter resulting from the pet must be removed immediately from the unit

Cats – Domesticated

- Must be spayed or neutered
- Must have all required inoculations
- Must be trained to use a litter box or other waste receptacle
- Must be licensed as specified now or in the future by State law and local ordinance
- Any litter resulting from the pet must be removed from the unit immediately

Birds (canaries, finches, parakeets, cockatiels, small parrots, etc.. **NO EXOTIC BIRDS**)

- Must be in enclosed cage at all times

Fish

- Maximum aquarium size: 10 gallons
- Must be maintained on an approved stand

Rodents (rabbit, guinea pig, hamster, gerbil ONLY)

Must be enclosed in an acceptable cage at all times

Pet Restrictions

BHA Policy

The following animals are not permitted:

- Domesticated dogs that exceed 25 pounds. (Animals certified to assist persons with disabilities are exempt from this weight limitation);
- Animals who would be allowed to produce offspring for sale;
- Wild, feral, or any other animals that are not amenable to routine human handling;
- Any poisonous animals of any kind;
- Fish in aquariums exceeding 10 gallons in capacity;
- Non-human primates;
- Animals whose climatological needs cannot be met in the unaltered environment of the individual dwelling unit;
- Pot-bellied pigs;
- Ferrets or other animals whose natural protective mechanisms pose a risk of serious bites and/or lacerations to small children;
- Hedgehogs or other animals whose protective instincts and natural body armor produce a risk of serious puncture injuries to children;
- Chicks, turtles, or other animals that pose a significant risk of salmonella infection to those who handle them;
- Pigeons, doves, mynahs, and birds of other species that are hosts to the organisms that cause psittacosis in humans;
- Snakes or other kinds of reptiles;
- Insects and Arachnids; or
- Any animal not permitted under state or local law or code.

Number of Pets

BHA Policy

With pre-approval, residents may own a maximum of 2 pets, only 1 of which may be a dog.

In the case of fish, residents may keep no more than can be maintained in a safe and healthy manner in a tank holding up to 10 gallons. Such a tank or aquarium will be counted as 1 pet.

Other Requirements

BHA Policy

Dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered at the time of registration or, in the case of underage animals, as defined in Section 10-II.B under "Proof of Spay/Neuter." Exceptions may be made upon veterinary certification that subjecting this particular pet to the procedure would be temporarily or permanently medically unsafe or unnecessary.

Pets must be licensed in accordance with state or local law. Residents must provide proof of licensing at the time of registration and annually, in conjunction with the resident's annual reexamination.

10-II.D. PET RULES

Pet owners must maintain pets responsibly, in accordance with BHA policies, and in compliance with applicable state and local public health, animal control, and animal cruelty laws and regulations [24 CFR 5.315; 24 CFR 960.707(a)].

Pet Area Restrictions

BHA Policy

Pets must be maintained within the resident's unit. When outside of the unit (within the building or on the grounds), dogs must be kept on a leash or carried. They must be under the control of the resident or other responsible individual at all times.

A common household pet must be effectively restrained and under the control of a responsible person when passing through a common area, from the street to the unit, etc.

Pets are not permitted in common areas including lobbies, community rooms and laundry areas except for those common areas which are entrances to and exits from the building.

Designated Pet/No-Pet Areas [24 CFR 5.318(g), PH GB, p. 182]

BHA may designate buildings, floors of buildings, or sections of buildings as no-pet areas where pets generally may not be permitted. Pet rules may also designate buildings, floors of building, or sections of building for residency by pet-owning tenants.

BHA may direct initial tenant moves as may be necessary to establish pet and no-pet areas. BHA may not refuse to admit, or delay admission of, an applicant on the grounds that the applicant's admission would violate a pet or no-pet area. BHA may adjust the pet and no-pet areas or may direct such additional moves as may be necessary to accommodate such applicants for tenancy or to meet the changing needs of the existing tenants.

BHA may not designate an entire development as a no-pet area, since regulations permit residents to own pets.

BHA Policy

The following areas are designated as no-pet areas:

- BHA playgrounds
- BHA laundry rooms
- BHA management offices
- BHA community rooms

Cleanliness

BHA Policy

The pet owner shall be responsible for the removal of waste from the exercise area by placing it in a sealed plastic bag and disposing of it in a container provided by BHA.

The pet owner shall take adequate precautions to eliminate any pet odors within or around the unit and to maintain the unit in a sanitary condition at all times.

Litter box requirements:

- Pet owners must promptly dispose of waste from litter boxes and must maintain litter boxes in a sanitary manner. Failure to do so will result in a Pet Waste Removal charge of \$25.00 per incident.
- Litter will not be disposed of by being flushed through a toilet.
- Litter boxes shall be kept inside the resident's dwelling unit.

Alterations to Unit

BHA Policy

Pet owners shall not alter their unit, patio, premises or common areas to create an enclosure for any animal.

Installation of pet doors is prohibited.

Noise

BHA Policy

Pet owners must agree to control the noise of pets so that such noise does not constitute a nuisance to other residents or interrupt their peaceful enjoyment of their housing unit or premises. This includes, but is not limited to, loud or continuous barking, howling, whining, biting, scratching, chirping, or other such activities.

Pet Care

BHA Policy

No pet (excluding fish) shall be left unattended in any unit for a period in excess of 24 hours.

Each pet owner shall be responsible for appropriately training and caring for his/her pet to ensure that the pet is not a nuisance or danger to other residents and does not damage BHA property.

No animals may be tethered or chained inside or outside the dwelling unit at any time.

All residents/pet owners shall be responsible for adequate care, nutrition, exercise and medical attention for their pet.

Residents/pet owners must recognize that other residents may have chemical sensitivities or allergies related to pets, or may be easily frightened or disoriented by animals. Pet owners must agree to exercise courtesy with respect to other residents.

Animals must not be a nuisance or a threat to the health or safety of BHA employees, postal workers, agency employees, the public or other residents in the community by reason of noise, unpleasant odors, or other objectionable situations.

Pet owners will be totally liable for all damages or injuries caused by their pet.

Breeding of pets is prohibited.

Any pet owner found to be involved in animal cruelty or neglect will have their pet agreement terminated.

If maintenance is requested or scheduled, either the pet owner must be at home at the time of service to restrain pets or pets must be confined. Failure to confine pets may be cause for delay of maintenance service, additional costs to the pet owner in the event of rescheduled maintenance, and termination of either the pet agreement or residential lease. BHA will not be liable for any pet who escapes due to failure of the owner to properly confine the pet.

Responsible Parties

BHA Policy

The pet owner will be required to designate two responsible parties for the care of the pet if the health or safety of the pet is threatened by the death or incapacity of the pet owner, or by other factors that render the pet owner unable to care for the pet.

A resident who cares for another resident's pet must notify BHA in advance and sign a statement that they agree to abide by all of the pet rules.

Inspections and Repairs

BHA Policy

Except for emergencies, management will not enter the dwelling unit for performance of repairs or inspections where a pet resides unless accompanied for the entire duration of the inspection or repair by the pet owner or responsible person designated by the pet owner. The pet must be held under physical restraint by the pet owner or responsible person until management has completed its tasks. Any delays or interruptions suffered by management in the inspection, maintenance, and upkeep of the premises due to the presence of a pet may be cause for lease termination.

Pets Temporarily on the Premises

BHA Policy

Residents may not care for (pet sit) any animal on the premises or in the unit which has not been approved by BHA as the tenant's pet.

Residents are prohibited from feeding or harboring stray animals.

This rule excludes visiting pet programs sponsored by a humane society or other non-profit organization and approved by BHA.

Pet Rule Violations

BHA Policy

All complaints of cruelty and all dog bites will be referred to animal control or an applicable agency for investigation and enforcement.

If a determination is made on objective facts supported by written statements, that a resident/pet owner has violated the pet rules, written notice will be served.

The notice will contain a brief statement of the factual basis for the determination and the pet rule(s) that were violated. The notice will also state:

- That the pet owner has 10 days from the effective date of the service of notice to correct the violation or make written request for a meeting to discuss the violation
- That the pet owner is entitled to be accompanied by another person of their choice at the meeting
- That the pet owner's failure to correct the violation, request a meeting, or appear at a requested meeting may result in initiation of procedures to remove the pet, or to terminate the pet owner's tenancy

The authorization for a common household pet may be revoked at any time subject to BHA's grievance procedure if the pet becomes destructive or a nuisance to others, or if the tenant fails to comply with this policy.

Notice for Pet Removal

BHA Policy

If the pet owner and BHA are unable to resolve the violation at the meeting or the pet owner fails to correct the violation in the time period allotted by BHA, BHA may serve notice to remove the pet.

The notice will contain:

- A brief statement of the factual basis for BHA's determination that a pet rule has been violated
- The requirement that the resident/pet owner must remove the pet within 30 days of the notice or, if for a threat to health and safety, removal within 24 hours.
- A statement that failure to remove the pet may result in the initiation of termination of tenancy procedures

The resident will be responsible for all reasonable expenses directly related to the presence of the animal or pet on the premises, including the cost of repairs and replacement in the apartment, and the cost of animal care facilities if needed.

- These charges are due and payable within 30 days of written notification.

Pet Removal

BHA Policy

If the death or incapacity of the pet owner threatens the health or safety of the pet, or other factors occur that render the owner unable to care for the pet, the situation will be reported to the responsible party designated by the pet owner.

If the responsible party is unwilling or unable to care for the pet, or if BHA after reasonable efforts cannot contact the responsible party, BHA may contact the appropriate state or local agency and request the removal of the pet.

Termination of Tenancy

BHA Policy

BHA may initiate procedures for termination of tenancy based on a pet rule violation if:

- The pet owner has failed to remove the pet or correct a pet rule violation within the time period specified
- The pet rule violation is sufficient to begin procedures to terminate tenancy under terms of the lease

Emergencies

BHA Policy

BHA will take all necessary steps to ensure that pets that become vicious, display symptoms of severe illness, or demonstrate behavior that constitutes an immediate threat to the health or safety of others, are immediately removed from the premises by referring the situation to the appropriate state or local entity authorized to remove such animals.

If it is necessary for BHA to place the pet in a shelter facility, the cost will be the responsibility of the pet owner.

If the pet is removed as a result of any aggressive act on the part of the pet, the pet will not be allowed back on the premises.

PART III: PET DEPOSITS AND FEES IN ELDERLY/DISABLED DEVELOPMENTS

10-III.A. OVERVIEW

This part describes BHA's policies for pet deposits and fees in elderly, disabled and mixed population developments. Policies governing deposits and fees in general occupancy developments are described in Part IV.

10-III.B. PET DEPOSITS

Payment of Deposit

BHA may require tenants who own or keep pets in their units to pay a refundable pet deposit. This deposit is in addition to any other financial obligation generally imposed on tenants of the development [24 CFR 5.318(d)(1)].

The maximum amount of pet deposit that may be charged by BHA on a per dwelling unit basis is the higher of the total tenant payment (TTP) or such reasonable fixed amount as BHA may require. BHA may permit gradual accumulation of the pet deposit by the pet owner [24 CFR 5.318(d)(3)].

The pet deposit is not part of the rent payable by the resident [24 CFR 5.318(d)(5)].

BHA Policy

Pet owners are required to pay a pet deposit in addition to any other required deposits. The amount of the deposit is \$300.00, and must be paid in full, or a signed payment agreement must be on file, before the pet is brought on the premises. Payment agreements for pet deposits will be no longer than 3 months.

Refund of Deposit [24 CFR 5.318(d)(1)]

BHA may use the pet deposit only to pay reasonable expenses directly attributable to the presence of the pet, including (but not limited to) the costs of repairs and replacements to, and fumigation of, the tenant's dwelling unit. BHA must refund the unused portion of the pet deposit to the tenant within a reasonable time after the tenant moves from the development or no longer owns or keeps a pet in the unit.

BHA Policy

BHA will refund the pet deposit to the resident, less the costs of any damages caused by the pet to the dwelling unit, within 14 days of move-out or removal of the pet from the unit.

The resident will be billed for any amount that exceeds the pet deposit.

BHA will provide the resident with a written list of any charges against the pet deposit within 14 days of the move-out inspection or removal of the pet from the unit. If the resident disagrees with the amount charged to the pet deposit, BHA will provide a meeting to discuss the charges.

10-III.C. OTHER CHARGES

Pet-Related Damages during Occupancy

BHA Policy

All reasonable expenses incurred by BHA as a result of damages directly attributable to the presence of the pet in the development will be the responsibility of the resident, including:

- The cost of repairs and replacements to the resident's dwelling unit
- Fumigation of the dwelling unit
- Repairs to common areas of the development

The expense of flea elimination shall also be the responsibility of the resident.

If the resident is in occupancy when such costs occur, the resident shall be billed for such costs in accordance with the policies in Section 8-I.F. Pet deposits will not be applied to the costs of pet-related damages during occupancy.

Charges for pet-related damage are not part of rent payable by the resident.

Pet Waste Removal Charge

The regulations do not address BHA's ability to impose charges for house pet rule violations. However, charges for violation of BHA pet rules may be treated like charges for other violations of the lease and BHA tenancy rules.

BHA Policy

A separate pet waste removal charge of \$25.00 per occurrence will be assessed against pet owners who fail to remove pet waste in accordance with this policy.

Notices of pet waste removal charges will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse action. Charges are due and payable 10 days after billing. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, BHA may not take action for nonpayment of the charge until the conclusion of the grievance process.

Charges for pet waste removal are not part of rent payable by the resident.

PART IV: PET DEPOSITS AND FEES IN GENERAL OCCUPANCY DEVELOPMENTS

10-IV.A. OVERVIEW

This part describes BHA's policies for pet deposits and fees for those who reside in general occupancy developments.

10-IV.B. PET DEPOSITS

BHA may require a refundable pet deposit to cover additional costs attributable to the pet and not otherwise covered [24 CFR 960.707(b)(1)].

If BHA requires a resident to pay a pet deposit, BHA must place the deposit in an account of the type required under applicable State or local law for pet deposits, or if there are no such requirements, for rental security deposits, if applicable. BHA must comply with such laws as to retention of the deposit, interest, and return of the deposit to the resident, and any other applicable requirements [24 CFR 960.707(d)].

Payment of Deposit

BHA Policy

Tenants with animals must pay a refundable pet deposit of \$300.

Refund of Deposit

BHA Policy

BHA will provide the tenant with a written list of any charges against the pet deposit within 14 days of move-out or removal of the pet from the unit. If the tenant disagrees with the amount charged to the pet deposit, BHA will provide a meeting to discuss the charges.

All reasonable expenses incurred by BHA as a result of damages directly attributable to the presence of the pet in the development will be the responsibility of the resident, including, but not limited to:

- The cost of repairs and replacements to the resident's dwelling unit
- Fumigation of the dwelling unit
- Common areas of the development if applicable
- The expense of flea de-infestation

If such expenses occur as the result of a move-out inspection, they will be deducted from the pet deposit. The resident will be billed for any amount that exceeds the pet deposit.

BHA will refund the pet deposit to the resident, less the costs of any damages caused by the pet to the dwelling unit within 14 days of move-out or removal of the pet from the unit.

Pet Deposits are not a part of rent payable by the resident.

10-IV.C. NON-REFUNDABLE NOMINAL PET FEE

BHA may require payment of a non-refundable nominal pet fee to cover the reasonable operating costs to the development relating to the presence of pets [24 CFR 960.707(b)(1)].

BHA Policy

BHA will not charge a non-refundable nominal fee.

10-IV.D. OTHER CHARGES

Pet-Related Damages during Occupancy

BHA Policy

All reasonable expenses incurred by BHA as a result of damages directly attributable to the presence of the pet in the development will be the responsibility of the resident, including:

- The cost of repairs and replacements to the resident's dwelling unit
- Fumigation of the dwelling unit
- Repairs to common areas of the development
- The expense of flea elimination

If the resident is in occupancy when such costs occur, the resident shall be billed for such costs in accordance with the policies in Section 8-I.F. Pet deposits will not be applied to the costs of pet-related damages during occupancy.

Charges for pet-related damage are not part of rent payable by the resident.

Pet Waste Removal Charge

The regulations do not address BHA's ability to impose charges for house pet rule violations. However, charges for violation of BHA pet rules may be treated like charges for other violations of the lease and BHA tenancy rules.

BHA Policy

A separate pet waste removal charge of \$25.00 per occurrence will be assessed against pet owners who fail to remove pet waste in accordance with this policy.

Notices of pet waste removal charges will be in accordance with requirements regarding notices of adverse action. Such charges will be due and payable 10 days after billing.

Charges for pet waste removal are not part of rent payable by the resident.

Chapter 11

COMMUNITY SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains HUD regulations requiring BHA to implement a community service program for all non-exempt adults living in public housing.

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

Part I: Community Service Requirements. This part describes who is subject to the community service requirement, who is exempt, and HUD's definition of economic self-sufficiency.

Part II: BHA Implementation of Community Service. This part provides BHA policy regarding BHA implementation and program design.

PART I: COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT

11-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD regulations pertaining to the community service requirement are contained in 24 CFR 960 Subpart F (960.600 through 960.609). BHA and residents must comply with the community service requirement, effective with PHA fiscal years that commenced on or after October 1, 2000. Per 903.7(l)(1)(iii), BHA Plan must contain a statement of the how BHA will comply with the community service requirement, including any cooperative agreement that BHA has entered into or plans to enter into.

Community service is the performance of voluntary work or duties that are a public benefit and that serve to improve the quality of life, enhance resident self-sufficiency, or increase resident self-responsibility in the community. Community service is not employment and may not include political activities [24 CFR 960.601(b)].

In administering community service requirements, BHA must comply with all nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements [24 CFR 960.605(c)(5)].

11-I.B. REQUIREMENTS

Each adult resident of BHA, who is not exempt, must [24 CFR 960.603(a)]:

- Contribute 8 hours per month of community service; or
- Participate in an economic self-sufficiency program (as defined in the regulations) for 8 hours per month; or
- Perform 8 hours per month of combined activities (community service and economic self-sufficiency programs).
- The required community service or self-sufficiency activity may be completed 8 hours each month or may be aggregated across a year. Any blocking of hours is acceptable as long as 96 hours is completed by each annual certification of compliance. [Notice PIH 2015-12]

Definitions

Exempt Individual [24 CFR 960.601(b), Notice PIH 2015-12]

An *exempt individual* is an adult who:

- Is age 62 years or older
- Is blind or disabled (as defined under Section 216[i][I] or 1614 of the Social Security Act), and who certifies that because of this disability s/he is unable to comply with the service provisions
- Is a primary caretaker of such an individual
- Is engaged in work activities

BHA Policy

BHA will consider 30 hours per week as the minimum number of hours needed to qualify for a work activity exemption.

- Is able to meet requirements of being exempted under a state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state in which the PHA is located, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program.
 - This exemption applies to anyone whose characteristics or family situation meet the welfare agency exemption criteria and can be verified.
- Is a family receiving assistance, benefits, or services under a state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of the state in which the PHA is located, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program and the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), and has not been found by the state or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with such program.

Community Service [24 CFR 960.601(b), Notice PIH 2015-12]

Community service is the performance of voluntary work or duties that are a public benefit, and that serve to improve the quality of life, enhance resident self-sufficiency, or increase resident self-responsibility in the community. Community service is not employment and may not include political activities.

Eligible community service activities include, but are not limited to, work at:

- Local public and nonprofit institutions such as schools, head start programs, before or after school programs, child care centers, hospitals, clinics, hospices, nursing homes, recreation centers, senior centers, adult day care programs, homeless shelters, feeding programs, food banks (distributing either donated or commodity foods), or clothes closets (distributing donated clothing)
- Nonprofit organizations serving BHA residents or their children such as: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys or Girls Clubs, 4-H programs, Police Assistance League (PAL), organized children's recreation, mentoring or education programs, Big Brother or Big Sister, garden centers, community clean-up programs, beautification programs
- Programs funded under the Older Americans Act, such as Green Thumb, Service Corps of Retired Executives, senior meals programs, senior centers, Meals on Wheels
- Public or nonprofit organizations dedicated to seniors, youth, children, residents, citizens, special-needs populations or with missions to enhance the environment, historic resources, cultural identities, neighborhoods, or performing arts
- Caring for the children of other residents so parent may volunteer

NOTE: Political activity is excluded for purposes of eligible community service activities.

BHA Policy

Community services at profit-motivated entities, volunteer work performed at homes or offices of general private citizens, and court-ordered or probation-based work will not be considered as eligible community service activities.

Economic Self-Sufficiency Program [24 CFR 5.603(b), Notice PIH 2015-12]

For purposes of satisfying the community service requirement, an *economic self-sufficiency program* is defined by HUD as: any program designed to encourage, assist, train, or facilitate economic independence of assisted families or to provide work for such families.

Eligible self-sufficiency activities include, but are not limited to:

- Job readiness or job training
- Training programs through local one-stop career centers, workforce investment boards (local entities administered through the U.S. Department of Labor), or other training providers
- Employment counseling, work placement, or basic skills training
- Education, including higher education (junior college or college), GED classes, or reading, financial, or computer literacy classes
- Apprenticeships (formal or informal)
- English proficiency or English as a second language classes
- Budgeting and credit counseling
- Any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as substance abuse or mental health counseling)

Work Activities [42 U.S.C. 607(d)]

As it relates to an exemption from the community service requirement, *work activities* means:

- Unsubsidized employment
- Subsidized private sector employment
- Subsidized public sector employment
- Work experience (including work associated with the refurbishing of publicly assisted housing) if sufficient private sector employment is not available
- On-the-job training
- Job search and job readiness assistance
- Community service programs
- Vocational educational training (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual)
- Job skills training directly related to employment
- Education directly related to employment, in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency
- Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate

Notification Requirements [24 CFR 960.605(c)(2), Notice PIH 2015-12; Notice PIH 2016-06]

BHA must give each family a written description of the community service requirement, the

process for claiming status as an exempt person, and the process for BHA verification of exempt status. BHA must also notify the family of its determination identifying the family members who are subject to the service requirement, and the family members who are exempt. In addition, the family must sign a certification, Attachment A of Notice PIH 2015-12, that they have received and read the policy and understand that if they are not exempt, failure to comply with the requirement will result in nonrenewal of their lease. The family must also sign a certification at annual reexaminations, such as Attachment B of Notice PIH 2015-12, certifying that they understand the requirement.

BHA Policy

BHA will provide the family with a copy of the Community Service Policy found in Exhibit 11-1 of this chapter, at lease-up, lease renewal, when a family member is determined to be subject to the community service requirement during the lease term, and at any time upon the family's request. The policy will notify the family that self-certification forms are subject to review by BHA.

On an annual basis, at the time of lease renewal, BHA will notify the family in writing of the family members who are subject to the community service requirement and the family members who are exempt. If the family includes non-exempt individuals, the notice will include a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities, as well as a documentation form on which they may record the activities they perform and the number of hours contributed. The form will also have a place for a signature by an appropriate official, who will certify to the activities and hours completed.

11-I.C. DETERMINATION OF EXEMPTION STATUS AND COMPLIANCE [24 CFR 960.605(c)(3)]

BHA must review and verify family compliance with service requirements annually at least thirty days before the end of the twelve month lease term. The policy for documentation and verification of compliance with service requirements may be found at Section 11-I.D.

Annual Determination

Determination of Exemption Status

An exempt individual is excused from the community service requirement [24 CFR 960.603(a)].

BHA Policy

At least 60 days prior to lease renewal, BHA will review and verify the exemption status of all adult family members. This verification will only be done on an annual basis unless the family reports a change or BHA has reason to believe that an individual's exemption status has changed. For individuals who are exempt because they are 62 years of age and older, verification of exemption status will be done only at the initial examination.

Upon completion of the verification process, BHA will notify the family of its determination in accordance with the policy in Section 11-I.B.

Determination of Compliance

BHA must review resident family compliance with service requirements annually at least thirty days before the end of the twelve month lease term [24 CFR 960.605(c)(3)]. As part of this review, BHA must verify that any family member that is not exempt from the community service requirement has met their service obligation.

BHA Policy

Approximately 60 days prior to the end of the lease term, BHA will provide written notice requiring the family to submit documentation that all subject family members have complied with the service requirement. The family will have 10 days to submit BHA required documentation form(s).

If the family fails to submit the required documentation within the required timeframe, or BHA-approved extension, the subject family members will be considered noncompliant with community service requirements, and notices of noncompliance will be issued pursuant to the policies in Section 11-I.E.

Change in Status between Annual Determinations

BHA Policy

Exempt to Non-Exempt Status

If an exempt individual becomes non-exempt during the 12-month lease term, it is the family's responsibility to report this change to BHA within 10 days.

Within 10 business days of a family reporting such a change, or BHA determining such a change is necessary, BHA will provide written notice of the effective date of the requirement, a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities, as well as a documentation form on which the family member may record the activities performed and number of hours contributed.

The effective date of the community service requirement will be the first of the month following 30-day notice.

Determination of Initial Compliance

When an adult family member becomes subject to community service, they must perform 8 hours of community service for the months they are subject to the requirement before the end of the lease term (anniversary date).

Example 1: Alberto Jones turns 18 on 5/10/15 and is not exempt from the community services requirements. His community service requirement begins on 6/1/15, and his initial compliance is reviewed before the end of the lease term (anniversary date), which is 11/30/15.

- Alberto must perform 6 months of community service in his initial compliance period, before the end of the lease term (anniversary date).

Example 2: Lisa Dewhurst leaves her job on 9/20/14 and is not exempt from the community service requirement. Her community service requirement begins on 10/1/14, and her initial compliance is reviewed before the end of the lease term (anniversary date), which is 6/30/15.

- Ms. Dewhurst must perform 9 months of community service in her initial compliance period, before the end of the lease term (anniversary date).

Non-Exempt to Exempt Status

If a non-exempt person becomes exempt during the 12-month lease term, it is the family's responsibility to report this change to BHA within 10 days. Any claim of exemption will be verified by BHA in accordance with the policy at Section 11-I.D., Documentation and Verification of Exemption Status.

Within 10 business days of a family reporting such a change, or BHA determining such a change is necessary, BHA will provide the family written notice that the family member is no longer subject to the community service requirement if BHA is able to verify the exemption.

The exemption will be effective immediately.

11-I.D. DOCUMENTATION AND VERIFICATION [24 CFR 960.605(c)(4); 24 CFR 960-607; Notice PIH 2016-08]

BHA must retain reasonable documentation of service requirement performance or exemption in participant files.

Documentation and Verification of Exemption Status

BHA Policy

All family members who claim they are exempt from the community service requirement will be required to sign the community service exemption certification form found in Exhibit 11-3. BHA will provide a completed copy to the family and will keep a copy in the tenant file.

BHA will verify that an individual is exempt from the community service requirement by following the verification hierarchy and documentation requirements in Chapter 7.

BHA makes the final determination whether or not to grant an exemption from the community service requirement. If a resident does not agree with BHA's determination, s/he can dispute the decision through BHA's grievance procedures (see Chapter 14).

Documentation and Verification of Compliance

At each regularly scheduled reexamination, each non-exempt family member presents a signed standardized certification form developed by BHA of community service and self-sufficiency activities performed over the last 12 months [Notice PIH 2015-12].

If qualifying community service activities are administered by an organization other than BHA, a family member who is required to fulfill a service requirement must provide documentation required by BHA. BHA may require a self-certification from a third-party. [24 CFR 960.607]. **292**

If BHA accepts self-certification of compliance with the community service requirement, it must provide a form which includes a statement that the client performed the required hours, contact information for the community service provider, a description of activities performed, and dates of service.

If BHA accepts self-certification, it must validate a sample of certifications through third-party documentation. BHA must notify families that self-certification forms are available and that a sample of self-certifications will be validated.

HUD strongly encourages PHAs to investigate community service compliance when there are questions of accuracy.

BHA Policy

If anyone in the family is subject to the community service requirement, BHA will provide the family with community service documentation forms at admission, at lease renewal, when a family member becomes subject to the community service requirement during the lease term, or upon request by the family. The forms will notify the family that self-certification forms are available, and that a sample of self-certifications will be validated through third-party documents.

Each individual who is subject to the requirement will be required to record their community service or self-sufficiency activities and the number of hours contributed on the required form. BHA will accept the individual's self-certification.

