

INFORMATIONAL NOTICE TO PARTICIPANTS

2010 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Administrative Plan: Policy Changes

Every year the Housing Authority (HA) reviews its policies for admission to the Housing Choice Voucher program (HCV).

Changes to policies are made if Federal regulations change, to clarify existing policies or to reflect the inclusion of new policies. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that beginning **January 1, 2010** the HCV (formerly known as Section 8) Administrative Plan will include the following additions or modifications:

❖ Updates Program Integrity Policies

Updates the Program Integrity policies, as follows:

1. Upon a finding of fraud by a program participant, one action the HA may take, [cases are examined on a case-by-case basis] would be to terminate assistance AND require repayment; and
2. If a repayment agreement is to be entered into, the HA will require that the family pay an initial 25% lump sum with the remaining balance to be paid in equal payments over a period of time not to exceed 12 months.

❖ Modifies/Clarifies Terms

Modifies the definition of "pattern of abuse" as it relates to mandatory denial of assistance due to drug use or alcohol abuse. Instead of "more than one incident during a previous 12 months", it is changed to "three or more incidents during the previous 24 months".

Also clarifies that "currently engaging in" means any use or possession of illegal drugs during the previous twelve months.

❖ Modifies Policy When Adding a Family Member to the Household Composition

Modifies approval criteria when a participant wishes to add a new family member to their family composition; the HA will not approve the addition of a new family member unless that person is a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any family member. [Cousin, niece, nephew, and aunt have been removed as part of the list, limiting additions to more closely reflect the HUD definition related to immediate family members].

❖ Adopts HUD-Recommended Subsidy Standard of Two-Per-Bedroom

Eliminates from the subsidy standards policy the following verbiage: "The head of household (with spouse or co-head, if any) will be allocated a separate bedroom from other household members."

❖ **Clarifies that Attaining Suitable Employment is Required to Receive Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Escrow Funds**

If the head of household in a FSS family fails to obtain suitable employment on or before the expiration of the contract term, this is grounds for forfeiture of their escrow account. The HA has determined suitable employment for the head of household as year round full-time sustainable employment **and** the gross annual income is equal to or exceeds the state minimum wage multiplied by nineteen hundred and fifty (1950) hours. Seasonal employment does not meet the HA standards for suitable employment unless the HOH is employed all year round with multiple seasonal jobs.

❖ **Change in Local Preference Selection Categories**

Local preferences determine the order of selection from the HCV waiting list. One local preference category, "Single Persons who are Elderly, Disabled or Displaced over Other Single Persons", is being eliminated and replaced with a similar but more expansive category: "Elderly or Disabled". The new local preference will be more responsive to the local needs in our community as it will benefit single applicants who are elderly or disabled as well as applicants with one or more disabled or elderly persons.

❖ **Adds Government-Referrals for Displaced Persons**

Accepts government referrals for certain displaced persons (e.g. individuals or families that are displaced as the result of a government-declared natural disaster). Such referrals are subject to the availability of voucher funds. Referrals are subject to the approval of the Executive Director or his designee

❖ **Adds a New Low-Income Admission Category.**

Adds one local category to those set by HUD allowing certain categories of individuals/families to be admitted to the HCV program if their income is at or below 80% of median income rule. The new policy states:

"As a local policy, the HA will permit admission of low-income families who met the requirements specified in Chapter 3 of the HCV Administrative Plan, "Referrals from Law Enforcement Agencies" and "Displacement Referrals from Government Agencies"

If you have any questions regarding this notice or would like to view the HCV Administrative Plan Policy, please contact Jo Ann Bliss or Alisha Prewitt at (559) 445-8994.

Sincerely,



Karen E. Butler
Senior Manager
Assisted Housing Division