Families will be required to submit the documentation to BHA, upon request by BHA, at least annually.

If BHA has reasonable cause to believe that the certification provided by the family is false or fraudulent, BHA will require third-party verification.

BHA will validate a sample of self-certifications. The sample size will be determined based on the chart in Appendix C of Notice PIH 2016-06. In order to validate the selected sample, BHA will request that the family provide third-party documentation of hours contributed as community service or self-sufficiency activities. BHA will follow the verification hierarchy in Notice PIH 2017-12 when validating this sample.

BHA will not accept self-certification for any family member who is under a work-out agreement for previous community service noncompliance.

11-I.E. NONCOMPLIANCE

Noncompliant Residents

The lease specifies that it is renewed automatically for all purposes unless the family fails to comply with the community service requirement. Violation of the service requirement is grounds for nonrenewal of the lease at the end of the 12-month lease term, but not for termination of tenancy during the course of the twelve month lease term [24 CFR 960.603(b)].

BHA may not evict a family due to CSSR noncompliance. However, if BHA finds a tenant is

noncompliant with CSSR, BHA must provide notification to the tenant of the noncompliance which must include:

- A brief description of the finding of non-compliance with CSSR.
- A statement that BHA will not renew the lease at the end of the current 12-month lease term unless the tenant enters into a written work-out agreement with BHA or the family provides written assurance that is satisfactory to BHA explaining that the tenant or other noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit. Such written work-out agreement must include the means through which a noncompliant family member will comply with the CSSR requirement [24 CFR 960.607(c), Notice PIH 2015-12].

The notice must also state that the tenant may request a grievance hearing on BHA's determination, in accordance with BHA's grievance procedures, and that the tenant may exercise any available judicial remedy to seek timely redress for BHA's nonrenewal of the lease because of BHA's determination.

BHA Policy

The notice of noncompliance will be provided at least 45 days prior to the end of the lease term.

The family will have 10 business days from the date of the notice of noncompliance to enter into a written work-out agreement to cure the noncompliance over the 12-month term of the new lease, provide documentation that the noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit, or to request a grievance hearing.

If the family reports that a noncompliant family member is no longer residing in the unit, the family must provide documentation that the family member has actually vacated the unit before BHA will agree to continued occupancy of the family. Documentation must consist of a certification signed by the head of household as well as evidence of the current address of the family member that previously resided with them.

If the family does not request a grievance hearing, or does not take either corrective action required by the notice of noncompliance within the required 10-day timeframe, BHA will terminate tenancy in accordance with the policies in Section 13-IV.D.

Continued Noncompliance and Enforcement Documentation [24 CFR 960.607(b)]

Should a family member refuse to sign a written work-out agreement, or fail to comply with the terms of the work-out agreement, PHAs are required to initiate termination of tenancy proceedings at the end of the current 12-month lease (see 24 CFR 966.53(c)) for failure to comply with lease requirements. When initiating termination of tenancy proceedings, the PHA will provide the following procedural safeguards:

- Adequate notice to the tenant of the grounds for terminating the tenancy and for non-renewal of the lease;
- Right of the tenant to be represented by counsel;
- Opportunity for the tenant to refute the evidence presented by the PHA, including the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and present any affirmative legal or equitable defense which the tenant may have; and,
- A decision on the merits.

BHA Policy

Notices of continued noncompliance will be sent at least 30 days prior to the end of the lease term and will also serve as the family's termination notice. The notice will meet the requirements for termination notices described in Section 13-IV.D.

The family will have 10 days from the date of the notice of non-compliance to provide documentation that the noncompliant resident no longer resides in the unit or to request a grievance hearing.

If the family reports that a noncompliant family member is no longer residing in the unit, the family must provide documentation that the family member has actually vacated the unit before BHA will agree to continued occupancy of the family. Documentation must consist of a certification signed by the head of household as well as evidence of the current address of the noncompliant family member that previously resided with them.

If the family does not request a grievance hearing, or provide such documentation within the required 10-day timeframe, the family's lease and tenancy will automatically terminate at the end of the current lease term without further notice.

PART II: IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

11-II.A. OVERVIEW

BHA must develop a policy for administration of the community service and economic self-sufficiency requirements for public housing. It is in BHA's best interest to develop a viable, effective community service program to provide residents the opportunity to engage in the community and to develop competencies.

BHA Implementation of Community Service

BHA may not substitute any community service or self-sufficiency activities performed by residents for work ordinarily performed by BHA employees, or replace a job at any location where residents perform activities to satisfy the service requirement [24 CFR 960.609].

BHA Policy

BHA will notify its insurance company if residents will be performing community service at BHA. In addition, BHA will ensure that the conditions under which the work is to be performed are not hazardous.

If a disabled resident certifies that s/he is able to perform community service, BHA will ensure that requests for reasonable accommodation are handled in accordance with the policies in Chapter 2.

BHA Program Design

BHA may administer qualifying community service or economic self-sufficiency activities directly, or may make community service activities available through a contractor, or through partnerships with qualified organizations, including resident organizations, and community agencies or institutions [24 CFR 960.605(b)].

BHA Policy

BHA will attempt to provide the broadest choice possible to residents as they choose community service activities.

BHA's goal is to design a service program that gives residents viable opportunities to become involved in the community and to gain competencies and skills. BHA will work with resident organizations and community organizations to design, implement, assess and recalibrate its community service program.

BHA will make every effort to encourage volunteer opportunities throughout the community, especially those in proximity to public housing developments. To the greatest extent possible, BHA will provide names and contacts at agencies that can provide opportunities for residents, including persons with disabilities, to fulfill their community service obligations.

BHA will provide in-house opportunities for volunteer work or self-sufficiency programs when possible.

Residents are able to participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and homeownership programs if BHA offers these programs. The guidelines for the FSS program are found in the most recently approved FSS Action Plan found on the BHA website.

When BHA has a ROSS program, a ROSS Service Coordinator, or an FSS program, BHA will coordinate individual training and service plans (ITSPs) with the community service requirement. Regular meetings with BHA coordinators will satisfy community service activities and BHA coordinators will verify community service hours within individual monthly logs.

EXHIBIT 11-1: COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY POLICY

A. Background

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 requires that all non-exempt (see definitions) public housing adult residents (18 or older) contribute eight (8) hours per month of community service (volunteer work) or participate in eight (8) hours of training, counseling, classes or other activities that help an individual toward self-sufficiency and economic independence. This is a requirement of the public housing lease.

B. Definitions

Community Service – community service activities include, but are not limited to, work at:

- Local public or nonprofit institution such as: schools, head start programs, before or after school programs, child care centers, hospitals, clinics, hospices, nursing homes, recreation centers, senior centers, adult day care programs, homeless shelters, feeding programs, food banks (distributing either donated or commodity foods), or clothes closets (distributing donated clothing)
- Nonprofit organizations such as: Parks and Recreation, United Way, Red Cross, Volunteers of America, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys or Girls Clubs, 4-H Programs, PAL, garden centers, community clean-up programs, beautification programs
- Programs funded under the Older Americans Act, such as Green Thumb, Service Corps of Retired Executives, senior meals programs, senior centers, Meals on Wheels
- Public or nonprofit organizations dedicated to seniors, youth, children, residents, citizens, special-needs populations or with missions to enhance the environment, historic resources, cultural identities, neighborhoods, or performing arts
- PHA housing to improve grounds or provide gardens (so long as such work does not alter the PHA's insurance coverage) or work through resident organizations to help other residents with problems, including serving on the Resident Advisory Board
- Caring for children of other residents so parent may volunteer

NOTE: Political activity is excluded.

Self-Sufficiency Activities – self-sufficiency activities include, but are not limited to:

- Job readiness or job training programs
- Training programs through local one-stop career centers, workforce investment boards (local entities administered through the U.S. Department of Labor), or other training providers
- Employment counseling, work placement, or basic skills training
- Education, including higher education (junior college or college), or reading, financial, or computer literacy classes
- Apprenticeships (formal or informal)
- English proficiency, English as a second language, or literacy (reading) classes

- Budgeting and credit counseling
- Any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as substance abuse or mental health counseling)

Exempt Adult – an adult member of the family who meets any of the following criteria:

- Is 62 years of age or older
- Is blind or a person with disabilities (as defined under Section 216[i][1] or 1614 of the Social Security Act), and who certifies that because of this disability they are unable to comply with the service provisions, or is the primary caretaker of such an individual
- Is engaged in *work activities*
- Is able to meet requirements under a state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of Washington State, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program; or
- Is a member of a family receiving assistance, benefits or services under a state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of Washington State, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program and the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), and has not been found by the state or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with such program
- BHA can use reasonable guidelines in clarifying the work activities in coordination with TANF as appropriate.

Work Activities – as it relates to an exemption from the community service requirement, *work activities* means:

- Unsubsidized employment
- Subsidized private sector employment
- Subsidized public sector employment
- Work experience (including work associated with the refurbishing of publicly assisted housing) if sufficient private sector employment is not available
- On-the-job training
- Job search and job readiness assistance
- Community service programs
- Vocational educational training (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual)
- Job skills training directly related to employment
- Education directly related to employment, in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency
- Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate
- Provision of child care services to an individual who is participating in a community service program

C. Requirements of the Program

1. The eight (8) hours per month may be either volunteer work or self-sufficiency program activity, or a combination of the two.
2. At least eight (8) hours of activity must be performed each month or may be aggregated across a year. Any blocking of hours is acceptable as long as 96 hours is completed by each annual certification of compliance.
3. Family obligation:
 - At lease execution, all adult members (18 or older) of a public housing resident family must:
 - Sign a certification that they have received and read this policy and understand that if they are not exempt, failure to comply with the community service requirement will result in a nonrenewal of their lease; and
 - Declare if they are exempt. If exempt, they must complete the Exemption Form (Exhibit 11-3) and provide documentation of the exemption.
 - Upon written notice from BHA, non-exempt family members must present complete documentation of activities performed during the applicable lease term. This documentation will include places for signatures of supervisors, instructors, or counselors, certifying to the number of hours contributed.
 - If a family member is found to be noncompliant at the end of the 12-month lease term, they, and the head of household, will be required to sign an agreement with BHA to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period, as a condition of continued occupancy, or the lease will be terminated.
 - At annual reexamination, the family must also sign a certification certifying that they understand the community service requirement.
4. Change in exempt status:
 - If, during the twelve (12) month lease period, a non-exempt person becomes exempt, it is their responsibility to report this to BHA and provide documentation of exempt status.
 - If, during the twelve (12) month lease period, an exempt person becomes non-exempt, it is their responsibility to report this to the PHA. Upon receipt of this information BHA will provide the person with the appropriate documentation form(s) and a list of agencies in the community that provide volunteer and/or training opportunities.

D. Authority Obligation

1. To the greatest extent possible and practicable, BHA will:
 - Provide names and contacts at agencies that can provide opportunities for residents, including residents with disabilities, to fulfill their community service obligations.
 - Provide in-house opportunities for volunteer work or self-sufficiency activities.
2. BHA will provide the family with a copy of this policy, and all applicable exemption verification forms and community service documentation forms, at lease-up, lease renewal, when a family member becomes subject to the community service requirement

during the lease term, and at any time upon the family's request.

3. Although exempt family members will be required to submit documentation to support their exemption, BHA will verify the exemption status in accordance with its verification policies. BHA will make the final determination as to whether or not a family member is exempt from the community service requirement. Residents may use BHA's grievance procedure if they disagree with BHA's determination.
4. Noncompliance of family member:
 - At least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the 12-month lease term, BHA will begin reviewing the exempt or non-exempt status and compliance of family members;
 - If, at the end of the initial 12-month lease term under which a family member is subject to the community service requirement, BHA finds the family member to be noncompliant, BHA will not renew the lease unless:
 - The head of household and any other noncompliant resident enter into a written agreement with BHA to make up the deficient hours over the next twelve (12) month period; or
 - The family provides written documentation satisfactory to BHA that the noncompliant family member no longer resides in the unit.
 - If, at the end of the next 12-month lease term, the family member is still not compliant, a 30-day notice to terminate the lease will be issued and the entire family will have to vacate, unless the family provides written documentation satisfactory to BHA that the noncompliant family member no longer resides in the unit;
 - The family may use BHA's grievance procedure to dispute the lease termination.

EXHIBIT 11-2: DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACTS 216(i)(I) and Section 1416 (excerpt) FOR PURPOSES OF EXEMPTION FROM COMMUNITY SERVICE

Social Security Act:

216(i)(1): Except for purposes of Sections 202(d), 202(e), 202(f), 223, and 225, the term “disability” means (A) inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months, or (B) blindness; and the term “blindness” means central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens. An eye which is accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees shall be considered for purposes of this paragraph as having a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less.

Section 1416 (excerpt):

SEC. 1614. [42 U.S.C. 1382c] (a)(1) For purposes of this Title, the term “aged, blind, or disabled individual” means an individual who—

(A) is 65 years of age or older, is blind (as determined under paragraph (2)), or is disabled (as determined under paragraph (3)), and

(B) (i) is a resident of the United States, and is either (I) a citizen or (II) an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise permanently residing in the United States under color of law (including any alien who is lawfully present in the United States as a result of the application of the provisions of Section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act), or

(ii) is a child who is a citizen of the United States and, who is living with a parent of the child who is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States assigned to permanent duty ashore outside the United States.

(2) An individual shall be considered to be blind for purposes of this Title if he has central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens. An eye which is accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees shall be considered for purposes of the first sentence of this subsection as having a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less. An individual shall also be considered to be blind for purposes of this Title if he is blind as defined under a State plan approved under Title X or XVI as in effect for October 1972 and received aid under such plan (on the basis of blindness) for December 1973, so long as he is continuously blind as so defined.

(3)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (C), an individual shall be considered to be disabled for purposes of this Title if he is unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve months.

EXHIBIT 11-3: BHA DETERMINATION OF EXEMPTION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Family: _____

Adult family member: _____

This adult family member meets the requirements for being exempted from BHA's community service requirement for the following reason:

- 62 years of age or older. (*Documentation of age in file*)
- Is a person with disabilities and self-certifies below that they are unable to comply with the community service requirement. (*Documentation of HUD definition of disability in file*)

Tenant certification: I am a person with disabilities and am unable to comply with the community service requirement.

Signature of Family Member

Date

- Is the primary caretaker of such an individual in the above category (*Documentation in file*)
- Is engaged in work activities (*Verification in file*)
- Is able to meet the requirements under a state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, or any other welfare program of Washington State, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program (*Documentation in file*)
- Is a member of a family receiving assistance, benefits or services under a state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, or under any other welfare program of Washington State, including a state-administered welfare-to-work program and the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), and has not been found by the state or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with such program. (*Documentation in file*)

Signature of Family Member

Date

Signature of BHA Representative

Date

EXHIBIT 11-4: CSSR WORK-OUT AGREEMENT

Date: _____

Noncompliant Adult: _____

Adult family member: _____

Community Service & Self-Sufficiency Requirement (CSSR):

Under Section 12 of the U.S. Housing Act, the Bremerton Housing Authority (BHA) is required to enforce the community service and self-sufficiency requirement (CSSR). Under the CSSR, each non-exempt adult family member residing in public housing must perform 8 hours per month of community service or self-sufficiency activities.

Noncompliance: BHA has found that the non-exempt individual named above is in noncompliance with the CSSR. This work-out agreement is BHA's written notification to you of this noncompliance.

Our records show that for the most recent lease term you were required to perform _____ hours of CSSR activities. However, there were _____ hours of verified CSSR activities. Therefore, you are in noncompliance for _____ hours.

BHA will not renew the lease at the end of the current 12-month lease term unless the head of household and noncompliant adult sign a written work-out agreement with BHA or the family provides written assurance that is satisfactory to BHA explaining that the noncompliant adult no longer resides in the unit. The regulations require that the work-out agreement include the means through which a noncompliant family member will comply with the CSSR requirement. [24 CFR 960.607(c), Notice PIH 2015-12]. The terms of the CSSR work-out agreement are on the reverse side of this page.

Enforcement: Should a family member refuse to sign this CSSR work-out agreement, or fail to comply with the terms of this CSSR work-out agreement, or fail to provide satisfactory written assurance that the noncompliant adult no longer resides in the unit, the BHA is required to initiate termination of tenancy proceedings at the end of the current 12-month lease [24 CFR 966.53(c)].

Terms of CSSR Work-Out Agreement

Noncompliant Adult: _____

Please check one of the below boxes:

- I [head of household or spouse/co-head] certify that the noncompliant adult named above no longer resides in the unit. [Verification attached.]

- I, the noncompliant adult named above, agree to complete _____ hours in the upcoming 12-month lease term. These hours include the _____ hours not fulfilled in the most previous lease term, plus the 96 hours for the upcoming lease term.

Below is a description of means through which I will comply with the CSSR requirement:

	Description of Activity	Number of Hours
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
	Total Hours	

SIGNED AND ATTESTED THIS DATE

Signature: _____
Head of Household

Date: _____

Signature: _____
Noncompliant Adult, if other than Head of Household

Date: _____

Signature: _____
BHA Official

Date: _____

Chapter 12

TRANSFER POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains BHA's transfer policy, based on HUD regulations, HUD guidance, and BHA policy decisions.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and BHA policies related to transfers in four parts:

Part I: Emergency Transfers. This part describes emergency transfers, emergency transfer procedures, and payment of transfer costs.

Part II: BHA Required Transfers. This part describes types of transfers that may be required by BHA, notice requirements, and payment of transfer costs.

Part III: Transfers Requested by Residents. This part describes types of transfers that may be requested by residents, eligibility requirements, security deposits, payment of transfer costs, and handling of transfer requests.

Part IV: Transfer Processing. This part describes creating a waiting list, prioritizing transfer requests, the unit offer policy, examples of good cause, de-concentration, transferring to another development, and reexamination.

BHA may require the tenant to move from the unit under some circumstances. There are also emergency circumstances under which alternate accommodations for the tenant must be provided, that may or may not require a transfer.

The tenant may also request a transfer, such as a request for a new unit as a reasonable accommodation.

BHA must have specific policies in place to deal with acceptable transfer requests.

PART I: EMERGENCY TRANSFERS

12-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD categorizes certain situations that require emergency transfers [PH GB, p. 147]. The emergency transfer differs from a typical transfer in that it requires immediate action by BHA.

In the case of a genuine emergency, it may be unlikely that BHA will have the time or resources to immediately transfer a tenant. Due to the immediate need to vacate the unit, placing the tenant on a transfer waiting list would not be appropriate. Under such circumstances, if an appropriate unit is not immediately available, BHA should find alternate accommodations for the tenant until the emergency passes, or a permanent solution (i.e., return to the unit or transfer to another unit) is possible.

12-I.B. EMERGENCY TRANSFERS

If the dwelling unit is damaged to the extent that conditions are created which are hazardous to life, health, or safety of the occupants, BHA must offer standard alternative accommodations, if available, where necessary repairs cannot be made within a reasonable time [24 CFR 966.4(h)].

The VAWA 2013 final rule requires BHA to adopt an emergency transfer plan for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.

BHA Policy

The following are considered emergency circumstances warranting an immediate transfer of the tenant or family:

Maintenance conditions in the resident's unit, building or at the site that pose an immediate verifiable threat to the life, health, or safety of the resident or family members that cannot be repaired or abated within 24 hours. Examples of such unit or building conditions would include: a gas leak; no heat in the building during the winter; no water; toxic contamination; and serious water leaks.

A verified incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. For instances of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, the threat may be established through documentation outlined in Section 16-VII.D. In order to request the emergency transfer, the requestor must submit an emergency transfer request form (form HUD-5383, Exhibit 16-4 of this ACOP), although BHA may waive this requirement in order to expedite the transfer process.

- BHA will immediately process requests for transfers due to domestic violence, dating violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. BHA will allow a tenant to make an internal emergency transfer under VAWA when a safe unit is immediately available. BHA defines *immediately available* as a vacant unit that is ready for move-in within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 30 days. If an internal transfer to a safe unit is not immediately available, BHA will assist the resident in seeking an external emergency transfer either within or outside BHA's programs.

BHA has adopted an emergency transfer plan, which is included as Exhibit 16-3 to this plan.

12-I.C. EMERGENCY TRANSFER PROCEDURES

BHA Policy

Any condition that would produce an emergency work order would qualify a family for an emergency transfer if the repairs cannot be made within 24 hours.

If the transfer is necessary because of maintenance conditions through no fault of the tenant, and an appropriate unit is not immediately available, BHA will provide temporary accommodations to the tenant by arranging for temporary lodging at a hotel or similar location. The family is entitled to alternative accommodations even if the tenant, household member, guest, or other covered person is responsible for the damage that caused the hazard or if a family is in the process of being evicted.

If the conditions that required the transfer cannot be repaired, or the condition cannot be repaired in a reasonable amount of time, BHA will transfer the resident to the first available and appropriate unit after the temporary relocation.

Emergency transfers that arise due to maintenance conditions are mandatory for the tenant.

If the emergency transfer is necessary to protect a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, BHA will follow procedures outlined in Exhibit 16-4.

12-I.D. COSTS OF TRANSFER

BHA Policy

BHA will bear the reasonable costs of temporarily accommodating the tenant and of long-term transfers, if any, due to emergency conditions that were no fault of the tenant.

The reasonable cost of transfers includes the cost of packing, moving, and unloading.

BHA will establish a moving allowance based on the typical costs in the community of packing, moving, and unloading. To establish typical costs, BHA will collect information from companies in the community that provide these services.

BHA will reimburse the family for eligible out-of-pocket moving expenses up to BHA's established moving allowance.

PART II: BHA REQUIRED TRANSFERS

12-II.A. OVERVIEW

HUD regulations regarding transfers are minimal, leaving it up to BHA to develop reasonable transfer policies.

BHA may require that a resident transfer to another unit under some circumstances. For example, BHA may require a resident to transfer to make an accessible unit available to a disabled family. BHA may also transfer a resident in order to maintain occupancy standards based on family composition. Finally, BHA may transfer residents in order to demolish or renovate the unit

A transfer that is required by BHA is an adverse action and is subject to the notice requirements for adverse actions [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)(i)].

12-II.B. TYPES OF BHA REQUIRED TRANSFERS

BHA Policy

The types of transfers that may be required by BHA, include, but are not limited to: transfers to make an accessible unit available for a disabled family; transfers to comply with occupancy standards; transfers for demolition, disposition, revitalization, or rehabilitation; and emergency transfers as discussed in Part I of this chapter.

Transfers required by BHA are mandatory for the tenant. The family will be given 15 days to vacate the unit after receipt of written notice.

Transfers to Make an Accessible Unit Available

When a family is initially given an accessible unit, but does not require the accessible features, BHA may require the family to agree to move to a non-accessible unit when it becomes available [24 CFR 8.27(b)].

BHA Policy

When a non-accessible unit becomes available, BHA will transfer a family living in an accessible unit that does not require the accessible features, to an available unit that is not accessible. BHA may wait until a disabled resident requires the accessible unit before transferring the family that does not require the accessible features out of the accessible unit.

Occupancy Standards Transfers

BHA may require a resident to move when a reexamination indicates that there has been a change in family composition, and the family is either overcrowded or over-housed according to BHA policy [24 CFR 960.257(a)(4)]. On some occasions, BHA may initially place a resident in an inappropriately sized unit at lease-up, where the family is over-housed, to prevent vacancies. The public housing lease must include the tenant's agreement to transfer to an appropriately sized unit based on family composition [24 CFR 966.4(c)(3)].

BHA Policy

BHA will transfer a family when the family size has changed and the family is now too large (overcrowded) or too small (over-housed) for the unit occupied.

For purposes of the transfer policy, overcrowded and over-housed are defined as follows:

- *Overcrowded*: the number of household members exceeds the maximum number of persons allowed for the unit size in which the family resides, according to the chart in Section 5-1.B.
- *Over-housed*: the family no longer qualifies for the bedroom size in which they are living based on BHA's occupancy standards as described in Section 5-1.B.

BHA may also transfer a family who was initially placed in a unit in which the family was over-housed to a unit of an appropriate size based on BHA's occupancy standards, when BHA determines there is a need for the transfer.

BHA may elect not to transfer an over-housed family in order to prevent vacancies.

A family that is required to move because of family size will be advised by BHA that a transfer is necessary and that the family has been placed on the transfer list.

Families that request and are granted an exception to the occupancy standards (for either a larger or smaller size unit) in accordance with the policies in Section 5-1.C will only be required to transfer if it is necessary to comply with the approved exception.

If a unit is not available, the family will be placed on the in-house transfer waiting list and BHA may offer the family a preference on the Public Housing waiting list.

Demolition, Disposition, Revitalizations, or Rehabilitation , Including Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Conversions Transfers

These transfers permit BHA to demolish, sell or do major capital or rehabilitation work at a building site [PH GB, page 148].

BHA Policy

BHA will relocate a family when the unit or site in which the family lives is undergoing major rehabilitation that requires the unit to be vacant, or the unit is being disposed of or demolished. BHA's relocation plan may or may not require transferring affected families to other available public housing units.

If the relocation plan calls for transferring public housing families to other public housing units, affected families will be placed on the transfer list.

In cases of revitalization or rehabilitation, the family may be offered a temporary relocation if allowed under Relocation Act provisions, and may be allowed to return to their unit, depending on contractual and legal obligations, once revitalization or rehabilitation is complete.

12-II.C. ADVERSE ACTION [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)(i)]

A BHA-required transfer is an adverse action. As an adverse action, the transfer is subject to the requirements regarding notices of adverse actions. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, BHA may not take action on the transfer until the conclusion of the grievance process.

12-II.D. COST OF TRANSFER

BHA Policy

BHA will bear the reasonable costs of transfers that BHA requires, except that residents will be required to bear the cost of occupancy standards transfers.

The reasonable costs of transfers include the cost of packing, moving, and unloading.

BHA will establish a moving allowance based on the typical costs in the community of packing, moving, and unloading. To establish typical costs, BHA will collect information from companies in the community that provide these services.

BHA will reimburse the family for eligible out-of-pocket moving expenses up to BHA's established moving allowance.

PART III: TRANSFERS REQUESTED BY TENANTS

12-III.A. OVERVIEW

HUD provides BHA with discretion to consider transfer requests from tenants. The only requests that BHA is required to consider are requests for reasonable accommodation. All other transfer requests are at the discretion of BHA. To avoid administrative costs and burdens, this policy limits the types of requests that will be considered by BHA.

Some transfers that are requested by tenants should be treated as higher priorities than others due to the more urgent need for the transfer.

12-III.B. TYPES OF RESIDENT REQUESTED TRANSFERS

BHA Policy

The types of requests for transfers that BHA will consider are limited to requests for transfers to alleviate a serious or life-threatening medical condition, transfers due to a threat of physical harm or criminal activity, reasonable accommodation, transfers to a location closer to employment, and transfers to a different unit size as long as the family qualifies for the unit according to BHA's occupancy standards. No other transfer requests will be considered by BHA.

BHA will consider the following as high-priority transfer requests:

- When a transfer is needed to alleviate verified medical problems of a serious or life-threatening nature
- When there has been a verified threat of physical harm or criminal activity. Such circumstances may, at BHA's discretion, include an assessment by law enforcement indicating that a family member is the actual or potential victim of a criminal attack, retaliation for testimony, or a hate crime.
- When a family requests a transfer as a reasonable accommodation. Examples of a reasonable accommodation transfer include, but are not limited to, a transfer to a first-floor unit for a person with mobility impairment, or a transfer to a unit with accessible features.

BHA will consider the following as regular-priority transfer requests:

- When a family requests a larger bedroom size unit even though the family does not meet BHA's definition of overcrowded, as long as the family meets BHA's occupancy standards for the requested size unit.
- When the head of household or spouse is employed 25 miles or more from the public housing unit, has no reliable transportation, and public transportation is not adequate.

Transfers requested by the tenant are considered optional for the tenant.

12-III.C. ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSFER

Transferring residents do not have to meet the admission eligibility requirements pertaining to income or preference. However, BHA may establish other standards for considering a transfer request [PH GB, p. 150].

BHA Policy

Except where reasonable accommodation is being requested, BHA will only consider transfer requests from residents that meet the following requirements:

- Have not engaged in criminal activity since occupancy that threatens the health and safety of residents and staff
- Owe no back rent or other charges, or do not have a pattern of late payment during tenancy
- Have no housekeeping lease violations or history of damaging property during tenancy
- Can get utilities turned on in the name of the head of household (applicable only to properties with tenant-paid utilities)

A resident with housekeeping-standards violations will not be transferred until the resident passes a follow-up housekeeping inspection and remains in good standing for a minimum of twelve months.

Exceptions to the good-record requirement may be made when it is to BHA's advantage to make the transfer. Exceptions may also be made when BHA determines that a transfer is necessary to protect the health or safety of a resident who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking and who provides documentation of abuse in accordance with Section 16-VII.D.

Exceptions will also be made when BHA determines that a transfer is necessary to protect the health or safety of a resident who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, and who provides documentation of abuse in accordance with Section 16-VII.D of this ACOP. Tenants who are not in good standing may still request an emergency transfer under VAWA.

If a family requested to be placed on the waiting list for a unit size smaller than designated by the occupancy guidelines, the family will not be eligible to transfer to a larger size unit for a period of two years from the date of admission, unless they have a change in family size or composition, or it is needed as a reasonable accommodation.

12-III.D. SECURITY DEPOSITS

BHA Policy

The family will be required to pay for the difference in deposit if the current deposit on hand is less than the deposit required at the time of move-in to the "new" unit. In turn, if the current deposit exceeds the deposit at the "new" unit, the family will be refunded the difference within 21 days of move-out from "old" unit. Transfers shall be treated as a new move-in and move-out transaction, the original deposit will be applied to "old" unit first, and remaining deposit will be applied to the balance of the new deposit.

12-III.E. COST OF TRANSFER

BHA must pay moving expenses to transfer a resident with a disability to an accessible unit as an accommodation for the resident's disability [Notice PIH 2010-26].

BHA Policy

The resident will bear all of the costs of transfer s/he requests unless the transfer is due to an approved reasonable accommodation. If the transfer is related to an approved reasonable accommodation, BHA will bear the transfer cost.

12-III.F. HANDLING OF REQUESTS

BHA Policy

Residents requesting a transfer to another unit or development will be required to submit a written request for transfer.

In order to request the emergency transfer under VAWA, the resident will be required to submit an emergency transfer request form (form HUD-5383, Exhibit 16-4 of this ACOP). BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, waive this requirement and accept a verbal request in order to expedite the transfer process. If BHA accepts an individual's statement, BHA will document acceptance of the statement in the individual's file in accordance with Section 16-VII.D of this ACOP. Transfer requests under VAWA will be processed in accordance with BHA's Emergency Transfer Plan (Exhibit 16-3).

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

BHA will respond by approving the transfer and putting the family on the transfer list, by denying the transfer, or by requiring more information or documentation from the family, such as documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking in accordance with Section 16-VII. D.

If the family does not meet the "good record" requirements under Section 12-III.C., the manager will address the problem and, until resolved, the request for transfer will be denied.

BHA will respond within ten (10) business days of the submission of the family's request. If BHA denies the request for transfer, the family will be informed of its grievance rights.

PART IV: TRANSFER PROCESSING

12-IV.A. OVERVIEW

Generally, families who request a transfer should be placed on a transfer list and processed in a consistent and appropriate order. The transfer process must be clearly auditable to ensure that residents do not experience inequitable treatment.

12-IV.B. TRANSFER LIST

BHA Policy

BHA will maintain a centralized transfer list to ensure that transfers are processed in the correct order and that procedures are uniform across all properties.

Emergency transfers will not automatically go on the transfer list. Instead emergency transfers will be handled immediately, on a case by case basis. If the emergency cannot be resolved by a temporary accommodation, and the resident requires a permanent transfer, the family will be placed at the top of the transfer list.

Transfers will be processed in the following order:

1. Emergency transfers (hazardous maintenance conditions, VAWA)
2. High-priority transfers (verified medical condition, threat of harm or criminal activity, and reasonable accommodation)
3. Transfers to make accessible units available
4. Demolition, renovation, etc.
5. Occupancy standards
6. Other BHA-required transfers
7. Other tenant-requested transfers

Within each category, transfers will be processed in order of the date a family was placed on the transfer list, starting with the earliest date.

With the approval of the Executive Director, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, transfer a family without regard to its placement on the transfer list in order to address the immediate need of a family in crisis.

If a resident has requested a transfer due to health or safety concerns related to the property or the unit they live in, BHA will attempt to cure the issues experienced by the resident. If it is not possible to cure the issue and there is no appropriate unit available to transfer the resident to, the resident will be offered a Housing Choice Voucher if funding is available and with written approval by the Executive Director.

Demolition and renovation transfers will gain the highest priority as necessary to allow BHA to meet the demolition or renovation schedule.

Transfers will take precedence over waiting list admissions.

12-IV.C. TRANSFER OFFER POLICY

BHA Policy

Residents will receive one offer of a transfer.

When the transfer is required by BHA, the refusal of that offer without good cause will result in lease termination.

When the transfer has been requested by the resident, the refusal of that offer without good cause will result in the removal of the family from the transfer list. In such cases, the family must wait six months to reapply for another transfer.

Tenant will be given a 30 day notice to move and be given 7 days to move when the unit is rent-ready. All moves will be treated as a "new move." A review of the family composition and income must be completed.

12-IV.D. GOOD CAUSE FOR UNIT REFUSAL

BHA Policy

Examples of good cause for refusal of a unit offer include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The family demonstrates to BHA's satisfaction that accepting the unit offer would require the adult household member to quit a job, drop out of an educational institution or job training program, or take a child out of day care or an educational program for children with disabilities.
- The family demonstrates to BHA's satisfaction that accepting the offer will place a family member's life, health, or safety in jeopardy. The family should offer specific and compelling documentation such as restraining orders, other court orders, risk assessments related to witness protection from a law enforcement agency, or documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking in accordance with Section 16-VII.D. Reasons offered must be specific to the family. Refusals due to location alone do not qualify for this good-cause exemption.
- A health professional verifies temporary hospitalization or recovery from illness of the principal household member, other household members (as listed on final application) or live-in aide necessary to the care of the principal household member.
- The unit is inappropriate for the applicant's disabilities, or the family does not need the accessible features in the unit offered and does not want to be subject to a 30-day notice to move.
- The unit has lead-based paint and the family includes children under the age of six.

BHA will require documentation of good cause for unit refusals.

12-IV.E. DECONCENTRATION

BHA Policy

If subject to de-concentration requirements, BHA will consider its de-concentration goals when transfer units are offered. When feasible, families above the Established Income Range will be offered a unit in a development that is below the Established Income Range, and vice versa, to achieve BHA's de-concentration goals. A de-concentration offer will be considered a "bonus" offer; that is, if a resident refuses a de-concentration offer, the resident will receive one additional transfer offer.

12-IV.F. REEXAMINATION POLICIES FOR TRANSFERS

BHA Policy

The reexamination date will be changed to the first of the month in which the transfer took place.

Chapter 13

LEASE TERMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Either party to the dwelling lease agreement may terminate the lease in accordance with the terms of the lease. A public housing lease is different from a private dwelling lease in that the family's rental assistance is tied to their tenancy. When the family moves from their public housing unit, they lose their rental assistance. Therefore, there are additional safeguards to protect the family's tenancy in public housing.

Likewise, there are safeguards to protect HUD's interest in the public housing program. BHA has the authority to terminate the lease because of the family's failure to comply with HUD regulations, for serious or repeated violations of the terms of the lease, and for other good cause. HUD regulations also specify when termination of the lease is mandatory by BHA.

When determining BHA policy on terminations of the lease, BHA must consider state and local landlord-tenant laws. Such laws vary from one location to another, and these variances may be either more or less restrictive than federal law or HUD regulation.

This chapter presents the policies that govern voluntary termination of the lease by the family and the mandatory and voluntary termination of the lease by BHA. It is presented in four parts:

Part I: Termination by Tenant. This part discusses BHA's requirements for voluntary termination of the lease by the family.

Part II: Termination by BHA - Mandatory. This part describes circumstances when termination of the lease by BHA is mandatory. This part also explains nonrenewal of the lease for noncompliance with community service requirements.

Part III: Termination by BHA – Other Authorized Reasons. This part describes BHA's options for lease termination that are not mandated by HUD regulation but for which HUD authorizes BHA to terminate. For some of these options, HUD requires BHA to establish policies and lease provisions for termination, but termination is not mandatory. For other options, BHA has full discretion whether to consider the options as just cause to terminate as long as BHA policies are reasonable, nondiscriminatory, and do not violate state or local landlord-tenant law. This part also discusses the alternatives that BHA may consider in lieu of termination, and the criteria BHA will use when deciding what actions to take.

Part IV: Notification Requirements. This part presents the federal requirements for disclosure of criminal records to the family prior to termination, the HUD requirements and BHA policies regarding the timing and content of written notices for lease termination and eviction, and notification of the post office when eviction is due to criminal activity. This part also discusses record keeping related to lease termination.

PART I: TERMINATION BY TENANT

13-I.A. TENANT CHOOSES TO TERMINATE THE LEASE [24 CFR 966.4(k)(1)(ii) and 24 CFR 966.4(l)(1)]

The family may terminate the lease at any time, for any reason, by following the notification procedures as outlined in the lease. Such notice must be in writing and delivered to the property site office or BHA central office or sent by pre-paid first-class mail, properly addressed.

BHA Policy

If a family desires to move and terminate their tenancy with BHA, they must give a written notice to terminate tenancy twenty (20) days prior to the end of the month. When a family must give less than 20 days' notice due to circumstances beyond their control, BHA, at its discretion, may waive the 20-day requirement.

The notice of lease termination must be signed by the head of household, spouse, or co-head.

PART II: TERMINATION BY BHA – MANDATORY

13-II.A. OVERVIEW

HUD requires mandatory termination of the lease for certain actions or inactions of the family. There are other actions or inactions of the family that constitute *grounds* for lease termination, but the lease termination is not mandatory. BHA must establish policies for termination of the lease in these cases where termination is optional for BHA.

For those tenant actions or failures to act where HUD requires termination, BHA has no such option. In those cases, the family's lease must be terminated. This part describes situations in which HUD requires BHA to terminate the lease.

13-II.B. FAILURE TO PROVIDE CONSENT [24 CFR 960.259(a) and (b)]

BHA must terminate the lease if any family member fails to sign and submit any consent form s/he is required to sign for any reexamination. See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of consent requirements.

13-II.C. FAILURE TO DOCUMENT CITIZENSHIP [24 CFR 5.514(c) and (d) and 24 CFR 960.259(a)]

BHA must terminate the lease if (1) a family fails to submit required documentation within the required timeframe concerning any family member's citizenship or immigration status; (2) a family submits evidence of citizenship and eligible immigration status in a timely manner, but United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) primary and secondary verification does not verify eligible immigration status of the family, resulting in no eligible family members; or (3) a family member, as determined by BHA, has knowingly permitted another individual who is not eligible for assistance to reside (on a permanent basis) in the unit. For (3), such termination must be for a period of at least 24 months. This does not apply to ineligible noncitizens already in the household where the family's assistance has been prorated.

See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of documentation requirements.

13-II.D. FAILURE TO DISCLOSE AND DOCUMENT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.218(c), 24 CFR 960.259(a)(3), Notice PIH 2018-24]

BHA must terminate the lease 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 BHA 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, BHA may defer the family's termination and provide the opportunity to comply with the requirement within a period not to exceed 90 days from the date BHA determined the family to be noncompliant.

BHA Policy

BHA 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 resident'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 resident will be able to disclose an SSN by the deadline.

See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of documentation and certification requirements.

13-II.E. FAILURE TO ACCEPT BHA'S OFFER OF A LEASE REVISION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(ii)(E)]

BHA must terminate the lease if the family fails to accept BHA's offer of a lease revision to an existing lease, provided BHA has done the following:

- The revision is on a form adopted by BHA in accordance with 24 CFR 966.3 pertaining to requirements for notice to tenants and resident organizations and their opportunity to present comments.
- BHA has made written notice of the offer of the revision at least 60 days before the lease revision is scheduled to take effect.
- BHA has specified in the offer a reasonable time limit within that period for acceptance by the family.

See Chapter 8 for information pertaining to BHA policies for offering lease revisions.

13-II.F. METHAMPHETAMINE CONVICTION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(i)(A)]

BHA must immediately terminate the lease if BHA determines that any household member has ever been convicted of the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally-assisted housing.

See Section 13.III.B below for the HUD definition of *premises*.

13-II.G. LIFETIME REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS [Notice PIH 2012-28]

Should BHA discover that a member of an assisted household was subject to a lifetime registration requirement at admission and erroneously admitted after June 25, 2001, BHA must immediately terminate assistance for the household member.

In this situation, BHA 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, BHA must terminate assistance for the household.

13-II.H. NONCOMPLIANCE WITH COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(ii)(D), 24 CFR 960.603(b) and 24 CFR 960.607(b)(2)(ii) and (c)]

BHA is prohibited from renewing the lease at the end of the 12 month lease term when the family fails to comply with the community service requirements as described in Chapter 11.

13-II.I. DEATH OF A SOLE FAMILY MEMBER [Notice PIH 2012-10]

BHA must immediately terminate the lease following the death of the sole family member.

13-II.J. OVER-INCOME FAMILIES [24 CFR 960.507; FR Notice 7/26/18; Notice PIH 2023-03 FR Notice 2/14/23]

In the public housing program, an *over-income family* is defined as a family whose income exceeds the over-income limit for 24 consecutive months. When this occurs, the PHA must either:

- Terminate the family's tenancy within six months of the PHA's final notification at the end of the 24-month grace period; or
- Within 60 days of the PHA's final notification of the end of the 24-month grace period or the next lease renewal (whichever is sooner), have the family executed a new lease that is consistent with 24 CFR 960.509 and charge the family a monthly rent that is the higher of the applicable fair market rent (FMR) or the amount of monthly subsidy for the unit, including amounts from the operating and capital funds.

However, BHA that owns or operates fewer than 250 public housing units may continue to lease public housing units to families whose incomes exceed the low-income limit at initial occupancy in accordance with 24 CFR 960.503. Otherwise, BHA must establish a continued occupancy policy for over-income families in the ACOP indicating which of the above will occur.

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BHA Policy

For families whose income exceeds the over-income limit for 24 consecutive months, BHA will not terminate the family's tenancy and will charge the family the alternative non-public housing rent as well as require the family to sign a new non-public housing lease in accordance with the continued occupancy policies below.

Over-Income Limit [Notice PIH 2023-03]

BHA must publish over-income limits in their ACOP and update them no later than 60 days after HUD publishes new income limits each year. The over-income limit is calculated by multiplying the very low-income limit (VLI) by 2.4, as adjusted for family size.

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BHA Policy

BHA will rely on the following over-income limits. These numbers will be updated within 60 days of HUD publishing new income limits each year and will be effective for all annual and interim reexaminations once these policies have been adopted.

For families larger than eight persons, the over-income limit will be calculated by multiplying the applicable very low-income limit by 2.4.

Decreases in Income [24 CFR 960.507(c)(4)]

If, at any time during the consecutive 24-month period following the initial over-income determination, BHA determines that the family's income is below the over-income limit, BHA's over-income policies no longer apply to the family. If BHA later determines that the family's income exceeds the over-income limit at a subsequent annual or interim reexamination, the family is entitled to a new 24 consecutive month period and new notices under this section.

BHA Policy

If, at any time during the 24-month period following the initial over-income determination, an over-income family experiences a decrease in income, the family may request an interim redetermination of rent in accordance with BHA policy in Chapter 9.

If, as a result, the previously over-income family is now below the over-income limit, the family is no longer subject to over-income provisions as of the effective date of the recertification. BHA will notify the family in writing within 10 business days of the determination that over-income policies no longer apply to them.

Initial Notice of Over-Income Status [24 CFR 960.507(c)(1); Notice PIH 2023-03]

If BHA determines the family has exceeded the over-income limit during an annual or interim reexamination, BHA must provide written notice to the family of the over-income determination no later than 30 days after the income examination. The notice must state that the family has exceeded the over-income limit and continuing to do so for a total of 24 consecutive months will result in BHA following its continued occupancy policy for over-income families. BHA must afford the family an opportunity for a hearing if the family disputes within a reasonable time BHA's determination that the family has exceeded the over-income limit. Exhibits 13-1 and 13-2 provide sample initial notices based on HUD's model notices.

BHA Policy

At annual or interim reexamination, if a family's income exceeds the applicable over-income limit, within 10 business days of the determination, BHA will notify the family in writing of the determination. The notice will state that if the family continues to be over-income for 24 consecutive months, the family will be subject to BHA's over-income policies. The notice will state that the family may request a hearing if the family disputes BHA's determination in accordance with BHA policies in Chapter 14. BHA will ensure that all notices and communications are provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other impairments.

Second Notice of Over-Income Status [24 CFR 960.507(c)(2); Notice PIH 2023-03; Notice PIH 2023-27]

BHA must conduct an income examination 12 months after the initial over-income determination, even if the family is paying flat rent, unless BHA determined the family's income fell below the over-income limit since the initial over-income determination. This includes when BHA makes an initial determination that a family is over-income during an interim

reexamination. In this case BHA must conduct a second interim reexamination 12 months after the over-income determination, unless the family's income falls below the over-income limit during the 24-month period. See Chapter 9 for BHA policies on interims for over-income families.

If BHA determines the family continues to exceed the over-income limit for 12 consecutive months, BHA must provide written notification of this 12-month over-income determination no later than 30 days after the income examination. The notice must state that the family has exceeded the over-income limit for 12 consecutive months and continuing to do so for a total of 24 consecutive months will result in BHA following its continued occupancy policy for over-income families. Additionally, if applicable under BHA policy, the notice must include an estimate (based on current data) of the alternative non-public housing rent for the family's unit. BHA must afford the family an opportunity for a hearing if the family disputes within a reasonable time the PHA's determination that the family has exceeded the over-income limit. Exhibits 13-3 and 13-4 provide sample 12-month notices based on HUD's model notices.

BHA Policy

If a family's income continues to exceed the applicable over-income limit after 12 consecutive months, within 10 business days of the determination, BHA will notify the family in writing of the determination. The notice will state that if the family continues to be over-income for 24 consecutive months, the family will be subject to BHA's over-income policies. The notice will provide an estimate of the alternative non-public housing rent applicable to the family at the close of the 24 consecutive month period. The notice will also state that the family may request a hearing if the family disputes BHA's determination in accordance with BHA policies in Chapter 14. BHA will ensure that all notices and communications are provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other impairments.

Final Notice of Over-Income Status [24 CFR 960.507(c)(3) and 960.509; Notice PIH 2023 03; Notice PIH 2023-27]

Unless BHA determines the family's income fell below the over-income limit since the second over-income determination, BHA must conduct an income examination 24 months after the initial over income determination, even if the family is paying flat rent. When BHA makes an initial determination that a family is over-income during an interim reexamination, BHA must conduct an interim reexamination 12 months after the over-income determination, and then again 12 months after the second over-income determination, unless the family's income falls below the over-income limit during the 24-month period.

If the family continues to be over-income based on this determination, BHA must provide written notification of this determination no later than 30 days after the income examination. The notice must state that the family has exceeded the over-income limit for 24 consecutive months and that BHA will follow its continued occupancy policies for over-income families. BHA must afford the family an opportunity for a hearing if the family disputes within a reasonable time BHA determines that the family has exceeded the over-income limit. Exhibits 13-5 and 13-6 provide sample 24-month notices based on HUD's model notices.

BHA Policy

If a family's income exceeds the applicable over-income limit for 24 consecutive months, BHA will notify the family in writing of the determination within 10 business days of the

date of the determination. BHA will ensure that all notices and communications are provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other impairments. The notice will state that the family will be charged the alternative non-public housing rent in accordance with BHA continued occupancy policies and HUD regulations and provide the family's new rent amount.

The notice will also include a new non-public housing lease and inform the family that the lease must be executed by the family and BHA no later than 60 days from the date of the notice or at the next lease renewal, whichever is sooner. The family will continue to be a public housing program participant until the family executes the new non-public housing lease. The notice will also state that failure to execute the lease within this time period will result in termination of tenancy no more than six months after the date of the notice. BHA will permit an over-income family to execute a lease beyond this time period, but before termination of tenancy, if the over-income family pays BHA the total difference between the alternative non-public housing rent and their public housing rent dating back to the point in time that the over-income family was required to execute the new lease.

Once the family signs the new non-public housing lease, the family will no longer be a public housing participant family. The family will no longer be subject to income examinations, are precluded from participating in the residential council, and cannot participate in any programs that are only for public housing or low-income families. BHA will not provide such families with hearing or grievance rights.

The non-public housing over-income (NPHOI) lease will contain all required provisions listed at 24 CFR 960.509. The initial term of the lease will be for one year. Upon expiration of the initial lease term, the lease will not renew automatically, and subsequent leases will state renewal terms. At any time, BHA may terminate tenancy in accordance with 24 CFR 960.509(b)(11) and in accordance with state and local laws.

Upon execution of the lease, the tenant will be required to pay the amount of monthly tenant rent (known as the alternative non-public housing rent) determined by BHA in accordance with HUD regulations. BHA will comply with state and local law in giving the tenant written notice stating any changes in the amount of tenant rent. Charges assessed under the lease will be due in accordance with state and local law.

If an NPHOI family subsequently experiences a decrease in income after signing the NPHOI lease, the family may only be readmitted to the public housing program if they once again become an eligible low-income family and reapply to the public housing program.

PART III: TERMINATION BY BHA – OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS

13-III.A. OVERVIEW

Besides requiring BHA to terminate the lease under the circumstances described in Part II, HUD requires BHA to establish provisions in the lease for termination pertaining to certain criminal activity, alcohol abuse, and certain household obligations stated in the regulations. While these provisions for lease termination must be in the lease agreement, HUD does not require BHA to terminate for such violations in all cases. BHA has the discretion to consider circumstances surrounding the violation or, in applicable situations, whether the offending household member has entered or completed rehabilitation, and BHA may, as an alternative to termination, require the exclusion of the culpable household member. BHA must adopt policies concerning the use of these options.

In addition, HUD authorizes BHA to terminate the lease for other grounds, but for only those grounds that constitute serious or repeated violations of material terms of the lease or for other good cause. BHA must develop policies pertaining to what constitutes serious or repeated lease violations, and other good cause, based upon the content of the BHA lease. In the development of the terms of the lease, BHA must consider the limitations imposed by state and local landlord-tenant law, as well as HUD regulations and federal statutes. Because of variations in state and local landlord-tenant law, and because HUD affords PHAs wide discretion in some areas, a broad range of policies could be acceptable.

BHA, with some restrictions, also has the option to terminate the tenancies of families who are over-income.

BHA may consider alternatives to termination and must establish policies describing the criteria BHA will use when deciding what action to take, the types of evidence that will be acceptable, and the steps BHA must take when terminating a family's lease.

13-III.B. MANDATORY LEASE PROVISIONS [24 CFR 966.4(I)(5)]

This section addresses provisions for lease termination that must be included in the lease agreement according to HUD regulations. Although the provisions are required, HUD does not require BHA to terminate for such violations in all cases, therefore BHA policies are needed.

***Definitions* [24 CFR 5.100]**

The following definitions will be used for this and other parts of this chapter:

Affiliated Individual is defined in Section 16-VII.B.

Covered person means a tenant, any member of the tenant's household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control.

Dating violence is defined in Section 16-VII.B.

Domestic violence is defined in Section 16-VII.B.

Drug means a controlled substance as defined in Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act [21 U.S.C. 802].

Drug-related criminal activity means the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with the intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use the drug.

Guest means a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of the tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant.

Household means the family and BHA-approved live-in aide. The term household also includes foster children and/or foster adults that have been approved to reside in the unit [HUD-50058, Instruction Booklet, p. 65].

Other person under the tenant's control means that the person, although not staying as a guest in the unit, is, or was at the time of the activity in question, on the premises because of an invitation from the tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant. Absent evidence to the contrary, a person temporarily and infrequently on the premises solely for legitimate commercial purposes is not *under the tenant's control*.

Premises means the building or complex or development in which the public or assisted housing dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

Sexual assault is defined in Section 16-VII.B.

Stalking is defined in Section 16-VII.B.

Violent criminal activity means any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage.

Drug Crime On or Off the Premises [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(i)(B)]

The lease must provide that drug-related criminal activity engaged in on or off the premises by the tenant, member of the tenant's household or guest, or any such activity engaged in on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control is grounds for termination.

BHA Policy

BHA will terminate the lease for drug-related criminal activity engaged in on or off the premises by any tenant, member of the tenant's household, guest, or any other person under the tenant's control and any such activity engaged in on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control.

BHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of covered persons related to the drug-related criminal activity.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, BHA will consider alternatives as described in

Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Illegal Use of a Drug [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(i)(B)]

The lease must provide that BHA may evict a family when BHA determines that a household member is illegally using a drug or that a pattern of illegal use of a drug interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

BHA Policy

BHA will terminate the lease when BHA determines that a household member is illegally using a drug or BHA determines that a pattern of illegal use of a drug interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

A pattern of illegal drug use means more than one incident of any use of illegal drugs during the previous three months.

BHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of household members related to the use of illegal drugs.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, BHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Threat to Other Residents [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(ii)(A)]

The lease must provide that any criminal activity by a covered person that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (including BHA management staff residing on the premises) or by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises, is grounds for termination of tenancy.

BHA Policy

BHA will terminate the lease when a covered person engages in any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (including BHA management staff working or residing on the premises) or by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

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

BHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of covered persons related to the criminal activity.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, BHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E, and 13-III.F. Upon

consideration of such alternatives and factors, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Alcohol Abuse [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vi)(A)]

BHA must establish standards that allow termination of tenancy if BHA determines that a household member has engaged in abuse or a pattern of abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

BHA Policy

BHA will terminate the lease if BHA determines that a household member has engaged in abuse or a pattern of abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

A pattern of such alcohol abuse means more than one incident of any such abuse of alcohol during the previous three months.

BHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of household members related to the abuse of alcohol.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, BHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Furnishing False or Misleading Information Concerning Illegal Drug Use or Alcohol Abuse or Rehabilitation [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vi)(B)]

BHA must establish standards that allow termination of tenancy if BHA determines that a household member has furnished false or misleading information concerning illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, or rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

BHA Policy

BHA will terminate the lease if BHA determines that a household member has furnished false or misleading information concerning illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, or rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

BHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or the abuse of alcohol, and any records or other documentation (or lack of records or documentation) supporting claims of rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, BHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Other Serious or Repeated Violations of Material Terms of the Lease – Mandatory Lease Provisions [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(i) and 24 CFR 966.4(f)]

HUD regulations require certain tenant obligations to be incorporated into the lease. Violations of such regulatory obligations are considered to be serious violations of the lease and grounds for termination. Incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking may not be construed as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of such violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

BHA Policy

BHA will terminate the lease for the following violations of tenant obligations under the lease:

- Failure to make payments due under the lease, including nonpayment of rent (see Chapter 8 for details pertaining to lease requirements for payments due);
- Repeated late payment of rent or other charges. Four late payments within a 12-month period shall constitute a repeated late payment.
- Failure to comply with certification requirements.
- Failure to fulfill the following household obligations:
 - Not to assign the lease or to sublease the dwelling unit. Subleasing includes receiving payment to cover rent and utility costs by a person living in the unit who is not listed as a family member.
 - Not to provide accommodations for boarders or lodgers.
 - To use the dwelling unit solely as a private dwelling for the tenant and the tenant's household as identified in the lease, and not to use or permit its use for any other purpose.
 - To abide by necessary and reasonable regulations promulgated by BHA for the benefit and well-being of the housing development and the tenants, which shall be posted in the development office and incorporated by reference in the lease.
 - To comply with all obligations imposed upon tenants by applicable provisions of building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety.
 - To keep the dwelling unit and such other areas as may be assigned to the tenant for the tenant's exclusive use in a clean and safe condition.
 - To dispose of all ashes, garbage, rubbish, and other waste from the dwelling unit in a sanitary and safe manner.
 - To use only in a reasonable manner all electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air-conditioning and other facilities and appurtenances including elevators.
 - To refrain from, and to cause the household and guests to refrain from, destroying, defacing, damaging, or removing any part of the dwelling unit or

development.

- To pay reasonable charges (other than for normal wear and tear) for the repair of damages to the dwelling unit, or to the development (including damages to development buildings, facilities or common areas) caused by the tenant, a member of the household or a guest.
- To act, and cause household members or guests to act, in a manner which will not disturb other residents' peaceful enjoyment of their accommodations and will be conducive to maintaining the project in a decent, safe and sanitary condition.
- Failure to maintain utility services during tenancy.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, BHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

13-III.C. OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS FOR TERMINATION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2) and (5)(ii)(B)]

HUD authorizes BHA to terminate the lease for reasons other than those described in the previous sections. These reasons are referred to as "other good cause."

Other Good Cause [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(ii)(B) and (C)]

HUD regulations state that BHA may terminate tenancy for other good cause. The regulations provide a few examples of other good cause, but do not limit BHA to only those examples. The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 explicitly prohibits BHA from considering incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, as "other good cause" for terminating the assistance, tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim or threatened victim of such violence [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

BHA Policy

BHA will terminate the lease for the following reasons:

- *Fugitive Felon or Parole Violator.* If a tenant is fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, or that, in the case of the State of New Jersey, is a high misdemeanor; or violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law.
- *Persons subject to sex offender registration requirement.* If any member of the household has, during their current public housing tenancy, become subject to a registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.
- Discovery of facts after admission to the program that would have made the tenant ineligible.
- Discovery of material false statements or fraud by the tenant in connection with an application for assistance or with a reexamination of income
- Failure to furnish such information and certifications regarding family composition and

income as may be necessary for BHA to make determinations with respect to rent, eligibility, and the appropriateness of the dwelling unit size.

- Failure to transfer to an appropriate size dwelling unit based on family composition, upon appropriate notice by BHA that such a dwelling unit is available.
- Failure to permit access to the unit by BHA after proper advance notification for the purpose of performing routine inspections and maintenance, for making improvements or repairs, or to show the dwelling unit for re-leasing, or without advance notice if there is reasonable cause to believe that an emergency exists.
- Failure to promptly inform BHA of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. In such a case, promptly means within 10 business days of the event.
- Failure to abide by the provisions of the BHA pet policy.
- If the family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with BHA.
- If a family member has violated federal, state, or local law that imposes obligations in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises.
- If a household member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward BHA personnel.

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

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

In making its decision to terminate the lease, BHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Family Absence from Unit [24 CFR 982.551(i)]

It is reasonable that the family may be absent from the public housing unit for brief periods. However, BHA needs a policy on how long the family may be absent from the unit. Absence in this context means that no member of the family is residing in the unit.

BHA Policy

The family must supply any information or certification requested by BHA to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any BHA-requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with BHA for this purpose.

The family must promptly notify BHA 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 days. In such a case promptly means within 10 business days of the start of the extended absence.

If a family is absent from the public housing unit for more than 180 consecutive days and ~~319~~

family does not adequately verify that they are living in the unit, BHA will terminate the lease for other good cause.

Abandonment of the unit. If the family appears to have vacated the unit without giving proper notice, BHA will follow state and local landlord-tenant law pertaining to abandonment before taking possession of the unit. If necessary, BHA will secure the unit immediately to prevent vandalism and other criminal activity.

13-III.D. ALTERNATIVES TO TERMINATION OF TENANCY

Exclusion of Culpable Household Member [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vii)(C)]

As an alternative to termination of the lease for criminal activity or alcohol abuse, HUD provides that BHA may consider exclusion of the culpable household member. Such an alternative can be used, for any other reason where such a solution appears viable in accordance with BHA policy.

Additionally, under the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, BHA may bifurcate a lease in order to terminate the tenancy of an individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant of a unit and engages in criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.

BHA Policy

BHA will consider requiring the tenant to exclude a household member in order to continue to reside in the assisted unit, where that household member has participated in or been culpable for action or failure to act that warrants termination.

As a condition of the family's continued occupancy, the head of household must certify that the culpable household member has vacated the unit and will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the assisted unit. The family must present evidence of the former household member's current address upon BHA request.

Repayment of Family Debts

BHA Policy

If a family owes amounts to BHA, as a condition of continued occupancy, BHA will require the family to repay the full amount or to enter into a repayment agreement, within 30 days of receiving notice from BHA of the amount owed. See Chapter 16 for policies on repayment agreements.

13-III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO TERMINATE TENANCY

Although BHA may have grounds to terminate a tenancy, it is not required to do so, except as explained in Part II of this chapter, and may consider all of the circumstances relevant to a particular case before making a decision.

Evidence [24 CFR 982.553(c)]

For criminal activity, HUD permits BHA to terminate the lease if a *preponderance of the evidence* indicates that a household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted, and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction.

BHA Policy

BHA will use the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all termination decisions.

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

Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 966.4(I)(5)(vii)(B)]

Although it is required that certain lease provisions exist for criminal activity and alcohol abuse, HUD provides that BHA may consider all circumstances relevant to a particular case in order to determine whether or not to terminate the lease.

Such relevant circumstances can also be considered when terminating the lease for any other reason.

BHA Policy

BHA will consider the following facts and circumstances before deciding whether to terminate the lease for any of the HUD required lease provisions or for any other reasons:

- The seriousness of the offending action, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents' safety or property.
- The extent of participation or culpability of the leaseholder, or other household members, in the offending action, including whether the culpable member is a minor, a person with disabilities, or (as discussed further in Section 13-III.F) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- The effects that the eviction will have on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure to act
- The effect on the community of the termination, or of BHA's failure to terminate the tenancy
- The effect of BHA's decision on the integrity of the public housing program
- The demand for housing by eligible families who will adhere to lease responsibilities
- The extent to which the leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and whether they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action
- The length of time since the violation occurred, including the age of the individual at the time of the conduct, as well as the family's recent history, and the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future

- While a record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole basis for termination, an arrest may, however, trigger an investigation to determine whether the participant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, BHA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. BHA 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 program abuse, the dollar amount of the underpaid rent and whether or not a false certification was signed by the family

Consideration of Rehabilitation [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vii)(D)]

HUD authorizes BHA to take into consideration whether a household member who had used illegal drugs or abused alcohol and is no longer engaging in such use or abuse is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.

BHA Policy

In determining whether to terminate the lease for illegal drug use or a pattern of illegal drug use, or for abuse or a pattern of abuse of alcohol, by a household member who is no longer engaging in such use or abuse, BHA will consider whether such household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.

For this purpose BHA will 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.

Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 966.7]

If the family includes a person with disabilities, BHA's decision to terminate the family's lease is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

BHA Policy

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

Nondiscrimination Limitation [24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(vii)(F)]

BHA's eviction actions must be consistent with fair housing and equal opportunity provisions **336**

13-III.F. TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, STALKING OR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

This section addresses the protections against termination of tenancy that the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides for public housing residents who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. For general VAWA requirements and BHA policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality, see Section 16-VII, where definitions of key VAWA terms are also located.

VAWA Protections against Termination [24 CFR 5.2005(c)]

VAWA provides that no person may deny assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights to public housing to a tenant on the basis or as a direct result of criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking that is engaged in by a member of the household of the tenant or any guest or other person under the control of the tenant, if the tenant or affiliated individual is the victim or threatened victim of such domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking [FR Notice 8/6/13].

VAWA further provides that incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking may not be construed either as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of such violence or as good cause for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1); FR Notice 8/6/13].

Limits on VAWA Protections [24 CFR 5.2005(d) and (e); FR Notice 8/6/13]

While VAWA prohibits BHA from using domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking as the cause for a termination or eviction action against a public housing tenant who is the victim of the abuse, the protections it provides are not absolute. Specifically:

- VAWA does not limit BHA's otherwise available authority to terminate assistance to or evict a victim for lease violations not premised on an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking providing that BHA does not subject the victim to a more demanding standard than the standard to which it holds other tenants.
- VAWA does not limit BHA's authority to terminate the tenancy of any public housing tenant if BHA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the property if that tenant's tenancy is not terminated.

HUD regulations define *actual and imminent threat* to mean words, gestures, actions, or other indicators of a physical threat that (a) is real, (b) would occur within an immediate time frame, and (c) could result in death or serious bodily harm [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2) and (e)]. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include:

- The duration of the risk
- The nature and severity of the potential harm
- The likelihood that the potential harm will occur

- The length of time before the potential harm would occur [24 CFR 5.2005(e)]

In order to demonstrate an actual and imminent threat, BHA 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 BHA to terminate the victim's assistance "only when there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat, including but not limited to transferring the victim to a different unit, barring the perpetrator from the property, contacting law enforcement to increase police presence or develop other plans to keep the property safe, or seeking other legal remedies to prevent the perpetrator from acting on a threat" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)]. Additionally, HUD regulations state that restrictions "predicated on public safety cannot be based on stereotypes but must be tailored to particularized concerns about individual residents" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)].

BHA Policy

In determining whether a public housing tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to a property, BHA 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, transferring the victim to another unit, or seeking a legal remedy to prevent the perpetrator from acting on the threat

If the tenant wishes to contest BHA's determination that they are an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or employees, the tenant may do so as part of the grievance hearing or in a court proceeding.

Documentation of Abuse [24 CFR 5.2007]

BHA Policy

When an individual facing termination of tenancy for reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking claims protection under VAWA, BHA will request in writing that the individual provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with the policies in Section 16-VII.D of this ACOP.

BHA 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 BHA will document the waiver in the individual's file.

Terminating or Evicting a Perpetrator of Domestic Violence

Although VAWA provides protection from termination for victims of domestic violence, it does not provide such protection for perpetrators. In fact, VAWA gives BHA the explicit authority to bifurcate a lease, or to remove a household member from a lease, "in order to evict, remove, or terminate assistance to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant of the housing and

who engages in criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking against an affiliated individual or other individual, without evicting, removing, terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing a victim of such criminal activity who is also a tenant or lawful occupant of the housing” [FR Notice 8/6/13]. Moreover, HUD regulations impose on BHA the obligation to consider lease bifurcation in any circumstances involving domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking [24 CFR 966.4(e)(9)].

Specific lease language affirming BHA’s authority to bifurcate a lease is not necessary, and the authority supersedes any local, state, or federal law to the contrary. However, if BHA chooses to exercise its authority to bifurcate a lease, it must follow any procedures prescribed by HUD or by applicable local, state, or federal law for eviction, lease termination, or termination of assistance. This means that BHA must follow the same rules when terminating or evicting an individual as it would when terminating or evicting an entire family [FR Notice 3/16/07]. BHA must not initiate eviction procedures until 30 days after the lease bifurcation [Notice PIH 2017-08].

BHA Policy

BHA will bifurcate a family’s lease and terminate the tenancy of a family member if BHA determines that the family member has committed criminal acts of physical violence against other family members or others. This action will not affect the tenancy or program assistance of the remaining, non-culpable family members.

In making its decision, BHA will consider all credible evidence, including, but not limited to, a signed certification (form HUD-5382) or other documentation of abuse submitted to BHA by the victim in accordance with this section and Section 16-VII.D. BHA will also consider the factors in Section 13-III.E. Upon such consideration, BHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to bifurcate the lease and terminate the tenancy of the culpable family member.

If BHA does bifurcate the lease and terminate the tenancy of the culpable family member, it will do so in accordance with the lease, applicable law, and the policies in this ACOP. If the person removed from the lease was the only tenant eligible to receive assistance, BHA must provide any remaining tenant a chance to establish eligibility for the unit. If the remaining tenant cannot do so, BHA must provide the tenant reasonable time to find new housing or to establish eligibility for another housing program covered by VAWA.

PART IV: NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS, EVICTION PROCEDURES AND RECORD KEEPING

13-IV.A. OVERVIEW

HUD regulations specify the requirements for the notice that must be provided prior to lease termination. This part discusses those requirements and the specific requirements that precede and follow termination for certain criminal activities which are addressed in the regulations. This part also discusses specific requirements pertaining to the actual eviction of families and record keeping.

13-IV.B. CONDUCTING CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS [24 CFR 5.903(e)(ii) and 24 CFR 960.259]

HUD authorizes BHA to conduct criminal records checks on public housing residents for lease enforcement and eviction. BHA policy determines when BHA will conduct such checks.

BHA Policy

BHA will conduct criminal records checks when it has come to the attention of BHA, either from local law enforcement or by other means that an individual has engaged in the destruction of property, engaged in violent activity against another person, or has interfered with the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents. Such checks will also include sex offender registration information. In order to obtain such information, all adult household members must sign consent forms for release of criminal conviction and sex offender registration records on an annual basis.

BHA may not pass along to the tenant the costs of a criminal records check.

13-IV.C. DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS TO FAMILY [24 CFR 5.903(f), 24 CFR 5.905(d) and 24 CFR 966.4(l)(5)(iv)]

In conducting criminal records checks, if BHA uses the authority of 24 CFR 5.903 and 5.905 to obtain such information, certain protections must be afforded the tenant before any adverse action is taken. In such cases if BHA obtains criminal records information from a state or local agency showing that a household member has been convicted of a crime, or is subject to a sex offender registration requirement, relevant to lease enforcement or eviction, BHA must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy of such information, and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before an eviction or lease enforcement action is taken.

BHA Policy

In all cases where criminal record or sex offender registration information would result in lease enforcement or eviction, BHA will notify the household in writing of the proposed adverse action and will provide the subject of the record and the tenant an opportunity to request a copy of such information, and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before an eviction or lease enforcement action is taken.

The family will be given 10 business days from the date of the BHA notice, to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information. If the family does not contact BHA to dispute the information within that 10 business day period, BHA will proceed with the termination action.

Should the tenant not exercise their right to dispute prior to any adverse action, the tenant still has the right to dispute in the grievance hearing or court trial.

13-IV.D. LEASE TERMINATION NOTICE [24 CFR 966.4(l)(3); Notice PIH 2021-29]

Form, Delivery, and Content of the Notice

Notices of lease termination must be in writing. The notice must state the specific grounds for termination, the date the termination will take place, the resident's right to reply to the termination notice, and their right to examine BHA documents directly relevant to the termination or eviction. If BHA does not make the documents available for examination upon request by the tenant, BHA may not proceed with the eviction [24 CFR 966.4(m)].

BHA Policy

If BHA offers remote hearings, the notice will also state that the resident may request a remote hearing.

If BHA requires that the hearing be conducted remotely, at the time the notice is sent to the resident informing them of the right to request a hearing, the resident will be notified that the hearing will be conducted remotely. The resident will be informed of the processes involved in a remote hearing and BHA will provide technical assistance, if needed, before the hearing.

Further, during the period of time for which HUD determines that a national emergency requires additional time for families to secure funding, all termination notifications for nonpayment of rent must include, at a minimum, the language provided in the Appendix of Notice PIH 2021-29.

When BHA is required to offer the resident an opportunity for a grievance hearing, the notice must also inform the resident of their right to request a hearing in accordance with BHA's grievance procedure. In these cases, the tenancy shall not terminate until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired and the grievance procedure has been completed.

When BHA is not required to offer the resident an opportunity for a grievance hearing because HUD has made a due process determination and the lease termination is for criminal activity that threatens health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment or for drug-related criminal activity, the notice of lease termination must state that the tenant is not entitled to a grievance hearing on the termination. It must specify the judicial eviction procedure to be used by BHA for eviction of the tenant, and state that HUD has determined that the eviction procedure provides the opportunity for a hearing in court that contains the basic elements of due process as defined in HUD regulations. The notice must also state whether the eviction is for a criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees of BHA, or for a drug-related criminal activity on or off the premises.

BHA Policy

BHA will attempt to deliver notices of lease termination directly to the tenant or an adult member of the household. If such attempt fails, the notice will be sent by first-class mail the same day.

All notices of lease termination a copy of the forms HUD-5382 and HUD-5380 to accompany the termination notice. Any tenant who claims that the cause for termination involves domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking of which the tenant or affiliated individual of the tenant is the victim will be given the opportunity to provide documentation in accordance with the policies in Sections 13-III.F and 16-VII.D.

Timing of the Notice [24 CFR 966.4(l)(3)(i)]; 24 CFR 966.8; Notice PIH 2021-29]

BHA must give written notice of lease termination of:

- During the period of time for which HUD determines that a national emergency requires additional time for families to secure federal funding that is available due to a Presidential declaration of a national emergency, at least 30 days from the date the tenant receives the notice in the case of failure to pay rent
- When such emergency is not present, 14 days in the case of failure to pay rent
- A reasonable period of time considering the seriousness of the situation (typically 10 days but not to exceed 30 days)
 - If the health or safety of other residents, BHA employees, or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises is threatened
 - If any member of the household has engaged in any drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity
 - If any member of the household has been convicted of a felony
- 30 days in any other case, except that if a state or local law allows a shorter notice period, such shorter period shall apply

BHA Policy

BHA will give written notice of 30 calendar days from the date the tenant receives the notice for nonpayment of rent (during nationwide emergency orders) or 14 calendar days from the date the tenant receives the notice for nonpayment of rent (upon expiration of nationwide emergency orders). For all other lease terminations, BHA will give 30 days' written notice unless a shorter time period is allowed by Washington State Residential Landlord Tenant Act.

The Notice to Vacate that may be required under state or local law may be combined with or run concurrently with the notice of lease termination.

BHA Policy

Any Notice to Vacate or Notice to Quit that is required by state or local law will run

concurrently with the Notice of Lease Termination under this section.

Notice of Nonrenewal Due to Community Service Noncompliance [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(ii)(D), 24 CFR 960.603(b) and 24 CFR 960.607(b)]

When BHA finds that a family is in noncompliance with the community service requirement, the tenant and any other noncompliant resident must be notified in writing of this determination. Notices of noncompliance will be issued in accordance with the requirements and policies in Section 11-I.E.

BHA Policy

If, after receiving a notice of initial noncompliance, the family does not request a grievance hearing, or does not take either corrective action required by the notice within the required timeframe, a termination notice will be issued in accordance with the policies above.

If a family agreed to cure initial noncompliance by signing an agreement, and is still in noncompliance after being provided the 12-month opportunity to cure, the family will be issued a notice of continued noncompliance. The notice of continued noncompliance will be sent in accordance with the policies in Section 11-I.E. and will also serve as the notice of termination of tenancy.

Notice of Termination Based on Citizenship Status [24 CFR 5.514 (c) and (d)]

In cases where termination of tenancy is based on citizenship status, HUD requires the notice of termination to contain additional information. In addition to advising the family of the reasons their assistance is being terminated, the notice must also advise the family of any of the following that apply: the family's eligibility for proration of assistance; the criteria and procedures for obtaining relief under the provisions for preservation of families; the family's right to request an appeal to the USCIS of the results of secondary verification of immigration status and to submit additional documentation or a written explanation in support of the appeal; and the family's right to request an informal hearing with BHA either upon completion of the USCIS appeal or in lieu of the USCIS appeal. Please see Chapter 14 for BHA's informal hearing procedures.

13-IV.E. EVICTION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(4) and 966.4(m)]

Eviction notice means a notice to vacate, or a complaint or other initial pleading used under state or local law to commence an eviction action. BHA may only evict the tenant from the unit by instituting a court action, unless the law of the jurisdiction permits eviction by administrative action, after a due process administrative hearing, and without a court determination of the rights and liabilities of the parties.

BHA Policy

When a family does not vacate the unit after receipt of a termination notice, by the deadline given in the notice, BHA will follow state and local landlord-tenant law in filing an eviction action with the local court that has jurisdiction in such cases.

If the eviction action is finalized in court and the family remains in occupancy beyond the deadline to vacate given by the court, BHA will seek the assistance of the court to remove the family from the premises as per state and local law.

BHA may not proceed with an eviction action if BHA has not made available the documents to be used in the case against the family, and has not afforded the family the opportunity to examine and copy such documents in accordance with the provisions of 24 CFR 966.4(l)(3) and (m).

13-IV.F. NOTIFICATION TO POST OFFICE [24CFR 966.4(l)(5)(iii)(B)]

When BHA evicts an individual or family for criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity, BHA must notify the local post office serving the dwelling unit that the individual or family is no longer residing in the unit.

13-IV.G. RECORD KEEPING

For more information concerning general record keeping, see Chapter 16.

BHA Policy

A written record of every termination and/or eviction will be maintained by BHA at the development where the family was residing, and will contain the following information:

- Name of resident, contact number, and unit number or address occupied by the tenant.
- Date of the notice of lease termination and any other notices required by state or local law; these notices may be on the same form and will run concurrently.
- Specific reason(s) for the notices, citing the lease section or provision that was violated, and other facts pertinent to the issuing of the notices described in detail (other than any criminal history reports obtained solely through the authorization provided in 24 CFR 5.903 and 5.905).
- Date and method of notifying the resident.
- Summaries of any conferences held with the resident including dates, names of conference participants, and conclusions.

EXHIBIT 13-1: SAMPLE NOTICE FOR OVER-INCOME FAMILIES – INITIAL NOTIFICATION

This material is based upon work supported, in whole or in part, by Federal award number NAL-C-17-094-05 awarded to NALCAB by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. Neither the United States Government, nor any of its employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately-owned rights. Reference herein to any individuals, agencies, companies, products, process, services, service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not constitute or imply an endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the author(s), contributor(s), the U.S. Government or any agency thereof. Opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, HUD or any Federal agency.

D or any Federal agency.

These Sample Notices include provisions required per 24 CFR 960.507(c). Anything included in brackets and italic is meant as instruction to the PHA in creating its own notices. Example: [This text is meant as instruction to the PHA.]

This sample notice is presented verbatim from HUD's sample forms used in the HOTMA Income and Assets Training Series, available at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6849/hotma-sample-notices-for-overincome-families/>. Only the formatting has been changed to be consistent with the formatting used throughout this ACOP. OR NPHOI FAMILY OPTION

OVER-INCOME FAMILY
INITIAL NOTIFICATION

[name of PHA]

Resident name:

Address:

Date:

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to inform you that _____ [name of PHA] has determined that your family's income is above the income limit (over-income) according to federal rules for the public housing program. This is your initial (first) notice.

What happens next?

For now, your rent will continue to be calculated as usual, you will continue to be offered a choice between income-based and flat rent, and you do not have to move. If your family remains over-income for the following 24 consecutive months, you will no longer be eligible for assistance under the public housing program but may remain in a public housing unit paying an alternative non-public housing rent calculated under federal rules for non-public housing tenants.

If you think that we have made a mistake and your family should not be considered over-income, you may request a hearing by calling: XXX-XXX-XXXX or emailing [address] or requesting more information from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible. If you do not wish to request a hearing, you do not need to do anything at this time.

And your family should not be considered over-income, you may request a hearing by calling: XXX-XXX-XXXX or emailing [address] or requesting more information from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible. If you do not wish to request a hearing, you do not need to do anything at this time.

What about changes to my income?

We will continue to reexamine your income every 12 months as usual. After each reexamination, you will receive a notification like this one if your family is still over-income.

If your family's income drops below the over-income limit before the end of the 24 consecutive-month grace period, you will no longer be considered over-income. If your family's income increases again to an amount that is over-income, you will receive another 24 consecutive

month grace period.

If your income changes, contact us using the information provided below to learn the policy for requesting an interim reexamination.

[PHA: Please note that the following section is optional. The regulations only require this level of detail for the second notice.]

What if my family remains over-income in 24 consecutive months?

According to the Continued Occupancy Policy, your family may continue to reside in a public housing unit even if you remain over-income after 24 months. However, your unit will no longer receive assistance from the federal public housing program so your rent will be calculated differently.

If you choose to stay in your unit after remaining over-income for 24 consecutive months, you will:

- Pay an “alternative non-public housing rent” (currently estimated at \$_____)
- The alternative rent is adjusted annually and subject to change.
- You will receive a notification with more details on what to expect next if you decide to remain in a public housing unit after 24 consecutive months of being over-income.
- Need to sign a new lease for Non-Public Housing Over-Income (NPHOI) families.
- The NPHOI lease will need to be signed no later than 60 days after receiving notification of the end of the 24-month grace period or at the next lease renewal, whichever is sooner.

[INSERT PHA CONTACT INFORMATION]

**EXHIBIT 13-2: SAMPLE NOTICE FOR OVER-INCOME FAMILIES – INITIAL NOTIFICATION
FOR TERMINATE ONLY OPTION**

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These Sample Notices include provisions required per 24 CFR 960.507(c). Anything included in brackets and italic is meant as instruction to the PHA in creating its own notices. Example: [This text is meant as instruction to the PHA.]

This sample notice is presented verbatim from HUD's sample forms used in the HOTMA Income and Assets Training Series, available at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6849/hotma-sample-notices-for-overincome-families/>. Only the formatting has been changed to be consistent with the formatting used throughout this ACOP.

OVER-INCOME FAMILY

INITIAL NOTIFICATION

[name of PHA]

Resident name:

Address:

Date:

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to inform you that _____ [name of PHA] has determined that your family's income is above the income limit (over-income) according to federal rules for the public housing program. This is your initial (first) notice.

What happens next?

For now, your rent will continue to be calculated as usual, you will continue to be offered a choice between income-based and flat rent, and you do not have to move. If your family remains over-income for the following 24 consecutive months, you will no longer be eligible for assistance under the public housing program.

If you think that we have made a mistake and your family should not be considered over-income, you may request a hearing by calling: XXX-XXX-XXXX or emailing [address] or requesting more information from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible. If you do not wish to request a hearing, you do not need to do anything at this time.

What about changes to my income?

We will continue to reexamine your income every 12 months as usual. After each reexamination, you will receive a notification like this one if your family is still over-income.

If your family's income drops below the over-income limit before the end of the 24 consecutive-month grace period, you will no longer be considered over-income. If your family's income increases again to an amount that is over-income, you will receive another 24 consecutive month grace period.

If your income changes, contact us using the information provided below to learn the policy for requesting an interim reexamination.

[PHA: Please note that the following section is optional. The regulations only require this level of detail for the second notice.]

What if my family remains over-income for 24 consecutive months?

Within 30 days of the recertification, you will receive a notice like this one informing you that your family has remained over-income for 24 consecutive months. According to the Continued Occupancy Policy, families that remain over-income for 24 consecutive months must leave their units and find other housing in no more than ____ [up to 6 depending on PHA policy] months after receiving notification.

If your family continues to reside in the unit after ____ [restate date], the PHA will begin eviction proceedings by issuing a notice to vacate.

Until the time of lease termination, you will continue to be a public housing program participant and will continue to be charged your choice of income-based or flat rent.

[INSERT PHA CONTACT INFORMATION]

**EXHIBIT 13-3: SAMPLE NOTICE FOR OVER-INCOME FAMILIES – 12 MONTH
NOTIFICATION FOR NPHOI FAMILY OPTION**

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These Sample Notices include provisions required per 24 CFR 960.507(c). Anything included in brackets and italic is meant as instruction to the PHA in creating its own notices. Example: [This text is meant as instruction to the PHA.]

This sample notice is presented verbatim from HUD's sample forms used in the HOTMA Income and Assets Training Series, available at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6849/hotma-sample-notices-for-overincome-families/>. Only the formatting has been changed to be consistent with the formatting used throughout this ACOP.

OVER-INCOME FAMILY
12 MONTH NOTIFICATION

[name of PHA]

Resident name:

Address:

Date:

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to inform you that _____ [name of PHA] has determined that your family's income is above the income limit (over-income) according to federal rules for public housing. This is your 12-month (second) notice.

What happens next?

For now, your rent will continue to be calculated as usual, you will continue to be offered a choice between income-based and flat rent, and you do not have to move. If your family remains over-income for the following 12 consecutive months, you will no longer be eligible for assistance under the public housing program but may remain in a public housing unit paying an alternative non-public housing rent calculated under federal rules for non-public housing tenants.

If you think that we have made a mistake and your family should not be considered over-income, you may request a hearing by calling: XXX-XXX-XXXX or emailing [address] or requesting more information from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible. If you do not wish to request a hearing, you do not need to do anything at this time.

And your family should not be considered over-income, you may request a hearing by calling: XXX-XXX-XXXX or emailing [address] or requesting more information from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible. If you do not wish to request a hearing, you do not need to do anything at this time.

What about changes to my income?

We will need to re-examine your income in 12 months. After the reexamination, you will receive a notification like this one if your family is still over-income.

If your family's income drops below the over-income limit before the end of the 24 consecutive

month grace period, you will no longer be considered over-income. If your family's income increases again to an amount that is over-income, you will receive another 24 consecutive month grace period.

If your income changes, contact us using the information provided below to learn the policy for requesting an interim reexamination.

What if my family remains over-income in consecutive 12 months?

According to the Continued Occupancy Policy, your family may continue your tenancy even if you remain over-income for another 12 months (24 consecutive months total). However, your unit will no longer receive assistance from the federal public housing program so your rent will be calculated differently.

If you choose to remain in a public housing unit after the 24 month grace period, you will:

- No longer be a public housing program participant and will therefore not be eligible to participate in the resident council or programs specifically for public housing residents.
- Pay an "alternative non-public housing rent" (currently estimated at \$_____)
- Need to sign a new lease

[INSERT PHA CONTACT INFORMATION]

**EXHIBIT 13-4: SAMPLE NOTICE FOR OVER-INCOME FAMILIES – 12 MONTH
NOTIFICATION FOR TERMINATE ONLY OPTION**

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These Sample Notices include provisions required per 24 CFR 960.507(c). Anything included in brackets and italic is meant as instruction to the PHA in creating its own notices. Example: [This text is meant as instruction to the PHA.]

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OVER-INCOME FAMILY
12 MONTH NOTIFICATION

[name of PHA]

Resident name:

Address:

Date:

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to inform you that _____ [name of PHA] has determined that your family's income is above the income limit (over-income) according to federal rules for public housing. This is your 12-month (second) notice.

What happens next?

For now, your rent will continue to be calculated as usual, you will continue to be offered a choice between income-based and flat rent, and you do not have to move. If your family remains over-income for the following 12 consecutive months, you will no longer be eligible for assistance under the public housing program.

If you think that we have made a mistake and your family should not be considered over-income, you may request a hearing by calling: XXX-XXX-XXXX or emailing [address] or requesting more information from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible. If you do not wish to request a hearing, you do not need to do anything at this time.

formation from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible. If you do not wish to request a hearing, you do not need to do anything at this time.

What about changes to my income?

We will need to re-examine your income in 12 months. After the reexamination, you will receive a notification like this one if your family is still over-income.

If your family's income drops below the over-income limit before the end of the 24 consecutive-month grace period, you will no longer be considered over-income. If your family's income increases again to an amount that is over-income, you will receive another 24 consecutive month grace period.

If your income changes, contact us using the information provided below to learn the policy for requesting an interim reexamination.

What if my family remains over-income in consecutive 12 months?

Within 30 days of the recertification, you will receive a notice like this one informing you that your family has remained over-income for 24 consecutive months. According to the Continued Occupancy Policy, families that remain over-income for 24 consecutive months must leave their units and find other housing in no more than ___ [up to 6 depending on PHA policy] months after receiving notification.

If your family continues to reside in the unit after ___ [restate date], ___ [name of PHA] will begin eviction proceedings by issuing a notice to vacate.
on proceedings by issuing a notice to vacate.

Until the time of lease termination, you will continue to be a public housing program participant and will continue to be charged your choice of income-based or flat rent.
[INSERT PHA CONTACT INFORMATION]

EXHIBIT 13-5: SAMPLE NOTICE FOR OVER-INCOME FAMILIES – 24 MONTH NOTIFICATION FOR NPHOI FAMILY OPTION

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or any Federal agency.

These Sample Notices include provisions required per 24 CFR 960.507(c). Anything included in brackets and italic is meant as instruction to the PHA in creating its own notices. Example: [This text is meant as instruction to the PHA.]

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OVER-INCOME FAMILY
24 MONTH NOTIFICATION

[name of PHA]

Resident name:

Address:

Date:

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to inform you that _____ [name of PHA] has determined that your family's income is above the income limit (over-income) according to federal rules for public housing. This is your 24-month (third) notice.

You are no longer eligible for assistance under the public housing program. However, you do not have to move – see below for details.

What if I disagree that my family is over-income?

If you think that we have made a mistake and your family should not be considered over-income, you may request a hearing by calling: XXX-XXX-XXXX or emailing [address] or requesting more information from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible.

What about changes to my income?

Changes to your income after you receive this notice will not change our determination. Because your family has been over-income for 24 months, you are no longer eligible for assistance under the public housing program.

What do I need to do now?

According to the Continued Occupancy Policy, your family may continue your tenancy. However, because you will not receive assistance from the federal public housing program, your rent will be calculated differently.

If you choose to remain in a public housing unit, you will:

- Pay an "alternative non-public housing rent" (currently \$_____)
- Need to sign a new lease within 60 days or at your next lease renewal (whichever is sooner)

If the lease is not signed within this time period, the PHA must terminate your tenancy by _____ [no more than 6 months after this notification]. However, per policy, _____ [name of PHA] may permit an over-income family to execute the lease after this period (up to 60 days), but before termination of the tenancy. In this case, the family must pay the total difference between the alternative non-public housing rent and your public housing rent dating back to the date when you were required to execute the lease.

d your public housing rent dating back to the date when you were required to execute the lease.

If you choose to leave your unit, please inform us as soon as possible according to your existing lease.

To inform the PHA if you do not plan to remain in a public housing unit: [Use this space to detail when and how and family can inform the PHA if they decline to stay in the unit.]

[INSERT PHA CONTACT INFORMATION]

**EXHIBIT 13-6: SAMPLE NOTICE FOR OVER-INCOME FAMILIES – 24 MONTH
NOTIFICATION FOR TERMINATION ONLY OPTION**

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These Sample Notices include provisions required per 24 CFR 960.507(c). Anything included in brackets and italic is meant as instruction to the PHA in creating its own notices. Example: [This text is meant as instruction to the PHA.]

This sample notice is presented verbatim from HUD's sample forms used in the HOTMA Income and Assets Training Series, available at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6849/hotma-sample-notices-for-overincome-families/>. Only the formatting has been changed to be consistent with the formatting used throughout this ACOP.

OVER-INCOME FAMILY
24 MONTH NOTIFICATION

[name of PHA]

Resident name:
Address:
Date:

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to inform you that _____ [name of PHA] has determined that your family's income is above the income limit (over-income) according to federal rules for public housing.

This is your 24-month (third) notice.
You are no longer eligible for assistance under the public housing program.

What if I disagree that my family is over-income?

If you think that we have made a mistake and your family should not be considered over-income, you may request a hearing by calling: XXX-XXX-XXXX or emailing [address] or requesting more information from PHA staff at: [location]. If you wish to request a hearing, please do so as soon as possible.

What about changes to my income?

Changes to your income after you receive this notice will not change our determination. If necessary, you may request an interim reexamination, but a decrease in income or rent will not make you eligible to remain. Because your family has been over-income for 24 consecutive months, you are no longer eligible for assistance under the public housing program.

What do I need to do now?

According to the Continued Occupancy Policy, your family cannot continue your tenancy. You must find other housing as soon as possible. Our policy is to allow families up to ____ [up to 6 depending on PHA policy] months to find other housing.
If your family continues to reside in the unit after ____ [restate date], the PHA will begin eviction proceedings by issuing a notice to vacate.

Until the time of lease termination, you will continue to be a public housing program participant and will continue to be charged your choice of income-based or flat rent.

[The following is an optional section where the PHA may include referral services to support **359**

family in finding new housing.]

The following services are available to assist you:

[INSERT PHA CONTACT INFORMATION]

Chapter 14

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses grievances and appeals pertaining to BHA actions or failures to act that adversely affect public housing applicants or residents. The policies are discussed in the following three parts:

Part I: Informal Hearings for Public Housing Applicants. This part outlines the requirements and procedures for informal hearings for public housing applicants.

Part II: Informal Hearings with Regard to Noncitizens. This part discusses informal hearings regarding citizenship status and where they differ from the requirements for general applicant and tenant grievances.

Part III: Grievance Procedures for Public Housing Residents. This part outlines the requirements and procedures for handling grievances for public housing residents.

Note that this chapter is not BHA's grievance procedure. The grievance procedure is a document separate from the ACOP. This chapter provides the policies that drive the grievance procedure.

PART I: INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING APPLICANTS

14-I.A. OVERVIEW

When BHA makes a decision that has a negative impact on an applicant family, the family is often entitled to appeal the decision. For applicants, the appeal takes the form of an informal hearing. HUD regulations do not provide a structure for or requirements regarding informal hearings for applicants (except with regard to citizenship status, to be covered in Part II). This part discusses BHA policies necessary to respond to applicant appeals through the informal hearing process.

14-I.B. INFORMAL HEARING PROCESS [24 CFR 960.208(a) and PH GB, p. 58]

Informal hearings are provided for public housing applicants. An applicant is someone who has applied for admission to the public housing program, but is not yet a tenant in the program. Informal hearings are intended to provide a means for an applicant to dispute a determination of ineligibility for admission to a development [24 CFR 960.208(a)]. Applicants to public housing are not entitled to the same hearing process afforded tenants under BHA grievance procedures [24 CFR 966.53(a) and PH GB, p. 58].

Informal hearings provide applicants the opportunity to review the reasons for denial of admission and to present evidence to refute the grounds for denial.

Use of Informal Hearing Process

While BHA must offer the opportunity of an informal hearing to applicants who have been determined as ineligible for admission, BHA could make the informal hearing process available to applicants who wish to dispute other BHA actions that adversely affect them.

BHA Policy

BHA will only offer informal hearings to applicants for the purpose of disputing denials of admission.

Notice of Denial [24 CFR 960.208(a)]

BHA must give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying eligibility for admission. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for BHA decision, and must also state that the applicant may request an informal hearing to dispute the decision. The notice must describe how to obtain the informal hearing.

When denying eligibility for admission, BHA must provide the family a notice of VAWA rights (form HUD-5380) as well as the HUD VAWA self-certification form (form HUD-5382) in accordance with the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, and as outlined in Section 16-VII.C. The notice and self-certification form must accompany the written notification of the denial of eligibility determination.

Prior to notification of denial based on information obtained from criminal or sex offender registration records, the family, in some cases, must be given the opportunity to dispute the information in those records which would be the basis of the denial. See Section 3-III.G for details concerning this requirement.

Scheduling an Informal Hearing

BHA Policy

A request for an informal hearing must be made by phone or in writing and delivered to BHA either in person or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 10 days from the date of BHA's notification of denial of admission.

Except as provided in Section 3-III.F, BHA will schedule and send written notice of the informal hearing within 10 business days of the family's request.

Conducting an Informal Hearing [PH GB, p. 58]

BHA Policy

The informal hearing will be conducted by a person other than the one who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of this person.

The applicant will be provided an opportunity to present written or oral objections to the decision of BHA.

The person conducting the informal hearing will make a recommendation to BHA, but BHA is responsible for making the final decision as to whether admission should be granted or denied.

Remote Informal Hearings [Notice PIH 2020-32]

There is no requirement that informal hearings be conducted in-person, and as such, HUD allows PHAs to conduct all or a portion of their informal hearings remotely either over the phone, via video conferencing, or through other virtual platforms. If the PHA chooses to conduct remote informal hearings, applicants may still request an in-person informal hearing, as applicable.

PHA Policy

BHA has the sole discretion to require that informal hearings be conducted remotely in case of local, state, or national physical distancing orders, and in cases of inclement weather or natural disaster.

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

Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and LEP Individuals

As with in-person informal hearings, the platform for conducting remote informal hearings must be accessible to persons with disabilities and the informal hearing must be conducted in accordance with Section 504 and accessibility requirements. This includes ensuring any information, websites, emails, digital notifications, and other virtual platforms are accessible for persons with vision, hearing, and other disabilities. Further, providing effective

communication in a digital context may require the use of individualized auxiliary aids or services, such as audio description, captioning, sign language and other types of interpreters, keyboard accessibility, accessible documents, screen reader support, and transcripts. Auxiliary aids or services must be provided in accessible formats, in a timely manner, and in such a way to protect the privacy and independence of the individual. PHAs may never request or require that individuals with disabilities provide their own auxiliary aids or services, including for remote informal hearings.

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

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

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

Conducting Remote Informal Hearings [Notice PIH 2020-32]

BHA must ensure that the lack of technology or inability to use technology for remote informal hearings does not pose a disadvantage to families that may not be apparent to BHA. BHA should determine through a survey or other means if these barriers exist prior to conducting the remote informal hearing and, if the family does not have the proper technology to fully participate, either postpone the informal hearing or provide an alternative means of access.

As with in-person informal hearings, BHA must provide all materials presented, whether paper or electronic, to the family prior to the remote informal hearing. The family must also be provided with an accessible means by which to transmit their own evidence.

BHA must ensure that the applicant has the right to hear and be heard. BHA policies and processes for remote informal hearings will be conducted in accordance with due process requirements and will be in compliance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 966.56 and the guidance for conducting remote hearings specified in Notice PIH 2020-32.

BHA Policy

BHA will conduct remote informal hearings via a video conferencing platform, when available. If, after attempting to resolve any barriers, applicants are unable to adequately access the video conferencing platform at any point, or upon applicant request, the informal hearing will be conducted by telephone conferencing call-in. If the family is unable to adequately access the telephone conferencing call-in at any point, the remote informal hearing will be postponed, and an in-person alternative will be provided promptly within a reasonable time.

At least five business days prior to scheduling the remote hearing, BHA will provide the family with login information and/or conferencing call-in information and an electronic copy of all materials being presented via first class mail and/or email. The notice will advise the family of technological requirements for the hearing and request the family notify BHA of any known barriers. BHA will resolve any barriers using the guidance in Section 6 of Notice PIH 2020-32, including offering the family the opportunity to attend an in-person hearing.

If the informal hearing is to be conducted remotely, BHA will require the family to provide any documents directly relevant to the informal hearing at least 24 hours before the scheduled hearing through the mail, via email, or text. BHA will scan and email copies of these documents to the BHA representative and to the person conducting the informal hearing the same day.

Documents will be shared electronically whenever possible.

BHA will follow up the email with a phone call and/or email to the applicant at least one business day prior to the remote informal hearing to ensure that the applicant received all information and is comfortable accessing the video conferencing or call-in platform. BHA will ensure that all electronic information stored or transmitted with respect to the informal hearing is secure, including protecting personally identifiable information (PII), and meets the requirements for accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with LEP.

Informal Hearing Decision [PH GB, p. 58]

BHA Policy

BHA will notify the applicant of BHA's final decision, including a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

In rendering a decision, BHA will evaluate the following matters:

- Whether or not the grounds for denial were stated factually in the notice
- The validity of grounds for denial of admission. If the grounds for denial are not specified in the regulations or in BHA policy, then the decision to deny assistance will be overturned. See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the grounds for applicant denial.
- The validity of the evidence. BHA will evaluate whether the facts presented prove the grounds for denial of admission. If the facts prove that there are grounds for denial, and the denial is required by HUD, BHA will uphold the decision to deny admission.
- If the facts prove the grounds for denial, and the denial is discretionary, BHA will consider the recommendation of the person conducting the informal hearing in making the final decision whether to deny admission.

BHA will notify the applicant of the final decision, including a statement explaining the reason(s) for the decision. The notice will be mailed, with return receipt requested, within 10 business days of the informal hearing, to the applicant and their representative, if any.

If the informal hearing decision overturns the denial, processing for admission will resume.

If the family fails to appear for their informal hearing, the denial of admission will stand and the family will be so notified.

Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities [24 CFR 966.7]

Persons with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations to participate in the informal hearing process, and BHA must consider such accommodations. BHA must also consider reasonable accommodation requests pertaining to the reasons for denial if related to the person's disability. See Chapter 2 for more detail pertaining to reasonable accommodation requests.

PART II: INFORMAL HEARINGS WITH REGARD TO NONCITIZENS

14-II.A. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR NONCITIZENS [24 CFR 5.514]

Denial or termination of assistance based on immigration status is subject to special hearing and notice rules. These special hearings are referred to in the regulations as informal hearings, but the requirements for such hearings are different from the informal hearings used to deny applicants for reasons other than immigration status.

Assistance to a family may not be delayed, denied, or terminated on the basis of immigration status at any time prior to a decision under the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) appeal process. Assistance to a family may not be terminated or denied while BHA hearing is pending, but assistance to an applicant may be delayed pending the completion of the informal hearing.

A decision against a family member, issued in accordance with the USCIS appeal process or the BHA informal hearing process, does not preclude the family from exercising the right, that may otherwise be available, to seek redress directly through judicial procedures.

Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 5.514(d)]

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 13, the notice of denial or termination of assistance for noncitizens must advise the family of any of the following that apply:

- That financial assistance will be denied or terminated, and provide a brief explanation of the reasons for the proposed denial or termination of assistance.
- The family may be eligible for proration of assistance.
- In the case of a tenant, the criteria and procedures for obtaining relief under the provisions for preservation of families [24 CFR 5.514 and 5.518].
- That the family has a right to request an appeal to the USCIS of the results of secondary verification of immigration status and to submit additional documentation or explanation in support of the appeal.
- That the family has a right to request an informal hearing with BHA either upon completion of the USCIS appeal or in lieu of the USCIS appeal.
- For applicants, assistance may not be delayed until the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process, but assistance may be delayed during the period of the informal hearing process.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Appeal Process [24 CFR 5.514(e)]

When BHA receives notification that the USCIS secondary verification failed to confirm eligible immigration status, BHA must notify the family of the results of the USCIS verification. The family will have 30 days from the date of the notification to request an appeal of the USCIS results. The request for appeal must be made by the family in writing directly to the USCIS. The family must provide BHA with a copy of the written request for appeal and proof of mailing.

BHA Policy

BHA will notify the family in writing of the results of the USCIS secondary verification within 10 business days of receiving the results.

The family must provide BHA with a copy of the written request for appeal and proof of mailing within 10 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 BHA, of its decision. When the USCIS notifies BHA of the decision, BHA must notify the family of its right to request an informal hearing.

BHA Policy

BHA will send written notice to the family of its right to request an informal hearing within 10 business days of receiving notice of the USCIS decision regarding the family's immigration status.

Informal Hearing Procedures for Applicants [24 CFR 5.514(f)]

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, an applicant family may request that BHA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the BHA notice of denial, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

The informal hearing procedures for applicant families are described below.

Informal Hearing Officer

BHA must provide an informal hearing before an impartial individual, other than a person who made or approved the decision under review, and other than a person who is a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision.

Evidence

The family must be provided the opportunity to examine and copy at the family's expense, at a reasonable time in advance of the hearing, any documents in the possession of BHA 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.

BHA Policy

The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of \$.25 per page. The family must request discovery of BHA documents no later than 3 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 BHA and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information BHA 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. BHA is obligated to provide a competent interpreter, free of charge, upon request. The family may also or instead provide its own interpreter, at the expense of the family

Recording of the Hearing

The family is entitled to have the hearing recorded by audiotape. BHA may, but is not required to, provide a transcript of the hearing.

BHA Policy

The family may request that BHA tape record the hearing. Such requests must be made in writing no later than three business days prior to the scheduled hearing date. If a request is made, a copy of the taped recording (not a transcript) will be made available to the family for the actual cost of the tape itself. Payment for the tape must be made at the time of the Informal Hearing.

BHA will consider that an audio tape recording of the proceedings is a transcript.

Hearing Decision

BHA must provide the family with a written notice of the final decision, based solely on the facts presented at the hearing, within 14 days of the date of the informal hearing. The notice must state the basis for the decision.

Retention of Documents [24 CFR 5.514(h)]

BHA must retain for a minimum of 5 years the following documents that may have been submitted to BHA by the family, or provided to BHA as part of the USCIS appeal or BHA informal hearing process:

- The application for assistance
- The form completed by the family for income reexamination
- Photocopies of any original documents, including original USCIS documents
- The signed verification consent form
- The USCIS verification results
- The request for a USCIS appeal
- The final USCIS determination
- The request for an informal hearing
- The final informal hearing decision

Informal Hearing Procedures for Residents [24 CFR 5.514(f)]

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, a resident family may request that BHA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be

made either within 30 days of receipt of the BHA notice of termination, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

The informal hearing procedures for resident families whose tenancy is being terminated based on immigration status is the same as for any grievance under the grievance procedures for resident families found in Part III.

PART III: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HOUSING APPLICANTS AND RESIDENTS

14-III.A. REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 966.52]

BHA must have a grievance procedure in place through which residents of public housing are provided an opportunity to grieve any BHA action or failure to act involving the lease or BHA policies which adversely affect their rights, duties, welfare, or status. BHA must not only meet minimal procedural due process requirements provided under the regulations, but must also meet any additional requirements imposed by local, state or federal law.

BHA grievance procedure must be included, or incorporated by reference, in the lease.

BHA Policy

The BHA grievance procedure will be included in the tenant lease.

BHA must provide at least 30 days' notice to tenants and resident organizations setting forth proposed changes in BHA grievance procedure, and provide an opportunity to present written comments. Comments submitted must be considered by BHA before adoption of any changes to the grievance procedure by BHA.

BHA Policy

Residents and resident organizations will have 30 days from the date they are notified by BHA of any proposed changes in the BHA grievance procedure, to submit written comments to BHA.

BHA must furnish a copy of the grievance procedure to each tenant and to resident organizations.

14-III.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 966.53; 24 CFR 966.51(a)(2)(i)]

There are several terms used by HUD with regard to public housing grievance procedures, which take on specific meanings different from their common usage. These terms are as follows:

- **Grievance** – any dispute which a tenant may have with respect to BHA action or failure to act in accordance with the individual tenant's lease or BHA regulations which adversely affect the individual tenant's rights, duties, welfare or status
- **Complainant** – any tenant whose grievance is presented to BHA or at the development management office
- **Due Process Determination** – a determination by HUD that law of the jurisdiction requires that the tenant must be given the opportunity for a hearing in court which provides the basic elements of due process before eviction from the dwelling unit
- **Elements of Due Process** – an eviction action or a termination of tenancy in a state or local court in which the following procedural safeguards are required:
 - Adequate notice to the tenant of the grounds for terminating the tenancy and for eviction

- Right of the tenant to be represented by counsel
- Opportunity for the tenant to refute the evidence presented by BHA including the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and to present any affirmative legal or equitable defense which the tenant may have
- A decision on the merits
- **Expedited Grievance** – a procedure established by BHA for any grievance or termination that involved:
 - Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment or BHA's public housing premises by other residents or employees of BHA; or
 - Any drug-related criminal activity on or off the premises.
- **Hearing Officer/Panel** – an impartial person or persons selected by BHA, other than the person who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of that person. The individual or individuals do not need legal training.
- **Applicant (applicant family)** – A family that has applied for admission to a program but is not yet a participant in the program
- **Tenant** – the adult person (or persons) (other than a live-in aide):
 - Who resides in the unit, and who executed the lease with BHA as lessee of the dwelling unit: or,
 - If no such person now resides in the unit, who resides in the unit, and who is the remaining head of household of the tenant family residing in the dwelling unit
- **Resident Organization** – includes a resident management corporation

14-III.C. APPLICABILITY [24 CFR 966.51]

Grievances could potentially address most aspects of BHA's operation. However, there are some situations for which the grievance procedure is not applicable.

The grievance procedure is applicable only to individual applicant or tenant issues relating to BHA. It is not applicable to disputes between applicants or tenants not involving BHA. Class grievances are not subject to the grievance procedure, and the grievance procedure is not to be used as a forum for initiating or negotiating policy changes of BHA.

If HUD has issued a due process determination, BHA may exclude from the BHA grievance procedure any grievance concerning a termination of tenancy or eviction that involves:

- Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees of BHA
- Any violent or drug-related criminal activity on or off such premises

In states without due process determinations, PHAs must grant opportunity for grievance hearings for all lease terminations, regardless of cause, with the following exception: PHAs may use expedited grievance procedures for the excluded categories listed above. These expedited grievance procedures are described in Section 14-III.E. below.

If HUD has issued a due process determination, BHA may evict through the state/local judicial eviction procedures. In this case, BHA is not required to provide the opportunity for a hearing under BHA's grievance procedure as described above.

BHA Policy

BHA is located in a HUD-declared due process state. Therefore, BHA will not offer grievance hearings for lease terminations involving criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees of BHA, or for violent or drug-related criminal activity on or off the premises, or for any criminal activity that resulted in felony conviction of a household member.

See Chapter 13 for related policies on the content of termination notices.

14-III.D. INFORMAL HEARING OF GRIEVANCE [24 CFR 966.54]

HUD regulations state that any grievance must be personally presented, either orally or in writing, to the BHA office or to the office of the housing development in which the complainant has applied or resides so that the grievance may be discussed informally and settled without a formal hearing. The informal hearing process is available to applicants and tenants.

BHA Policy

BHA will accept requests for an informal hearing of a grievance either orally or in writing, to the BHA office within 10 days of the grievable event. Within 10 business days of receipt of the request, BHA will arrange a meeting with the complainant at a mutually agreeable time and confirm such meeting in writing to the complainant.

If a complainant fails to attend the scheduled meeting without prior notice, BHA will reschedule the appointment only if the complainant can show good cause for failing to appear, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.

Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety or welfare of the family.

HUD regulations require that a summary of such discussion will be prepared within a reasonable time. One copy will be given to the complainant and one retained in BHA's tenant or application file.

The summary must specify the names of the participants, dates of meeting, the nature of the proposed disposition of the complaint and the specific reasons therefore, and will specify the procedures by which a hearing may be obtained if the complainant is not satisfied. A formal hearing process is available only to tenants. Applicants are not eligible for further consideration once the informal hearing process is completed.

BHA Policy

BHA will prepare a summary of the informal hearing within 14 days; one copy to be given to the complainant and one copy to be retained in BHA's tenant file.

For PHAs who have the option to establish an expedited grievance procedure, and who exercise this option, the informal hearing of grievances is not applicable to those grievances for which the expedited grievance procedure applies.

14-III.E. PROCEDURES TO OBTAIN A FORMAL GRIEVANCE HEARING

Requests for Hearing and Failure to Request

BHA Policy

The resident must submit a written request for a grievance hearing to BHA within 5 days of the tenant's receipt of the summary of the informal hearing.

If the complainant does not request a hearing, BHA's disposition of the grievance under the informal hearing process will become final. However, failure to request a hearing does not constitute a waiver by the complainant of the right to contest BHA's action in disposing of the complaint in an appropriate judicial proceeding.

Scheduling of Hearings [24 CFR 966.56(a)]

If the complainant has complied with all requirements for requesting a hearing as described above, a hearing must be scheduled by the hearing officer/panel promptly for a time and place reasonably convenient to both the complainant and BHA. A written notification specifying the time, place and the procedures governing the hearing must be delivered to the complainant and the appropriate BHA official.

BHA Policy

Within 10 business days of receiving a written request for a hearing, the hearing officer will schedule and send written notice of the hearing to both the complainant and BHA.

BHA may wish to permit the tenant to request to reschedule a hearing for good cause.

BHA Policy

The tenant may request to reschedule a hearing for good cause, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of the family. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date. At its discretion, BHA may request documentation of the "good cause" prior to rescheduling the hearing.

Expedited Grievance Procedure [24 CFR 966.52(a)]

BHA may establish an expedited grievance procedure for any grievance concerning a termination of tenancy or eviction that involves:

- Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or employees of BHA; or
- Any drug-related criminal activity on or near such premises

In such expedited grievances, the informal hearing of grievances as discussed in Section 14-III.D is not applicable.

BHA Policy

BHA grievance hearings will be conducted by a single, contracted hearing officer and not a panel.

BHA may adopt special procedures concerning expedited hearings, including provisions for expedited notice or scheduling, or provisions for expedited decision on the grievance.

BHA Policy

BHA will follow expedited grievance procedures for any grievance concerning a termination of tenancy or eviction that involves any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or employees of BHA, or any drug-related criminal activity on or near such premises.

Such procedures will provide an expedited notice of hearing request, an expedited scheduling of the hearing, and for an expedited decision on the grievance. The tenant will have 3 business days to make their hearing request. The hearing officer will have 3 business days to schedule the hearing and 3 business days to render a decision. All other aspects of the expedited grievance process shall be the same as for other grievances.

14-III.F. SELECTION OF HEARING OFFICER/PANEL [24 CFR 966.53(e)]

The formal grievance hearing must be conducted by an impartial person or persons appointed by BHA, other than the person who made or approved the BHA action under review, or a subordinate of such person. BHA must describe their policies for selection of a hearing officer in their lease.

BHA must determine the methodology for appointment of the hearing officer, and it must be stated in the grievance procedure.

BHA Policy

BHA grievance hearings will be conducted by a single hearing officer and not a panel.

BHA will appoint a staff member who was not involved in the decision under appeal. If a designated staff member (such as the program manager) was involved in the decision, or is a subordinate of such person, an alternate hearing officer will be selected.

BHA may select designated staff members who were not involved in the decision under appeal in certain circumstances, such as appeals involving discrimination claims or denials of requests for reasonable accommodations.

BHA will describe its policies for selection of a hearing officer in its lease forms. Changes to the public housing lease are subject to a 30-day comment period (24 CFR 966.4).

14-III.G. REMOTE HEARINGS [Notice PIH 2020-32]

There is no requirement that grievance hearings be conducted in-person, and as such, HUD allows PHAs to conduct all or a portion of their grievance hearings remotely either over the phone, via video conferencing, or through other virtual platforms. If the PHA chooses to conduct remote grievance hearings, applicants may still request an in-person hearing, as applicable.

BHA Policy

BHA has the sole discretion to require that hearings be conducted remotely in case of local, state, or national physical distancing orders, and in cases of inclement weather or

natural disaster.

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

Discovery of Documents Before the Remote Hearing

BHA Policy

If the hearing will be conducted remotely, BHA will compile a hearing packet, consisting of all documents BHA intends to produce at the hearing. BHA will mail copies of the hearing packet to the tenant, the tenant's representatives, if any, and the hearing officer at least three days before the scheduled remote hearing.

The original hearing packet will be in the possession of BHA's representative and retained BHA.

If the hearing is to be conducted remotely, BHA will require the resident to provide any documents directly relevant to the hearing at least 24 hours before the scheduled hearing through the mail, via email, or text. BHA will scan and email copies of these documents to the hearing officer and BHA's representative the same day they are received.

Documents will be shared electronically whenever possible.

Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and LEP Individuals

As with in-person grievance hearings, the platform for conducting remote grievance hearings must be accessible to persons with disabilities and the grievance hearings must be conducted in accordance with Section 504 and accessibility requirements. This includes ensuring any information, websites, emails, digital notifications, and other virtual platforms are accessible for persons with vision, hearing, and other disabilities. Further, providing effective communication in a digital context may require the use of individualized auxiliary aids or services, such as audio description, captioning, sign language and other types of interpreters, keyboard accessibility, accessible documents, screen reader support, and transcripts. Auxiliary aids or services must be provided in accessible formats, in a timely manner, and in such a way to protect the privacy and independence of the individual. BHA may never request or require that individuals with disabilities provide their own auxiliary aids or services, including for remote grievance hearings.

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

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

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

14-III.H. PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE HEARING [24 CFR 966.56]

Rights of Complainant [24 CFR 966.56(b)]

The complainant will be afforded a fair hearing. This includes:

- The opportunity to examine before the grievance hearing any BHA documents, including records and regulations that are directly relevant to the hearing. The tenant must be allowed to copy any such document at the tenant's expense. If BHA does not make the document available for examination upon request by the complainant, BHA may not rely on such document at the grievance hearing.

BHA Policy

The tenant will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at no cost to the family. There will be no charge for documents emailed by BHA. The family must request discovery of BHA documents no later than 12:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the hearing.

- The right to be represented by counsel or other person chosen to represent the tenant, and to have such person make statements on the tenant's behalf.

BHA Policy

Hearings may be attended by the following applicable persons:

BHA's representatives and any witnesses for BHA

The tenant and any witnesses for the tenant

The tenant's counsel or other representative

Any other person approved by BHA as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability

- The right to a private hearing unless the complainant requests a public hearing.
- The right to present evidence and arguments in support of the tenant's complaint, to controvert evidence relied on by BHA or project management, and to confront and cross examine all witnesses upon whose testimony or information BHA or project management relies.
- A decision based solely and exclusively upon the facts presented at the hearing.

Failure to Appear [24 CFR 966.56(c)]

If the complainant or BHA fails to appear at a scheduled hearing, the hearing officer may make a determination to postpone the hearing for no more than five business days or may make a determination that the party has waived their right to a hearing. Both the complainant and BHA must be notified of the determination by the hearing officer: Provided, That a determination that the complainant has waived their right to a hearing will not constitute a waiver of any right the complainant may have to contest the PHA's disposition of the grievance in an appropriate judicial proceeding.

There may be times when a complainant does not appear due to unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control and are no fault of their own.

BHA Policy

If the tenant does not appear at the scheduled time of the hearing, the hearing officer will wait up to 30 minutes. If the tenant appears within 30 minutes of the scheduled time, the hearing will be held. If the tenant does not arrive within 30 minutes of the scheduled time, they will be considered to have failed to appear.

If the tenant fails to appear and was unable to reschedule the hearing in advance, the tenant must contact BHA within 24 hours of the scheduled hearing date, excluding weekends and holidays. The hearing officer will reschedule the hearing only if the tenant can show good cause for the failure to appear, or it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.

"Good cause" is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of the family.

General Procedures [24 CFR 966.56(d), (e)]

At the hearing, the complainant must first make a showing of an entitlement to the relief sought and thereafter BHA must sustain the burden of justifying BHA action or failure to act against which the complaint is directed [24 CFR 966.56(d)].

The hearing is conducted informally by the hearing officer. BHA and the tenant must be given the opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence pertinent to the facts and issues raised by the complaint, and to question any witnesses.

BHA Policy

Any evidence to be considered by the hearing officer must be presented at the time of the hearing. There are four categories of evidence.

Oral evidence: the testimony of witnesses

Documentary evidence: a writing which is relevant to the case, for example, a letter written to BHA. Writings include all forms of recorded communication or representation, including letters, emails, words, pictures, sounds, videotapes or symbols or combinations thereof.

Demonstrative evidence: Evidence created specifically for the hearing and presented as an illustrative aid to assist the hearing officer, such as a model, a chart or other diagram.

Real evidence: A tangible item relating directly to the case.

Hearsay Evidence is evidence based not on a witness' personal knowledge. In and of itself, hearsay evidence carries no weight when making a finding of fact. The hearing officer may include hearsay evidence when considering their decision if it is corroborated by other evidence. Even though hearsay evidence is generally admissible in a hearing, the hearing officer will not base a hearing decision on hearsay alone unless there is clear probative value and credibility of the evidence, and the party seeking the change has met the burden of proof.

If BHA fails to comply with the discovery requirements (providing the tenant with the opportunity to examine BHA documents prior to the grievance hearing), the hearing officer will refuse to admit such evidence.

Other than the failure of BHA to comply with discovery requirements, the hearing officer has the authority to overrule any objections to evidence.

The complainant or BHA may arrange, in advance and at the expense of the party making the arrangement, for a transcript of the hearing. Any interested party may purchase a copy of such transcript [24 CFR 966.56(e)].

BHA Policy

If the complainant would like BHA to record the proceedings by audiotape, the request must be made to BHA by 12:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the hearing.

BHA will consider that an audio tape recording of the proceedings is a transcript.

Accommodations of Persons with Disabilities [24 CFR 966.56(f)]

BHA must provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities to participate in the hearing. Reasonable accommodation may include qualified sign language interpreters, readers, accessible locations, or attendants.

If the tenant is visually impaired, any notice to the tenant which is required in the grievance process must be in an accessible format.

See Chapter 2 for a thorough discussion of the PHA's responsibilities pertaining to reasonable accommodation.

Limited English Proficiency (24 CFR 966.56(g))

BHA must comply with HUD's LEP Final Rule in providing language services throughout the grievance process.

14-III.I. DECISION OF THE HEARING OFFICER [24 CFR 966.57]

The hearing officer must issue a written decision, stating the reasons for the decision, within a reasonable time after the hearing. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family must be based on a preponderance of evidence presented at the hearing. A copy of the decision must be sent to the complainant and BHA. BHA must retain a copy of the decision in the tenant's folder. A log of all hearing officer decisions must also be maintained by BHA and made available for inspection by a prospective complainant, their representative, or the hearing officer [24 CFR 966.57(a)].

BHA Policy In rendering a decision, the hearing officer will consider the following matters:

- **BHA Notice to the Family:** The hearing officer will determine if the reasons for BHA's decision are factually stated in the notice.
- **Discovery:** The hearing officer will determine if the family was given the opportunity to examine any relevant documents in accordance with BHA policy.
- **BHA Evidence to Support the BHA 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 BHA's conclusion.
- **Validity of Grounds for Termination of Tenancy (when applicable):** The hearing officer will determine if the termination of tenancy is for one of the grounds specified in the HUD regulations and BHA policies. If the grounds for termination are not specified in the regulations or in compliance with BHA policies, then the decision of BHA will be overturned.

The hearing officer will issue a written decision to the family and BHA no later than 10 business days after the hearing. The report will contain the following information:

- **Hearing Information:**
 - Name of the complainant
 - Date, time and place of the hearing
 - Name of the hearing officer
 - Name of BHA representative(s)
 - Name of family representative (if any)
 - Names of witnesses (if any)
- **Background:** A brief, impartial statement of the reason for the hearing and the date(s) on which the informal hearing was held, who held it, and a summary of the results of the informal hearing. Also includes the date the complainant requested the grievance hearing.
- **Summary of the Evidence:** The hearing officer will summarize the testimony of each witness and identify any documents that a witness produced in support of their testimony and that were admitted into evidence.
- **Findings of Fact:** The hearing officer will include all findings of fact, based on a preponderance of the evidence. *Preponderance of the evidence* is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is

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

- **Conclusions:** The hearing officer will render a conclusion derived from the facts that were found to be true by a preponderance of the evidence. The conclusion will result in a determination of whether these facts uphold BHA's decision.
- **Order:** The hearing report will include a statement of whether BHA's decision is upheld or overturned. If it is overturned, the hearing officer will instruct BHA to change the decision in accordance with the hearing officer's determination. In the case of termination of tenancy, the hearing officer will instruct BHA to restore the family's status.

Procedures for Further Hearing

BHA Policy

The hearing officer may ask the family for additional information and/or might adjourn the hearing in order to reconvene at a later date, before reaching a decision. If the family misses an appointment or deadline ordered by the hearing officer, the action of BHA will take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

Final Decision [24 CFR 966.57(b)]

The decision of the hearing officer/panel is binding on BHA which must take the action, or refrain from taking the action, cited in the decision unless the BHA Board of Commissioners determines within a reasonable time, and notifies the complainant that:

- The grievance does not concern BHA action or failure to act in accordance with or involving the complainant's lease on BHA policies which adversely affect the complainant's rights, duties, welfare, or status; or
- The decision of the hearing officer/panel is contrary to Federal, state, or local law, HUD regulations or requirements of the annual contributions contract between HUD and BHA.

BHA Policy

When BHA consider the decision of the hearing officer to be invalid due to the reasons stated above, it will present the matter to the BHA Board of Commissioners within 10 business days of the date of the hearing officer's decision. The Board has 30 calendar days to consider the decision. If the Board decides to reverse the hearing officer's decision, it must notify the complainant within 10 business days of this decision.

A decision by the hearing officer/panel, or Board of Commissioners in favor of BHA or which denies the relief requested by the complainant in whole or in part must not constitute a waiver of any rights, nor effect in any manner whatever, any rights the complainant may have to a subsequent trial or judicial review in court [24 CFR 966.57(c)].

EXHIBIT 14-1: SAMPLE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Note: The sample procedure provided below is a sample only and is designed to match up with the default policies in the model ACOP. If your PHA has made policy decisions that do not reflect the default policies in the ACOP, you would need to ensure that the procedure matches those policy decisions.

I. Definitions applicable to the grievance procedure [24 CFR 966.53]

- A. Grievance: Any dispute a tenant may have with respect to PHA action or failure to act in accordance with the individual tenant's lease or PHA regulations that adversely affects the individual tenant's rights, duties, welfare, or status.
- B. Complainant: Any tenant (as defined below) whose grievance is presented to the PHA or at the project management office in accordance with the requirements presented in this procedure.
- C. Elements of due process: An eviction action or a termination of tenancy in a state or local court in which the following procedural safeguards are required:
 - i. Adequate notice to the tenant of the grounds for terminating the tenancy and for eviction
 - ii. Right of the tenant to be represented by counsel
 - iii. Opportunity for the tenant to refute the evidence presented by the PHA, including the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and to present any affirmative legal or equitable defense that the tenant may have
 - iv. A decision on the merits of the case
- D. Hearing officer: An impartial person or persons selected by the PHA other than the person who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of that person. Such individuals do not need legal training.
- E. Tenant: The adult person (or persons other than a live-in aide) who resides in the unit and who executed the lease with the PHA as lessee of the dwelling unit, or if no such person now resides in the unit, who resides in the unit and who is the remaining head of the household of the tenant family residing in the dwelling unit.
- F. Resident organization: An organization of residents, which also may include a resident management corporation.

II. Applicability of this grievance procedure [24 CFR 966.51]

In accordance with the applicable federal regulations (24 CFR 966.50), this grievance procedure is applicable to all individual grievances (as defined in Section I above) between the tenant and the PHA with the following exception of disputes between tenants not involving the PHA or class grievances. The grievance procedure is not intended as a forum for initiating or negotiating policy changes between a group or groups of tenants and the PHA's Board of Commissioners [24 CFR 966.51(b)].

This grievance procedure is incorporated by reference in all tenant dwelling leases and will be furnished to each tenant and all resident organizations [24 CFR 966.52 (b) and (d)].

Any changes proposed in this grievance procedure must provide for at least 30 days' notice to tenants and resident organizations, setting forth the proposed changes and providing an opportunity to present written comments. Comments will be considered by the PHA before any revisions are made to the grievance procedure [24 CFR 966.52(c)].

III. Informal settlement of a grievance [24 CFR 966.54]

Any grievance must be personally presented, either orally or in writing (including email), to the PHA's central office or the management office of the development in which the complainant resides **within 10 days after the grievable event**.

Grievances related to complaints about operations matters that are received by the PHA's central office will be referred to the person responsible for the management of the development in which the complainant resides. Grievances involving complaints related to discrimination, harassment, or disability rights will be referred to the Civil Rights Administrator or Director of Operations.

As soon as the grievance is received, it will be reviewed by the management office of the development or the Civil Rights Administrator (if applicable) to be certain that neither of the exclusions in paragraphs II.A or II.B above applies to the grievance. Should one of the exclusions apply, the complainant will be notified in writing that the matter raised is not subject to the PHA's grievance procedure with the reason specified.

If neither of the exclusions cited above apply, the complainant will be contacted to arrange a mutually convenient time **within 10 business days** to meet so the grievance may be discussed informally and settled without a hearing. At the informal settlement, the complainant will present the grievance and the person in charge of the management office or the Civil Rights Administrator will attempt to settle the grievance to the satisfaction of both parties.

Within five business days following the informal discussion, the PHA will prepare and either hand deliver, mail, or email to the tenant a summary of the discussion that must specify the names of the participants, the dates of meeting, the nature of the proposed disposition of the complaint, and the specific reasons therefore, and will specify the procedures by which a formal hearing under this procedure may be obtained if the complainant is not satisfied. A copy of this summary will also be placed in the tenant's file.

IV. Formal grievance hearing

If the complainant is not satisfied with the settlement arrived at in the informal settlement, the complainant must submit a written request for a hearing to the management office of the development where the tenant resides **no later than five business days after the summary of the informal hearing is received**.

The written request must specify:

- The reasons for the grievance; and

- The action of relief sought from the PHA

Within 10 days of receiving the written request for a hearing, the hearing officer will schedule and sent written notice of hearing to both the complainant and the PHA.

IV. Selecting the hearing officer

A grievance hearing will be conducted by a single impartial person appointed by the PHA as described below:

- A. The hearing officer will be appointed directly by the executive director.
- B. The hearing officer will be a staff member who did not make or approve the decision under review and who is not a subordinate of such persons. If the designated staff member (such as the program manager) was involved in the decision or is a subordinate of such person, an alternate hearing officer will be selected.
- C. The PHA may select designated staff members who were not involved in the decision under review in certain circumstances, such as those involving discrimination claims or denials of requests for reasonable accommodations.
- D. The PHA's method for selecting a hearing officer will be inserted into the lease.

V. Scheduling hearings [24 CFR 966.56(a)]

When a complainant submits a timely request for a grievance hearing, the PHA will immediately appoint an impartial hearing office to schedule the hearing within the following 10 business days.

Once the hearing officer has scheduled the hearing, the hearing officer will send written notice of the hearing to both the complainant and the PHA. Notice to the complainant will be in writing, either personally delivered to the complainant, or sent by mail or email, return receipt requested.

The written notice will specify the time, place, and procedures governing the hearing. If the hearing will be held remotely, the PHA will also include information on the remote hearing process.

The tenant may request to reschedule a hearing on a one-time basis. Should the complainant need to reschedule a second time, they may do so for good cause, or if needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. *Good cause* is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of the family. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date.

VI. Procedures governing the hearing [24 CFR 966.56]

The hearing will be held before a hearing officer as described above in Section V. The complainant will be afforded a fair hearing, which will include:

- A. The opportunity to examine before the hearing any PHA documents, including records and regulations, that are directly relevant to the hearing.

The tenant is allowed to copy any such document at no cost to the tenant. If the PHA does not make the document available for examination upon request by the complainant, the PHA may not rely on such document at the grievance hearing.

- B. The right to be represented by counsel or other person chosen as the tenant's representative and to have such person make statements on the tenant's behalf.
- C. The right to a private hearing unless the complainant requests a public hearing.
- D. The right to present evidence and arguments in support of the tenant's complaint, to refute evidence relied on by the PHA or project management, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses upon whose testimony or information the PHA or project management relies.
- E. A decision based solely and exclusively upon the fact presented at the hearing [24 CFR 966.56(b)].

The hearing is conducted informally by the hearing officer. The PHA and the tenant must be given the opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence pertinent to the facts and issues raised by the complaint, and to question any witnesses.

The complainant or the PHA may arrange in advance for a transcript of the hearing at the expense of the party making the arrangement. Any interested party may purchase a copy of the transcript [24 CFR 966.56(e)].

The PHA must provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities to participate in the hearing. Reasonable accommodation may include qualified sign language interpreters, readers, accessible locations, or attendants. If the tenant is visually impaired, any notice to the tenant that is required under this procedure must be in an accessible format [24 CFR 966.56(f)].

The PHA must comply with HUD's requirements regarding limited English proficiency as specified in "Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons," issued January 22, 2007, and available at:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/promotingfh/lep-faq.

VII. Remote Hearings

The PHA has the authority to require that hearings be conducted remotely in certain situations.

VIII. Failure to appear at the hearing

If the complainant or PHA fails to appear at the hearing, the hearing officer may make a determination to postpone the hearing or make a determination that the complainant has waived their right to a hearing.

Both the complainant and the PHA must be notified of the determination by the hearing officer. A determination that the complainant has waived their right to a hearing will not constitute a waiver of any right the complainant may have to contest the PHA's disposition of the grievance in an appropriate judicial setting [24 CFR 966.56(c)].

IX. Decision of the hearing officer [24 CFR 966.57]

The hearing officer will prepare a written decision together with the reasons for the decision **within 10 business days** after the hearing. A copy of the decision will be sent to the complainant and the PHA.

The PHA will retain a copy of the decision in the tenant's file.

The hearing officer may ask the family for additional information and/or might adjourn the hearing in order to reconvene at a later date before reaching a decision. If the family misses a deadline ordered by the hearing officer, the hearing officer will make a decision based on the evidence presented.

The decision of the hearing officer will be binding on the PHA unless the PHA's Board of Commissioners determines within a reasonable time and notifies the complainant of its determination that:

- A. The grievance does not concern PHA action or failure to act in accordance with or involving the complainant's lease or PHA regulations, which adversely affect the complainant's rights, duties, welfare, or status; or
- B. The decision of the hearing officer is contrary to applicable federal, state, or local law, HUD regulations, or requirements of the annual contributions contract (ACC) between HUD and the PHA.

When the PHA considers the decision of the hearing officer to be invalid due to either of the reasons stated above, it will present the matter to the PHA Board of Commissioners within 10 business days of the date of the hearing officer's decision. The Board has 30 calendar days to consider the decision. If the Board decides to reverse the hearing officer's decision, it must notify the complainant within 10 business days of this decision.

A decision by the hearing officer or Board of Commissioners in favor of the PHA or which denies the relief requested by the complainant in whole or in part will not constitute a waiver of nor affect in any way the rights of the complainant to a trial or judicial review in any court proceedings, which may be brought in the matter later [24 CFR 966.57].

Chapter 15

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

INTRODUCTION

BHA is committed to ensuring that funds made available to BHA are spent in accordance with HUD requirements.

This chapter covers HUD and BHA 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 BHA policies related to preventing, detecting, and investigating errors and program abuse.

Part II: Corrective Measures and Penalties. This part describes the corrective measures BHA must and may take when errors or program abuses are found.

PART I: PREVENTING, DETECTING, AND INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

15-I.A. PREVENTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

HUD created the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system to provide PHAs with a powerful tool for preventing errors and program abuse. BHA is required to use the EIV system at annual recertification in accordance with HUD administrative guidance [24 CFR 5.233]. BHA is further required to:

- Provide applicants and residents with form HUD-52675, “Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations”
- Require all adult members of an applicant or participant family to acknowledge receipt of form HUD-52675 by signing a copy of the form for retention in the family file

BHA Policy

BHA anticipates that the vast majority of families and BHA employees intend to and will comply with program requirements and make reasonable efforts to avoid errors.

To ensure that BHA’s public housing program is administered effectively and according to the highest ethical and legal standards, BHA will employ a variety of techniques to ensure that both errors and intentional program abuse are rare.

- BHA will provide each applicant and resident with a copy of “Is Fraud Worth It?” (form HUD-1141-OIG) which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse.
- BHA will provide each applicant and resident with a copy of “What You Should Know about EIV,” a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2017-12. In addition, BHA will require the head of each household to acknowledge receipt of the guide by signing a copy for retention in the family file.
- BHA will require mandatory orientation sessions for all prospective residents either prior to or upon execution of the lease. BHA will discuss program compliance and integrity issues. At the conclusion of all program orientation sessions, the family representative will be required to sign a program briefing certificate to confirm that all rules and pertinent regulations were explained to them.
- BHA will routinely provide resident counseling as part of every reexamination interview in order to clarify any confusion pertaining to program rules and requirements.
- BHA staff will be required to review and explain the contents of all HUD- and BHA-required forms prior to requesting family member signatures.
- BHA will place a warning statement about the penalties for fraud (as described in the False Statement Act, 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 1010) on key BHA forms and form letters that request information from a family member.
- BHA will provide each BHA employee with the necessary training on program rules and the organization’s standards of conduct and ethics.

- At each regular reexamination, BHA staff will explain any changes in HUD regulations or BHA policy that affect residents.

For purposes of this chapter, the term *error* refers to an unintentional error or omission. *Program abuse or fraud* refers to a single act or pattern of actions that constitute a false statement, omission, or concealment of a substantial fact, made with the intent to deceive or mislead.

15-I.B. DETECTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

In addition to taking steps to prevent errors and program abuse, BHA will use a variety of activities to detect errors and program abuse.

Quality Control and Analysis of Data

BHA Policy

BHA will employ a variety of methods to detect errors and program abuse, including:

- BHA routinely will use EIV and other non-HUD sources of up-front income verification. This includes the Work Number and any other private or public databases available to BHA.
- 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.
- BHA will compare family-reported income and expenditures to detect possible unreported income.

Independent Audits and HUD Monitoring

Notice PIH 2015-16 requires all PHAs that expend \$750,000 or more in federal awards annually to have an independent audit (IPA). In addition, HUD conducts periodic on-site and automated monitoring of BHA activities and notifies BHA of errors and potential cases of program abuse.

BHA Policy

BHA 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 BHA's error detection and abuse prevention efforts.

Individual Reporting of Possible Errors and Program Abuse

BHA Policy

BHA will encourage staff, residents, and the public to report possible program abuse.

15-I.C. INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

When BHA Will Investigate

BHA Policy

BHA 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 BHA 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.

BHA will investigate when inconsistent or contradictory information is detected through file reviews and the verification process.

Consent to Release of Information [24 CFR 960.259]

BHA may investigate possible instances of error or abuse using all available BHA and public records. If necessary, BHA will require families to sign consent forms for the release of additional information.

Analysis and Findings

BHA Policy

BHA 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 BHA will determine (1) whether an error or program abuse has occurred, (2) whether any amount of money is owed BHA, 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 BHA will enforce other corrective actions and penalties depends upon the nature of the error or program abuse.

BHA Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, BHA 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, and (4) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

Notice and Appeals

BHA Policy

BHA will inform the relevant party in writing of its findings and remedies within 10 business days of the conclusion of the investigation. The notice will include (1) a description of the error or program abuse, (2) the basis on which BHA determined the error or program abuses, (3) the remedies to be employed, and (4) the family's right to appeal the results through an informal hearing or grievance hearing (see Chapter 14).

PART II: CORRECTIVE MEASURES AND PENALTIES

15-II.A. UNDER- OR OVERPAYMENT

An under- or overpayment includes an incorrect tenant rent payment by the family, or an incorrect utility reimbursement to a family.

Corrections

Whether the incorrect rental determination is an overpayment or underpayment, BHA must promptly correct the tenant rent and any utility reimbursement prospectively.

BHA Policy

Increases in the tenant rent will be implemented on the first of the month following a written 30 day notice.

Any decreases in tenant rent will become effective the first of the month following the discovery of the error.

Reimbursement

Whether the family is required to reimburse BHA or BHA is required to reimburse the family depends upon which party is responsible for the incorrect payment and whether the action taken was an error or program abuse. Policies regarding reimbursement are discussed in the three sections that follow.

15-II.B. FAMILY-CAUSED ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

General administrative requirements for participating in the program are discussed throughout the ACOP. This section deals specifically with errors and program abuse by family members.

An incorrect rent determination caused by a family generally would be the result of incorrect reporting of family composition, income, assets, or expenses, but also would include instances in which the family knowingly allows BHA to use incorrect information provided by a third party.

Family Reimbursement to BHA

BHA Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the family will be required to repay any amounts of rent underpaid. BHA may, but is not required to, offer the family a repayment agreement in accordance with Chapter 16. If the family fails to repay the amount owed, BHA will terminate the family's lease in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

BHA Reimbursement to Family

BHA Policy

BHA will not reimburse the family for any overpayment of rent when the overpayment clearly is caused by the family.

Prohibited Actions

An applicant or resident in the public housing program must not knowingly:

- Make a false statement to BHA [Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001].
- Provide incomplete or false information to BHA [24 CFR 960.259(a)(4)].
- Commit fraud, or make false statements in connection with an application for assistance or with reexamination of income [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2)(iii)(C)].

BHA Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of family program abuse:

- Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to BHA Board of Commissioners, employees, contractors, or other BHA representatives
- Offering payments or other incentives to a third party as an inducement for the third party to make false or misleading statements to BHA on the family's behalf
- Use of a false name or the use of falsified, forged, or altered documents
- Intentional misreporting of family information or circumstances (e.g., misreporting of income or family composition)
- Omitted facts that were obviously known by a family member (e.g., not reporting employment income)
- Admission of program abuse by an adult family member

BHA 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, BHA may, at its discretion, impose any of the following remedies.

- BHA may require the family to repay any amounts owed to the program (see Section 15-II.B).
- BHA may require, as a condition of receiving or continuing assistance, that a culpable family member not reside in the unit. See policies in Chapter 3 (for applicants) and Chapter 13 (for residents).
- BHA may deny admission or terminate the family's lease following the policies set forth in Chapter 3 and Chapter 13 respectively.
- BHA may refer the family for state or federal criminal prosecution as described in Section 15-II.D.

15-II.C. BHA-CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE

The responsibilities and expectations of BHA staff with respect to normal program administration are discussed throughout the ACOP. This section specifically addresses actions of a BHA staff member that are considered errors or program abuse related to the public housing program. Additional standards of conduct may be provided in the BHA personnel policy.

BHA-caused incorrect rental determinations include (1) failing to correctly apply public housing rules regarding family composition, income, assets, and expenses, and (2) errors in calculation.

De Minimis Errors [24 CFR 5.609(c)(4); Notice PIH 2023-27]

BHA 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 the PHA 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.

BHA must take corrective action to credit or repay a family if the family was overcharged rent, including when BHA makes de minimis errors in the income determination. Families will not be required to repay BHA in instances where BHA miscalculated income resulting in a family being undercharged for rent. BHA states in their policies how they will repay or credit a family the amount they were overcharged as a result of the BHA's de minimis error in income determination.

BHA Policy

BHA 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.

Prohibited Activities

BHA Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of program abuse by BHA staff:

- Failing to comply with any public housing program requirements for personal gain
- Failing to comply with any public housing program requirements as a result of a conflict of interest relationship with any applicant or resident
- Seeking or accepting anything of material value from applicants, residents, vendors, contractors, or other persons who provide services or materials to BHA
- Disclosing confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Gaining profit as a result of insider knowledge of BHA activities, policies, or practices
- Misappropriating or misusing public housing funds
- Destroying, concealing, removing, or inappropriately using any records related to the public housing program
- Committing any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program
- Committing sexual harassment or other harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity, either quid pro quo (supervisory harassment) or hostile environment
- Allowing sexual harassment or other harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity, either quid pro quo (supervisory harassment) or hostile environment, where BHA knew or should have known such harassment was occurring
- Retaliating against any applicant, resident, or staff reporting sexual harassment or other harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, familial status,

disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity, either quid pro quo (supervisory harassment) or hostile environment

15-II.D. CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

BHA Policy

When BHA determines that program abuse by a family or BHA staff member has occurred and the amount of underpaid rent meets or exceeds the threshold for prosecution under local or state law, BHA will refer the matter to the appropriate entity for prosecution. When the amount of underpaid rent meets or exceeds the federal threshold, the case will also be referred to the HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Other criminal violations related to the public housing program will be referred to the appropriate local, state, or federal entity.

15-II.E. FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE RECOVERIES

If BHA enters into a repayment agreement with a family to collect rent owed, initiates litigation against the family to recover rent owed, or begins eviction proceedings against a family, BHA may retain 100 percent of program funds that BHA recovers [Notice PIH 2007-27 (HA)].

If BHA does none of the above, all amounts that constitute an underpayment of rent must be returned to HUD.

The family must be afforded the opportunity for a hearing through BHA's grievance process.

Chapter 16

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses administrative policies and practices that are relevant to the activities covered in this ACOP. The policies are discussed in seven parts as described below:

Part I: Setting Utility Allowances. This part describes how utility allowances are established and revised. Also discussed are the requirements to establish surcharges for excess consumption of BHA-furnished utilities.

Part II: Establishing Flat Rents. This part describes the requirements and policies related to establishing and updating flat rent amounts.

Part III: Repayment of Family Debts. This part contains policies for recovery of monies that have been underpaid by families, and describes the circumstances under which BHA may offer repayment agreements to families. Also discussed are the consequences for failure to make payments in accordance with a repayment agreement.

Part IV: Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS). This part describes the PHAS indicators, how BHA is scored under PHAS, and how those scores affect BHA.

Part V: Record-Keeping. All aspects of the program involve certain types of record-keeping. This part outlines the privacy rights of applicants and participants and record retention policies BHA will follow.

Part VI: Reporting and Record Keeping for Children with Environmental Intervention Blood Lead Level. This part describes BHA's reporting responsibilities related to children with environmental intervention blood lead levels that are living in public housing.

Part VII: Violence against Women Act (VAWA): Notification, Documentation, and Confidentiality. This part contains key terms used in VAWA and describes requirements related to notifying families about their rights and responsibilities under VAWA; requesting documentation from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained from victims.

PART I: SETTING UTILITY ALLOWANCES

[24 CFR 965 Subpart E]

16-I.A. OVERVIEW

BHA must establish allowances for BHA-furnished utilities for all check metered utilities and for resident-purchased utilities for all utilities purchased directly by residents from a utility supplier [24 CFR 965.502(a)].

BHA must also establish surcharges for excess consumption of BHA-furnished utilities [24 CFR 965.506].

BHA must maintain a record that documents the basis on which utility allowances and scheduled surcharges are established and revised, and the record must be made available for inspection by residents [24 CFR 965.502(b)].

16-I.B UTILITY ALLOWANCES

BHA must establish separate allowances for each utility and for each category of dwelling units BHA determines to be reasonably comparable as to factors affecting utility usage [24 CFR 965.503].

The objective of BHA in establishing utility allowances for each dwelling unit category and unit size is to approximate a reasonable consumption of utilities by an energy-conservative household of modest circumstances consistent with the requirements of a safe, sanitary, and healthful living environment [24 CFR 965.505].

Utilities include gas, electricity, fuel for heating, water, sewerage, and solid waste disposal for a dwelling unit. In addition, if BHA does not furnish a range and refrigerator, the family must be granted a utility allowance for the range and refrigerator they provide [24 CFR 965.505].

Costs for telephone, cable/satellite TV, and internet services are not considered utilities [PH GB, p. 138].

Utility allowance amounts will vary by the rates in effect, size and type of unit, climatic location and sitting of the unit, type of construction, energy efficiency of the dwelling unit, and other factors related to the physical condition of the unit. Utility allowance amounts will also vary by residential demographic characteristics affecting home energy usage [PH GB, p. 138].

Chapter 14 of the *PH Occupancy Guidebook* provides detailed guidance to BHA about establishing utility allowances.

Air-Conditioning

“If a PHA installs air conditioning, it shall provide, to the maximum extent economically feasible, systems that give residents the option of choosing to use air conditioning in their units. The design of systems that offer each resident the option to choose air conditioning shall include retail meters or check meters, and residents shall pay for the energy used in its operation. For systems that offer residents the option to choose air conditioning but cannot be check metered, residents are to be surcharged in accordance with 965.506. If an air conditioning system does not provide for resident option, residents are not to be charged, and these systems should be avoided whenever possible.” [24 CFR 965.505(e)]

BHA Policy

BHA has not installed air-conditioning.

Utility Allowance Revisions [24 CFR 965.507]

BHA must review at least annually the basis on which utility allowances have been established and must revise the allowances if necessary in order to adhere to the standards for establishing utility allowances that are contained in 24 CFR 965.505. The review must include all changes in circumstances (including completion of modernization and/or other energy conservation measures implemented by the PHA) indicating probability of a significant change in reasonable requirements and changes in utility rates [24 CFR 965.507(a)].

BHA must revise its allowances for resident-purchased utilities if there is a rate change, and is required to do so if such change, by itself or together with prior rate changes not adjusted for, results in a change of 10 percent or more from the rate on which the allowance was based.

Adjustments to resident payments as a result of such changes must be retroactive to the first day of the month following the month in which the last rate change taken into account became effective. Such rate changes are not subject to the 60-day notice [24 CFR 965.507(b)].

BHA Policy

BHA is required to revise utility allowances annually on October 1st. Unless the change is greater than 10%, revised utility allowances will be applied to a family’s rent calculations at the first annual reexamination after the allowance is adopted. If the change is greater than 10%, the change will go into effect on October 1st.

For LIHTC properties, any changes in the utility allowance must be implemented in compliance with Washington State Housing Finance Commission requirements upon publication by BHA.

16-I.C. SURCHARGES FOR BHA-FURNISHED UTILITIES [24 CFR 965.506]

For dwelling units subject to allowances for BHA-furnished utilities where check meters have been installed, BHA must establish surcharges for utility consumption in excess of the allowances. Surcharges may be computed on a straight per unit of purchase basis or for stated blocks of excess consumption, and must be based on BHA’s average utility rate. The basis for calculating the surcharges must be described in BHA’s schedule of allowances. Changes in the amount of surcharges based directly on changes in BHA’s average utility rate are not subject to the advance notice requirements discussed under Section 16-I.D.

For dwelling units served by BHA-furnished utilities where check meters have not been installed, BHA must establish schedules of surcharges indicating additional dollar amounts residents will be required to pay by reason of estimated utility consumption attributable to resident-owned major appliances or to optional functions of BHA-furnished equipment. The surcharge schedule must state the resident-owned equipment (or functions of BHA-furnished equipment) for which surcharges will be made and the amounts of such charges. Surcharges must be based on the cost to BHA of the utility consumption estimated to be attributable to reasonable usage of such equipment.

BHA Policy

BHA does have BHA-furnished utilities.

16-I.D. NOTICE REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 965.502]

BHA must give notice to all residents of proposed allowances and scheduled surcharges, and revisions thereof. The notice must be given in the manner provided in the lease and must:

- Be provided at least 60 days before the proposed effective date of the allowances, scheduled surcharges, or revisions.
- Describe the basis for determination of the allowances, scheduled surcharges, or revisions, including a statement of the specific items of equipment and function whose utility consumption requirements were included in determining the amounts of the allowances and schedule of surcharges.
- Notify residents of the place where BHA's documentation on which allowances and surcharges are based is available for inspection.
- Provide all residents an opportunity to submit written comments during a period expiring not less than 30 days before the proposed effective date of the allowances, scheduled surcharges, or revisions.

16-I.E. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND INDIVIDUAL RELIEF [24 CFR 965.508]

On request from a family, PHAs must approve a utility allowance that is higher than the applicable amount for the dwelling unit if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family with a disability [24 CFR 8 and 100, PH Occ GB, p. 172].

On request from a family that includes a disabled or elderly person, the PHA must approve a utility allowance that is higher than the applicable amount for the dwelling unit if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family [PH Occ GB, p. 172].

Likewise, residents with disabilities may not be charged for the use of certain resident-supplied appliances if there is a verified need for special equipment because of the disability [24 CFR 8 and 100, [PH GB, p. 172].

See Chapter 2 for policies regarding the request for and approval of reasonable accommodations.

Further, BHA may grant requests for relief from charges in excess of the utility allowance on reasonable grounds, such as special needs of the elderly, ill, or residents with disabilities, or special factors not within control of the resident, as BHA deems appropriate. The family must request the higher allowance and provide BHA with information about the additional allowance required.

BHA should develop criteria for granting individual relief and to notify residents about the availability of individual relief, and also to notify participants about the availability of individual relief programs (sometimes referred to as “Medical Baseline discounts”) offered by the local utility company [Utility Allowance GB, p. 19, 24 CFR 965.508].

PART II: ESTABLISHING FLAT RENTS

16-II.A. OVERVIEW

Flat rents are designed to encourage self-sufficiency and to avoid creating disincentives for continued residency by families who are attempting to become economically self-sufficient.

Flat rents are also used to prorate assistance for a mixed family. A mixed family is one whose members include those with citizenship or eligible immigration status, and those without citizenship or eligible immigration status [24 CFR 5.504].

This part discusses how BHA establishes and updates flat rents. Policies related to the use of flat rents, family choice of rent, flat rent hardships, and proration of rent for a mixed family are discussed in Chapter 6.

16-II.B. FLAT RENTS [24 CFR 960.253(b) and Notice PIH 2022-33]

Establishing Flat Rents

The 2015 Appropriations Act requires that flat rents must be set at no less than 80 percent of the applicable fair market rent (FMR). Alternatively, BHA may set flat rents at no less than 80 percent of the applicable small area FMR (SAFMR) for metropolitan areas, or 80 percent of the applicable unadjusted rents for nonmetropolitan areas.

For areas where HUD has not determined a SAFMR or an unadjusted rent, BHA must set flat rents at no less than 80 percent of the FMR or apply for an exception flat rent.

The 2015 Appropriations Act permits BHA to request an exception flat rent that is lower than either 80 percent of the FMR or SAFMR/unadjusted rent if BHA can demonstrate that these FMRs do not reflect the market value of a particular property or unit.

In order to demonstrate the need for an exception flat rent, BHA is required to submit a market analysis methodology that demonstrates the value of the unit. BHA must use HUD's rent reasonableness methodology to determine flat rents. In determining flat rents, BHA must consider the following:

- Location
- Quality
- Unit size
- Unit type
- Age of property
- Amenities at the property and in immediate neighborhood
- Housing services provided
- Maintenance provided by BHA
- Utilities provided by BHA

BHA must receive written HUD approval before implementing exception flat rents. If BHA uses exception flat rents, it must conduct a new market analysis and obtain HUD approval annually.

BHA is now required to apply a utility allowance to flat rents. Flat rents set at 80 percent of the FMR must be reduced by the amount of the unit's utility allowance, if any.

Review of Flat Rents

No later than 90 days after HUD publishes new annual FMRs/SAFMRs/unadjusted rent, BHA must revise flat rents as necessary based on changes to the FMR/SAFMR/unadjusted rent. BHA must offer changes to the flat rent to all new admissions and to existing families at the next annual rent option.

If the FMR falls from year to year, BHA may, but is not required to, lower the flat rent to 80 percent of the current FMR/SAFMR/unadjusted rent.

BHA Policy

If the FMR/SAFMR/unadjusted rent is lower than the previous year, BHA will reduce flat rents to 80 percent of the current FMR/SAFMR/unadjusted rent.

Applying Flat Rents

BHA Policy

BHA will apply updated flat rents at each family's next annual reexamination or flat rent update after implementation of the new flat rents.

Posting of Flat Rents

BHA Policy

BHA will publicly post the schedule of flat rents in a conspicuous manner in the applicable BHA or development office.

Documentation of Flat Rents [24 CFR 960.253(b)(5)]

BHA must maintain records that document the method used to determine flat rents and that show how flat rents were determined by BHA in accordance with this method.

PART III: FAMILY DEBTS TO BHA

16-III.A. OVERVIEW

Families are required to reimburse BHA if they were charged less rent than required because the family either underreported or failed to report income. BHA is required to determine retroactive rent amounts as far back as BHA has documentation of family unreported income [Notice PIH 2018-18].

This part describes BHA's policies for recovery of monies owed to BHA by families.

BHA Policy

When an action or inaction of a resident family results in the underpayment of rent or other amounts, BHA holds the family liable to return any underpayments to BHA.

BHA will enter into repayment agreements in accordance with the policies contained in this part as a means to recover underpayments. The term *repayment agreement* refers to a formal document signed by a tenant and provided to BHA in which a tenant acknowledges a debt in a specific amount and agrees to repay the amount due at specific time periods.

16-III.B. REPAYMENT POLICY

Family Debts to BHA

BHA Policy

Any amount owed to BHA by a public housing family must be repaid. If the family is unable to repay the debt within 30 days, BHA may offer to enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies below.

Refusal to Enter into An Agreement

If the family refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, BHA will terminate the family's

PHA Policy

When a family refuses to repay monies owed to BHA, in addition to termination of program assistance, BHA will utilize other available collection alternatives including, but not limited to, the following:

- Collection agencies
- Small claims court
- Civil lawsuit
- State income tax set-off program

Repayment Agreement [24 CFR 792.103]

The term repayment agreement refers to a formal written document signed by a tenant or owner and provided to the PHA in which a tenant or owner acknowledges a debt in a specific amount and agrees to repay the amount due at specific time periods.

General Repayment Agreement Guidelines

Down Payment Requirement

BHA Policy

Prior to the execution of a repayment agreement, the family must pay 10 percent of the balance owed to BHA. If the family can provide evidence satisfactory to BHA that a down payment of 10 percent would impose an undue hardship, BHA may, in its sole discretion, require a lesser percentage or waive the requirement.

Payment Thresholds

Notice PIH 2018-18 recommends that the total amount that a family must pay each month—the family's monthly share of rent plus the monthly debt repayment amount—should not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income, which is considered "affordable." Moreover, Notice PIH 2018-18

acknowledges that BHA has the discretion to establish "thresholds and policies" for repayment agreements with families [24 CFR 982.552(c)(1)(vii)].

BHA Policy

BHA may enter into a repayment agreement with a family when the amount due is a result of a program violation. An example of a program violation would be failing to report an increase in income within the timeframe stated in this ACOP.

BHA will not enter into a repayment agreement if the family has intentionally and knowingly committed fraud. Intentionally and knowingly committing fraud occurs when a family certifies in writing that something is true that is not. Examples of intentionally and knowingly committing fraud include, but are not limited to:

- Certifying that the income reported to BHA is correct and subsequently failing to report income due to a wage increase or new employment of any family member whose income is used in rent determination
- Certifying to the family composition and subsequently failing to report a change in circumstance that impacts rent including failing to add a new household member to the lease

Amounts between \$3,000 and the Federal or State threshold for criminal prosecution must be repaid within 36 months.

Amounts between \$2,000 and \$2,999 must be repaid within 30 months.

Amounts between \$1,000 and \$1,999 must be repaid within 24 months.

Amounts between \$100 and \$999 must be repaid within 12 months.

Amounts under \$100 must be repaid in full.

If a family is paying less than 40 percent of its monthly adjusted income (MAI) in rent, the minimum monthly payment amount will be the greater of the difference between 40 percent of the family's MAI and the TTP at the time the agreement is executed or \$25.

If a family can provide evidence satisfactory to BHA that a monthly payment amount of \$25 would impose an undue hardship, BHA may, in its sole discretion, require a lower monthly payment amount. In making its determination, BHA will consider all relevant information, including the following:

- The amount owed by the family to BHA
- The reason for the debt, including whether the debt was the result of family action/inaction or circumstances beyond the family's control
- The family's current and potential income and expenses
- The family's current tenant rent, as calculated under 24 CFR 960.253(c)
- The family's history of meeting its financial responsibilities

If the family's income increases or decreases during the term of a repayment agreement, either BHA or the family may request that the monthly payment amount be adjusted accordingly.

Execution of the Agreement

All repayment agreements must be in writing, dated, and signed by both the family and BHA [Notice PIH 2018-18].

BHA Policy

Any repayment agreement between BHA and a family must be signed and dated by BHA and by the head of household and spouse/co-head (if applicable).

Due Dates

BHA Policy

All payments are due by the close of business on the 15th day of the month. If the 15th does not fall on a business day, the due date is the close of business on the first business day after the 15th.

Late or Missed Payment

BHA Policy

If a payment is not received by the end of the business day on the date due, and prior approval for the missed payment has not been given by BHA, BHA will send the family a delinquency notice giving the family 14 days to make the late payment. If the payment is not received by the due date of the delinquency notice, it will be considered a breach of the agreement, and BHA will terminate tenancy in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

If a family receives three delinquency notices for unexcused late payments in a 12-month period, the repayment agreement will be considered in default, and BHA will send the tenant to collections.

No Offer of Repayment Agreement

BHA Policy

BHA will not enter into a repayment agreement if there is already a repayment agreement in place with the family.

BHA will not enter into a repayment agreement if the family has intentionally and knowingly committed fraud. Intentionally and knowingly committing fraud occurs when a family certifies in writing that something is true that is not. Examples of intentionally and knowingly committing fraud include, but are not limited to:

- Certifying that the income reported to BHA is correct and subsequently failing to report income due to a wage increase or new employment of any family member whose income is used in rent determination
- Certifying to the family composition and subsequently failing to report a change in circumstance that impacts rent including failing to add a new household member to the lease

Repayment Agreements Terms

All repayment agreements must be in writing, dated, signed by both the family and BHA, include the total retroactive rent amount owed, amount of lump sum payment made at time of execution, if applicable, and the monthly repayment amount. PIH 2018-18 requires certain provisions to be included in any repayment agreement involving amounts owed by a family because it underreported or failed to report income:

- A reference to the items in the public housing lease that state the family's obligation to provide true and complete information at every reexamination and the grounds on which BHA 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 BHA the monthly payment amount specified in the agreement but must also pay to BHA the monthly tenant rent.
- A statement that the terms of the repayment agreement may be renegotiated if the family's income decreases or increases
- A statement that late or missed payments constitute default of the repayment agreement and may result in termination of tenancy

PART IV: PUBLIC HOUSING ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (PHAS)

16-IV.A. OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) is to improve the delivery of services in public housing and enhance trust in the public housing system among PHAs, public housing residents, HUD and the general public by providing a management tool for effectively and fairly measuring the performance of a public housing agency in essential housing operations.

16-IV.B. PHAS INDICATORS [24 CFR 902 Subparts A, B, C, D, and E]

The table below lists each of the PHAS indicators, the points possible under each indicator, and a brief description of each indicator. A PHA's performance is based on a combination of all four indicators.

<p>Indicator 1: Physical condition of the PHA's properties Maximum Score: 40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The objective of this indicator is to determine the level to which a PHA is maintaining its public housing in accordance with the standard of safe, habitable dwelling units.• To determine the physical condition of a PHA's properties, inspections are performed using the National Standards for the Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE). The inspections are performed by an independent inspector arranged by HUD and include a statistically valid sample of the units in each project in the PHA's public housing portfolio.
<p>Indicator 2: Financial condition of the PHA's projects Maximum Score: 25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The objective of this indicator is to measure the financial condition of the PHA's public housing projects for the purpose of evaluating whether the PHA has sufficient financial resources and is capable of managing those financial resources effectively to support the provision of housing that is decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.• A PHA's financial condition is determined by measuring each public housing project's performance in each of the following sub-indicators: quick ratio, months expendable net assets ratio, and debt service coverage ratio.
<p>Indicator 3: Management operations of the PHA's projects Maximum Score: 25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The objective of this indicator is to measure certain key management operations and responsibilities of a PHA's projects for the purpose of assessing the PHA's management operations capabilities.• Each project's management operations are assessed based on the following sub-indicators: occupancy, tenant accounts receivable, and accounts payable.• An on-site management review may be conducted as a diagnostic and feedback tool for problem performance areas and for compliance. Management reviews are not scored.
<p>Indicator 4: Capital Fund Maximum Score: 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The objective of this indicator is to measure how long it takes the PHA to obligate capital funds and to occupy units.• The PHA's score for this indicator is measured at the PHA level and is based on the following sub-indicators: timeliness of fund obligation and occupancy rate.

16-IV.C. PHAS SCORING [24 CFR 902 Subpart F]

HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) issues overall PHAS scores, which are based on the scores of the four PHAS indicators, and the sub-indicators under each indicator. BHA's indicator scores are based on a weighted average of BHA's public housing development's scores. PHAS scores translate into a designation for BHA as high performing, standard, substandard, or troubled.

A high performer is a PHA that achieves an overall PHAS score of 90 or greater, and achieves a score of at least 60 percent of the points available under the physical, financial, and management indicators and at least 50 percent of the points available under the capital fund indicator.

A standard performer is a PHA that has an overall PHAS score between 60 and 89, and achieves a score of at least 60 percent of the points available under the physical, financial, and management indicators and at least 50 percent of the points available under the capital fund indicator.

A substandard performer is a PHA that has an overall PHAS score of at least 60 percent and achieves a score of less than 60 percent under one or more of the physical, financial, or management indicators.

A troubled performer is a PHA that achieves an overall PHAS score of less than 60, or achieves less than 50 percent of the total points available under the capital fund indicator.

These designations can affect a PHA in several ways:

- High-performing PHAs are eligible for incentives including relief from specific HUD requirements and bonus points in funding competitions [24 CFR 902.71].
- PHAs that are standard performers may be required to submit and operate under a corrective action plan to eliminate deficiencies in the PHA's performance [24 CFR 902.73(a)(1)].
- PHAs that are substandard performers will be required to submit and operate under a corrective action plan to eliminate deficiencies in the PHA's performance [24 CFR 902.73(a)(2)].
- PHAs with an overall rating of "troubled" are subject to additional HUD oversight and are required to enter into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with HUD to improve PHA performance [24 CFR 902.75].
- PHAs that fail to execute or meet MOA requirements may be referred to the Assistant Secretary to determine remedial actions, including, but not limited to, remedies available for substantial default. [24 CFR 902.75(g) and 24 CFR Part 907].

PHAs must post a notice of its final PHAS score and status in appropriate conspicuous and accessible locations in its offices within two weeks of receipt of its final score and designation [24 CFR 902.64(b)(2)].

PART V: RECORD KEEPING

16-V.A. OVERVIEW

BHA 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, BHA must ensure that all applicant and participant files are maintained in a way that protects an individual's privacy rights, and that comply with VAWA 2013 confidentiality requirements.

16-V.B. RECORD RETENTION

BHA must keep the last three years of the Form HUD-50058 and supporting documentation during the term of each assisted lease, and for a period of at least three years from the end of participation (EOP) date [24 CFR 908.101].

BHA must maintain Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system Income Reports in the tenant file for the duration of the tenancy but for a period not to exceed three years from the EOP date [Notice PIH 2018-18].

Notice PIH 2014-20 requires the PHA to keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices and corrective actions related to violations of the Fair Housing Act or the equal access final rule. BHA must keep confidential records of all emergency transfer requested under the PHA's Emergency Transfer Plan, and the outcomes of such requests, and retain the records for a period of three years, or for a period of time as specific in program regulations [24 CFR 5.2002(e)(12)].

BHA Policy

BHA will keep the last three years of the Form HUD-50058 and supporting documentation, and for at least three years after end of participation all documents related to a family's eligibility, tenancy, and termination.

BHA will keep Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system Income Reports in the tenant file for the duration of the tenancy and for a period not to exceed three years from the end of participation date.

In addition, BHA will keep the following records for at least three years:

- An application from each ineligible family and notice that the applicant is not eligible
- Lead-based paint records as required by 24 CFR 35, Subpart B
- Documentation supporting the establishment of flat rents
- Documentation supporting the establishment of utility allowances and surcharges
- Documentation related to PHAS
- Accounts and other records supporting BHA budget and financial statements for the program

- Complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions related to violations of the Fair Housing Act or the equal access final rule or VAWA.
- Confidential records of all emergency transfers related to VAWA requested under BHA's Emergency Transfer Plan and the outcomes of such requests
- Other records as determined by BHA or as required by HUD

If a hearing to establish a family's citizenship status is held, longer retention requirements apply for some types of documents. For specific requirements, see Section 14-II.A.

16-V.C. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

BHA must maintain applicant and tenant files and information in accordance with the regulatory requirements described below.

BHA Policy

All applicant and participant information will be kept in a secure location and access will be limited to authorized BHA staff.

BHA 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 BHA may release the information collected.

Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Records

PHAs that access UIV data through HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system are required to adopt and follow specific security procedures to ensure that all EIV data is protected in accordance with federal laws, regardless of the media on which the data is recorded (e.g., electronic, paper). These requirements are contained in the HUD issued document, *Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System, Security Procedures for Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Data*.

BHA Policy

Prior to utilizing HUD's EIV system, BHA will adopt and implement EIV security procedures in accordance with HUD requirements.

Criminal Records

BHA may only disclose the criminal conviction records which BHA receives from a law

enforcement agency to officers or employees of BHA, or to authorized representatives of BHA who have a job-related need to have access to the information [24 CFR 5.903(e)].

BHA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any criminal record received by BHA 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 BHA action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation [24 CFR 5.903(g)].

BHA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any sex offender registration information received by BHA from a state or local agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to the BHA 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 BHA other than under 24 CFR 5.905.

Medical/Disability Records

BHA is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability. BHA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If BHA receives a verification document that provides such information, BHA should not place this information in the tenant file. BHA should destroy the document.

Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, or Human Trafficking Records

For requirements and BHA policies related to management of documentation obtained from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, see Section 16-VII.E.

PART VI: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL

16-VI.A. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 35.1130(e); Notice PIH 2017-13]

BHA has certain responsibilities relative to children with environmental intervention blood lead levels that are living in public housing.

BHA must report the name and address of a child identified as having an environmental intervention blood lead level to the public health department within 5 business days of being so notified by any other medical health care professional. BHA must also report each known case of a child with an environmental intervention blood lead level to the HUD field office.

BHA Policy

BHA will provide the public health department written notice of the name and address of any child identified as having an elevated blood lead level (EBLL).

BHA will provide written notice of each known case of a child with an EBLL to the HUD field office and to HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control (OLHCHH) within 5 business days of receiving the information.

PART VII: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

16-VII.A. OVERVIEW

The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides special protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking who are applying for or receiving assistance under the public housing program. If your state or local laws provide greater protection for such victims, those laws apply in conjunction with VAWA.

In addition to definitions of key terms used in VAWA, this part contains general VAWA requirements and BHA policies in three areas: notification, documentation, and confidentiality. Specific VAWA requirements and BHA policies are located in Chapter 3, “Eligibility” (Sections 3-I.C and 3-III.F); Chapter 5, “Occupancy Standards and Unit Offers” (Section 5-II.D); Chapter 8, “Leasing and Inspections” (Section 8-I.B); Chapter 12, “Transfer Policy” (Sections 12-III.C, 12-III.F, and 12-IV.D); and Chapter 13, “Lease Terminations” (Sections 13-III.F and 13-IV.D).

16-VII.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003; FR Notice 8/6/13]

As used in VAWA:

- The term *affiliated individual* means, with respect to a person:
 - A spouse, parent, brother or sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that person stands in the position or place of a parent; or
 - Any individual, tenant or lawful occupant living in the household of the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.
- The term *bifurcate* means, with respect to a public housing or Section 8 lease, to divide a lease as a matter of law such that certain tenants can be evicted or removed while the remaining family members’ lease and occupancy rights are allowed to remain intact.
- The term *dating violence* means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
 - The length of the relationship
 - The type of relationship
 - The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship
- The term *domestic violence* includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

- The term *sexual assault* means:
 - Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks the capacity to consent.
- The term *stalking* means:
 - To engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

16-VII.C. NOTIFICATION [24 CFR 5.2005(a)]

Notification to Public

BHA adopts the following policy to help ensure that all actual and potential beneficiaries of its public housing program are aware of their rights under VAWA.

BHA Policy

BHA will post the following information regarding VAWA in its offices and on its website. It will also make the following information readily available to anyone who requests it:

- A notice of occupancy rights under VAWA to public housing program applicants and tenants who are or have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking (form HUD-5380, see Exhibit 16-1)
- A copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternate Documentation (see Exhibit 16-2)
- A copy of BHA's emergency transfer plan (see Exhibit 16-3)
- A copy of HUD's Emergency Transfer Request for Certain Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking (form HUD-5383, see Exhibit 16-4)
- The National Domestic Violence Hot Line: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) (included in Exhibit 16-1)
- Contact information for local victim advocacy groups or service providers

Notification to Applicants and Tenants [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(1)]

BHA is required to inform public housing applicants and tenants of their rights under VAWA, including their right to confidentiality and the limits thereof, when they are denied assistance, when they are admitted to the program, and when they are notified of an eviction or termination of housing benefits.

BHA must distribute a notice of VAWA rights, along with the VAWA self-certification form (HUD-5382) at each of these three junctures.

BHA Policy

The VAWA information provided to applicants and tenants will consist of the notices in Exhibit 16-1 and 16-2.

BHA will provide applicants with information about VAWA at the time they request an application for housing assistance. BHA will also include such information in all notices of denial of assistance or other legal actions (see Section 3-III.F).

BHA will provide all tenants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see Section 8-I.B) and at annual reexamination. BHA will also include such information in all lease termination notices (see Section 13-IV.D).

BHA is not limited to providing VAWA information at the times specified in the above policy. If BHA decides to provide VAWA information to a tenant following an incident of domestic violence, Notice PIH 2006-42 cautions against sending the information by mail, since the abuser may be monitoring the mail. The notice recommends that in such cases BHA make alternative delivery arrangements that will not put the victim at risk.

BHA Policy

Whenever BHA has reason to suspect that providing information about VAWA to a public housing tenant might place a victim of domestic violence at risk, it will attempt to deliver the information by hand directly to the victim or by having the victim come to an office or other space that may be safer for the individual, making reasonable accommodations as necessary. For example, BHA may decide not to send mail regarding VAWA protections to the victim's unit if BHA believes the perpetrator may have access to the victim's mail, unless requested by the victim.

When discussing VAWA with the victim, BHA 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-VII.D. DOCUMENTATION [24 CFR 5.2007]

If BHA 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 human trafficking, or criminal activity related to any of these forms of abuse, BHA may—but is not required to—request that the individual making the claim document the abuse. Any request for documentation must be in writing, and the individual must be allowed at least 14 business days after receipt of the request to submit the documentation. BHA may extend this time period at its discretion. [24 CFR 5.2007(a)]

The individual may satisfy BHA'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, stalking, or human trafficking, 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.

BHA may not require third-party documentation (forms 2 and 3) in addition to certification (form 1), except as specified below under "Conflicting Documentation," nor may it require certification in addition to third-party documentation [VAWA 2005 final rule].

BHA Policy

Any request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking will be in writing, will specify a deadline of 14 business days following receipt of the request, will describe the three forms of acceptable documentation, will provide explicit instructions on where and to whom the documentation must be submitted, and will state the consequences for failure to submit the documentation or request an extension in writing by the deadline.

BHA may, in its discretion, extend the deadline for 10 days. In determining whether to extend the deadline, BHA 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 BHA will be in writing.

Once the victim provides documentation, BHA will acknowledge receipt of the documentation within 10 business days.

Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(e)]

In cases where BHA 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, BHA may determine which is the true victim by requiring each to provide acceptable third-party documentation, as described above (forms 2 and 3). BHA may also request third-party documentation when submitted documentation contains information that conflicts with existing information already available to BHA. BHA must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property. Individuals have 30 calendar days to return third-party verification to BHA. If BHA does not receive third-party documentation, and BHA will deny or terminate assistance as a result, BHA must hold separate hearings for the tenants [Notice PIH 2017-08].

BHA Policy

If presented with conflicting certification documents from members of the same household, BHA will attempt to determine which is the true victim by requiring each of them to provide third-party documentation in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(e) and by following any HUD guidance on how such determinations should be made. When requesting third-party documents, BHA will provide contact information for local domestic violence and legal aid offices. In such cases, applicants or tenants will be given 30 calendar days from the date of the request to provide such documentation.

If BHA does not receive third-party documentation within the required timeframe (and any extensions), BHA 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, BHA will hold separate hearings for the applicants or tenants.

Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(d)]

BHA has the discretion to provide benefits to an individual based solely on the individual's statement or other corroborating evidence—i.e., without requiring formal documentation of abuse in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(b). HUD recommends documentation in a confidential manner when a verbal statement or other evidence is accepted.

BHA Policy

If BHA accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence (as determined by the victim) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, BHA will document acceptance of the statement or evidence in the individual's file.

Failure to Provide Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(c)]

In order to deny relief for protection under VAWA, BHA 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 BHA may allow, BHA may deny relief for protection under VAWA.

16-VII.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)]

All information provided to BHA regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, must be retained in confidence. This means that BHA (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.

BHA Policy

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

EXHIBIT 16-1: SAMPLE NOTICE OF OCCUPANCY RIGHTS UNDER THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT, FORM HUD-5380

[Insert Name of Housing Provider]

Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act¹

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.² The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal agency that oversees that public housing is in compliance with VAWA. This notice explains your rights under VAWA. A HUD-approved certification form is attached to this notice. You can fill out this form to show that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and that you wish to use your rights under VAWA.

Protections for Applicants

If you otherwise qualify for assistance under public housing, you cannot be denied admission or denied assistance because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Protections for Tenants

If you are receiving assistance under public housing, 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 public housing solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Affiliated individual means your spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child, or a person to whom you stand in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is in your care, custody, or control); or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in your household.

¹ Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available 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.

Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household

The PHA may divide (bifurcate) your lease in order to evict the individual or terminate the assistance of the individual who has engaged in criminal activity (the abuser or perpetrator) directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

If the PHA chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, the PHA may not take away the rights of eligible tenants to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. If the evicted abuser or perpetrator was the sole tenant to have established eligibility for assistance under the program, the PHA must allow the tenant who is or has been a victim and other household members to remain in the unit for 30 days, in order to establish eligibility under the program or under another HUD housing program covered by VAWA, or find alternative housing.

In removing the abuser or perpetrator from the household, the PHA must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, the PHA may, but is not required to, ask you for documentation or certification of the incidences of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Moving to Another Unit

Upon your request, the PHA may permit you to move to another unit, subject to the availability of other units, and still keep your assistance. In order to approve a request, the PHA may ask you to provide documentation that you are requesting to move because of an incidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If the request is a request for emergency transfer, the PHA may ask you to submit a written request or fill out a form where you certify that you meet the criteria for an emergency transfer under VAWA. The criteria are:

- 1. You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.** If your PHA does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation, as described in the documentation section below.
- 2. You expressly request the emergency transfer.** Your PHA may choose to require that you submit a form, or may accept another written or oral request.
- 3. You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit.** This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

OR

You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer. If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you expressly request the transfer.

The PHA will keep confidential requests for emergency transfers by victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the location of any move by such victims and their families.

The PHA's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and the PHA must make a copy of its emergency transfer plan available to you if you ask to see it.

Documenting You Are or Have Been a Victim of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

The PHA can, but is not required to, ask you to provide documentation to "certify" that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Such request from the PHA must be in writing, and the PHA must give you at least 14 business days (Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays do not count) from the day you receive the request to provide the documentation. The PHA may, but does not have to, extend the deadline for the submission of documentation upon your request.

You can provide one of the following to the PHA as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if the PHA asks you to provide documentation that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

- A complete HUD-approved certification form given to you by the PHA with this notice, that documents an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The form will ask for your name, the date, time, and location of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and a description of the incident. The certification form provides for including the name of the abuser or perpetrator if the name of the abuser or perpetrator is known and is safe to provide.
- A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency that documents the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Examples of such records include police reports, protective orders, and restraining orders, among others.
- A statement, which you must sign, along with the signature of an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, "professional") from whom you sought assistance in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking or the effects of abuse, and with the professional selected by you attesting under penalty of perjury that they believe that the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking are grounds for protection.
- Any other statement or evidence that the PHA has agreed to accept.

If you fail or refuse to provide one of these documents within the 14 business days, the PHA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

If the PHA receives conflicting evidence that an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking has been committed (such as certification forms from two or more members of a household each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the abuser or perpetrator), the PHA has the right to request that you provide third-party documentation within thirty 30 calendar days in order to

resolve the conflict. If you fail or refuse to provide third-party documentation where there is conflicting evidence, the PHA does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

Confidentiality

The PHA must keep confidential any information you provide related to the exercise of your rights under VAWA, including the fact that you are exercising your rights under VAWA.

The PHA must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of the PHA (for example, employees and contractors) to have access to confidential information unless for reasons that specifically call for these individuals to have access to this information under applicable federal, state, or local law.

The PHA must not enter your information into any shared database or disclose your information to any other entity or individual. The PHA, however, may disclose the information provided if:

- You give written permission to the PHA to release the information on a time limited basis.
- The PHA needs to use the information in an eviction or termination proceeding, such as to evict your abuser or perpetrator or terminate your abuser or perpetrator from assistance under this program.
- A law requires the PHA or your landlord to release the information.

VAWA does not limit the PHA's duty to honor court orders about access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect a victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

Reasons a Tenant Eligible for Occupancy Rights under VAWA May Be Evicted or Assistance May Be Terminated

You can be evicted and your assistance can be terminated for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against you. However, the PHA cannot hold tenants who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding set of rules than it applies to tenants who have not been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The protections described in this notice might not apply, and you could be evicted and your assistance terminated, if the PHA can demonstrate that not evicting you or terminating your assistance would present a real physical danger that:

1. Would occur within an immediate time frame, and
2. Could result in death or serious bodily harm to other tenants or those who work on the property.

If the PHA can demonstrate the above, the PHA should only terminate your assistance or evict you if there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat.

Other Laws

VAWA does not replace any Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You may be entitled to additional housing protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking under other Federal laws, as well as under State and local laws.

Non-Compliance with The Requirements of This Notice

You may report your PHA for violations of these rights and seek additional assistance, if needed, by contacting or filing a complaint with **[insert contact information for any intermediary, if applicable]** or **[insert HUD field office]**.

For Additional Information

You may view a copy of HUD's final VAWA rule at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-11-16/pdf/2016-25888.pdf>.

Additionally, the PHA must make a copy of HUD's VAWA regulations available to you if you ask to see them.

For questions regarding VAWA, please contact **[insert name of program or rental assistance contact information able to answer questions on VAWA]**.

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 **[Insert contact information for relevant local organizations]**.

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 **[Insert contact information for relevant organizations]**

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact **[Insert contact information for relevant organizations]**.

Attachment: Certification form HUD-5382 **[form approved for this program to be included]**

**EXHIBIT 16-2: CERTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL
ASSAULT, OR STALKING AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION,
FORM HUD-5382**

CERTIFICATION OF U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING, AND
ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION

Exp. 06/30/2017

Purpose of Form: The Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) protects applicants, tenants, and program participants in certain HUD programs from being evicted, denied housing assistance, or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against them. Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Use of This Optional Form: If you are seeking VAWA protections from your housing provider, your housing provider may give you a written request that asks you to submit documentation about the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

In response to this request, you or someone on your behalf may complete this optional form and submit it to your housing provider, or you may submit one of the following types of third-party documentation:

- (1) A document signed by you and an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional, or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom you have sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse. The document must specify, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking occurred and meet the definition of “domestic violence,” “dating violence,” “sexual assault,” or “stalking” in HUD’s regulations at 24 CFR 5.2003.
- (2) A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or
- (3) At the discretion of the housing provider, a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

Submission of Documentation: The time period to submit documentation is 14 business days from the date that you receive a written request from your housing provider asking that you provide documentation of the occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Your housing provider may, but is not required to, extend the time period to submit the documentation, if you request an extension of the time period. If the requested information is not received within 14 business days of when you received the request for the documentation, or any extension of the date provided by your housing provider, your housing provider does not need to grant you any of the VAWA protections. Distribution or issuance of this form does not serve as a written request for certification.

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall be kept confidential and such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections to you, and such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING

1. Date the written request is received by victim: _____
2. Name of victim: _____
3. Your name (if different from victim's): _____
4. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: _____

5. Residence of victim: _____
6. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed): _____

7. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: _____
8. Date(s) and times(s) of incident(s) (if known): _____

10. Location of incident(s): _____

In your own words, briefly describe the incident(s): _____ _____ _____ _____
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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.

**EXHIBIT 16-3: EMERGENCY TRANSFER PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**

Attachment: Certification Form HUD-5382

Housing Authority of the City of Bremerton

**Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual
Assault, or Stalking**

Public Housing Program

Emergency Transfers

Bremerton Housing Authority 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)³, BHA allows tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assaults, 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.⁴ The ability of BHA to honor such request for tenants currently receiving assistance, however, may depend upon a preliminary determination that the tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and on whether BHA has another dwelling unit that is available and is safe to offer the tenant for temporary or more permanent occupancy.

This plan identifies tenants who are eligible for an emergency transfer, the documentation needed to request an emergency transfer, confidentiality protections, how an emergency transfer may occur, and guidance to tenants on safety and security. This plan is based on a model emergency transfer plan published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the federal agency that oversees that the **public housing and housing choice voucher (HCV) programs** are in compliance with VAWA.

Eligibility for Emergency Transfers

A tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking as provided in HUD's regulations at 24 CFR part 5, subpart L, is eligible for an emergency transfer, if the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant remains in 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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, the tenant shall notify BHA's management office and submit a written request for a transfer to **any BHA office**. BHA will provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities. The tenant's written request for an emergency transfer should include either:

1. A statement expressing that the tenant reasonable believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant were to remain in the same dwelling unit assisted under BHA's programs; OR
2. A statement that the tenant was a sexual assault victim and that the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period preceding the tenant's request for an emergency transfer.

Confidentiality

BHA will keep confidential any information that the tenant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the tenant gives BHA written permission to release the information on a time-limited basis, or disclosure of the information is required by law or required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the covered program. This includes keeping confidential the new location of the dwelling unit of the tenant, if one is provided, from the person or persons that committed an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against the tenant. See the Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence against Women Act for All Tenants for more information about BHA'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

BHA cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. BHA will, however, act as quickly as possible to move a tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to another unit, subject to availability and safety of a unit. If a tenant reasonably believes a proposed transfer would not be safe, the tenant may request a transfer to a different unit. If a unit is available, the transferred tenant must agree to abide by the terms and conditions that govern occupancy in the unit to which the tenant has been transferred. BHA may be unable to transfer a tenant to a particular unit if the tenant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

If BHA has no safe and available units for which a tenant who needs an emergency transfer is eligible, BHA 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, BHA will also assist tenants in contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are attached to this plan.

Emergency Transfers: Public Housing (PH) Program

If you are a public housing resident and request an emergency transfer as described in this plan, BHA will attempt to assist you in moving to a safe unit quickly. BHA will make exceptions as required to policies restricting moves.

Emergency transfers for which you are not required to apply for assistance include the following:

- Public housing unit in a different development
- Public housing unit in the same development, if you determine that the unit is safe

At your request, BHA will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you. **427**

You may also request an emergency transfer to the following programs for which you are required to apply for assistance:

- HCV tenant-based program
- HCV project-based assistance
- Other programs administered by BHA (such as state housing programs)

Emergency transfers will not take priority over waiting list admissions for these types of assistance. At your request, BHA will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

Safety and Security of Tenants

Pending processing of the transfer and the actual transfer, if it is approved and occurs, the tenant is urged to take all reasonable precautions to be safe.

Tenants who are or have been victims of domestic violence are encouraged to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233, or a local domestic violence shelter, for assistance in creating a safety plan. For persons with hearing impairments, that hotline can be accessed by calling 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Tenants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE, or visit the online hotline at <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>.

Tenants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

Attachment: Local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

EXHIBIT 16-4: EMERGENCY TRANSFER REQUEST FOR CERTAIN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING, FORM HUD-5383

EMERGENCY TRANSFER U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
OMB Approval No. 2577-0286
REQUEST FOR CERTAIN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE,
SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING
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) _____

GLOSSARY

A. ACRONYMS USED IN PUBLIC HOUSING

ACC	Annual contributions contract
ACOP	Admissions and continued occupancy policy
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AMI	Area median income
AMP	Asset management project
BR	Bedroom
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant (Program)
CFP	Capital fund program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations (published federal rules that define and implement laws; commonly referred to as “the regulations”)
COCC	Central office cost center
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
HA	Housing authority or housing agency
HCV	Housing choice voucher
HIP	Housing Information Portal
HOPE VI	Revitalization of Severely Distressed Public Housing Program
HOTMA	Housing Opportunity through Modernization Act of 2016
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
LIHTC	Low-income housing tax credit
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
PHA	Public housing agency
PHAS	Public Housing Assessment System
PIH	(HUD Office of) Public and Indian Housing
QC	Quality control
QHWRA	Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (also known as the Public Housing Reform Act)
RAD	Rental Assistance Demonstration Program
REAC	(HUD) Real Estate Assessment Center
RFP	Request for proposals
RIGI	Regional inspector general for investigation (handles fraud and program abuse matters for HUD at the regional office level)
ROSS	Resident Opportunity and Supportive Services
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSI	Supplemental security income
SWICA	State wage information collection agency
TANF	Temporary assistance for needy families
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 Reauthorization Act of 2013
VCA	Voluntary Compliance Agreement

B. GLOSSARY OF PUBLIC HOUSING TERMS

Accessible. The facility or portion of the facility can be approached, entered, and used by persons with disabilities.

Adjusted income. Annual income (as determined under 24 CFR 5.609), of the members of the family residing or intending to reside in the dwelling unit less allowable HUD deductions and allowances.

Affiliated individual. With respect to an individual, a spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or a person 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 the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

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.

Applicant (applicant family). A family that has applied for admission to a program but is not yet a participant in the program.

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.

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.

Ceiling rent. The highest amount the PHA will require a family to pay for, for a particular unit size, when the family is paying an income-based rent.

Child. A member of the family other than the family head or spouse who is under 18 years of age.

Child care expenses. Amounts anticipated to be paid by the family for the care of children under 13 years of age during the period for which annual income is computed, but only where such care is necessary to enable a family member to actively seek employment, be gainfully employed, or to further their education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. The amount deducted shall reflect reasonable charges for child care. In the case of child care necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.

Citizen. A citizen or national of the United States.

Co-head. An individual in the household who is equally responsible for the lease with the head of household. A family may have a co-head or spouse but not both. A co-head never qualifies as a dependent. The co-head must have legal capacity to enter into a lease.

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.

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.

Dependent. A member of the family (which excludes foster children and foster adults) other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability, or is a full-time student.

Dependent child. In the context of the student eligibility restrictions, a dependent child of a student enrolled in an institution of higher education. The dependent child must also meet the definition of *dependent* as specified above.

Disability assistance expenses. Reasonable expenses that are anticipated, during the period for which annual income is computed, for attendant care and auxiliary apparatus for a disabled family member, and that are necessary to enable a family member (including the disabled member) to be employed, provided that the expenses are neither paid to a member of the family nor reimbursed by an outside source.

Disabled family. A family whose head, cohead, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities; two or more persons with disabilities living together; or one or more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides.

Disabled person. See *person with disabilities*.

Disallowance. Exclusion from annual income.

Displaced family. A family in which each member, or whose sole member, is a person displaced by governmental action, or a person whose dwelling has been extensively damaged or

destroyed as a result of a disaster declared or otherwise formally recognized pursuant to federal disaster relief laws.

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

Domicile. The legal residence of the household head or spouse as determined in accordance with state and local law.

Drug-related criminal activity. The illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use the drug.

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 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).

Effective date. The "effective date" of an examination or reexamination refers to: (i) in the case of an examination for admission, the date of initial occupancy and (ii) in the case of reexamination of an existing tenant, the date the redetermined rent becomes effective.

Elderly family. A family whose head, co-head, 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 (Family). A family that is income eligible and meets the other requirements of the 1937 Act and Part 5 of 24 CFR.

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, as determined by HUD, whichever is higher, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish

income ceilings higher or lower than 30 percent of median income if HUD finds such variations are necessary due to unusually high or low family incomes. (See 24 CFR 5.603.)

Facility. All or any portion of buildings, structures, equipment, roads, walks, parking lots, rolling stock, or other real or personal property or interest in the property.

Fair Housing Act. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

Fair market rent (FMR). The rent, including the cost of utilities (except telephone), as established by HUD for units of varying sizes (by number of bedrooms), that must be paid in the housing market area to rent privately owned, existing, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities. See periodic publications in the *Federal Register* in accordance with 24 CFR Part 888.

Family. Includes but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, and can be further defined in PHA policy.

- - A single person, who may be:
 - o An elderly person, displaced person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person;
 - o 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
- - A group of persons residing together, and such group includes, but is not limited to:
 - o 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);
 - o An elderly family;
 - o A near-elderly family;
 - o A disabled family;
 - o A displaced family; and
- o The remaining member of a tenant 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)The program established by a PHA in accordance with 24 CFR part 984 to promote self-sufficiency of assisted families, including the coordination of supportive services (42 U.S.C. 1437u).**Federal agency.** A department of the executive branch of the federal government.

Flat rent. Established by the PHA for each public housing unit: a rent based on the market rent charged for comparable units in the unassisted rental market set at no less than 80 percent of the applicable Fair Market Rent (FMR) and adjusted by the amount of the utility allowances, if any.

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.*

aw. 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 child care payment. A payment to eligible households by state, local, or private agencies appointed by the state to administer payments for the care of foster children.

Full-time student. A person who is attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis (carrying a subject load that is considered full-time for day students under the standards and practices of the educational institution attended). (See 24 CFR 5.603)

Gender identity. Actual or perceived gender-related characteristics.

Handicap. Any condition or characteristic that renders a person an individual with handicaps. (See *person with disabilities*.)

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. *Health and medical care expenses are 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.*

medical care expenses are 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 agency (HA). See *public housing agency*.

HUD. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Imputed asset. An asset disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years preceding examination or reexamination.

Imputed asset income. When the value of net family assets exceeds \$50,000 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

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-based rent. A tenant rent that is based on the family's income and the PHA's rent policies for determination of such rents.

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.

Income Validation Tool (IVT) Accessible through HUD's EIV system, provides validation of tenant reported wages, unemployment compensation, and Social Security benefits by comparing the income reported in IMS-PIC via form HUD-50058 to information received from the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), and the Social Security Administration (SSA) data sharing agreements.

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.*

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*.

Jurisdiction. The area in which the PHA has authority under state and local law to administer the program.

Lease. A written agreement between the PHA and a tenant family for the leasing of a public housing unit.

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-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.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program - an indirect Federal subsidy used to finance the development of affordable rental housing for low-income households.

Minimum rent. An amount established by that PHA of zero to \$50.

Minor. A member of the family household other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age.

Mixed family. A family whose members include those with citizenship or eligible immigration status, and those without citizenship or eligible immigration status.

Monthly adjusted income. One twelfth of adjusted income.

Monthly income. One twelfth of annual income.

National. A person who owes permanent allegiance to the United States, for example, as a result of birth in a United States territory or possession.

Near-elderly family. A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62; or two or more persons, who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62, living together; or one or more persons who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62 living with one or more live-in aides.

Net family assets. (1) *Net 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. **Noncitizen.** A person who is neither a citizen nor national of the United States.

PHA Plan. The annual plan and the 5-year plan as adopted by the PHA and approved by HUD.

Participant (participant family). A family that has been admitted to the PHA program and is currently assisted in the program.

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.

Premises. The building or complex in which the dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

Previously unemployed. With regard to the earned income disallowance, a person who has earned, in the 12 months previous to employment, no more than would be received for 10 hours of work per week for 50 weeks at the established minimum wage.

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.

Real property. Has the same meaning as that provided under the law of the State in which the property is located.

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.

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).

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 program, the PHA administering the program under an ACC with HUD. **Secretary.** The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Secretary. *The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.*

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.*

Section 8. Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937; refers to the housing choice voucher program

Security deposit. A dollar amount (maximum set according to the regulations) which can be used for unpaid rent or damages to the PHA upon termination of the lease.

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.

Single person. A person living alone or intending to live alone.

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.

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.

Tenant. The person or persons (other than a live-in aide) who executes the lease as lessee of the dwelling unit.

Tenant rent. The amount payable monthly by the family as rent to the PHA.

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 § 5.609, that is not earned income.

Utilities. Water, electricity, gas, other heating, refrigeration, cooking fuels, trash collection, and sewage services. Telephone service is not included.

Utility allowance. If the cost of utilities (except telephone) and other housing services for an assisted unit is not included in the tenant rent but is the responsibility of the family occupying the unit, an amount equal to the estimate made or approved by a PHA or HUD of the monthly cost of a reasonable consumption of such utilities and other services for the unit by an energy-conservative household of modest circumstances consistent with the requirements of a safe, sanitary, and healthful living environment.

Utility reimbursement. The amount, if any, by which the utility allowance for the unit, if applicable, exceeds the total tenant payment (TTP) for the family occupying the unit.

Veteran. A person who has served in the active military or naval service of the United States at any time and who shall have been discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013. Prohibits denying admission to, denying assistance under, or evicting from a public housing unit an otherwise qualified applicant or tenant on the basis that the applicant or tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

Violent criminal activity. Any illegal criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another.

Waiting List. A list of families organized according to HUD regulations and PHA policy who are waiting for a unit to become available.

Welfare assistance. Income assistance from federal or state welfare programs, including assistance provided under TANF and general assistance. Does not include assistance directed solely to meeting housing expenses, nor programs that provide health care, child care or other services for working families. For the FSS program

(24 CFR 984.103(b)), welfare assistance includes only cash maintenance payments designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs. Does not include nonrecurring short term benefits designed to address individual crisis situations, work subsidies, supportive services such as child care and transportation provided to families who are employed, refundable earned income tax credits, contributions to and distributions from Individual Development Accounts under TANF, services such as counseling, case management, peer support, child care information and referral, financial empowerment, transitional services, job retention, job advancement, and other employment-related services that do not provide basic income support, amounts solely directed to meeting housing expenses, amounts for health care, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and emergency rental and utilities assistance, SSI, SSDI, or social security, and child-only or non-needy TANF grants made to or on behalf of a dependent child solely on the basis of the child's need and not the need of the child's current non-parental caretaker only cash maintenance payments from federal or state programs designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs, but does not include food stamps, emergency rental and utilities assistance, SSI, SSDI, or social security.