

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 the PHA with the information needed to determine the family's eligibility. HUD requires the PHA to place all eligible families that apply for public housing on a waiting list. When a unit becomes available, the PHA must select families from the waiting list in accordance with HUD requirements and PHA policies as stated in its Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) and its annual plan.

The PHA 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 the PHA to receive preferential treatment.

HUD regulations require that the PHA 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 Occ GB p. 13]. Adherence to the selection policies described in this chapter ensures that the PHA will be in compliance with all relevant fair housing requirements, as described in Chapter 2.

This chapter describes HUD and PHA policies for accepting applications, managing the waiting list and selecting families from the waiting list. The PHAs policies for assigning unit size and making unit offers are contained in Chapter 5. Together, Chapters 4 and 5 of the ACOP comprise the PHA'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 the PHA will handle the applications it receives.

Part II: Managing the Waiting List. This part presents the policies that govern how the PHA'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 the PHA will use to keep the waiting list current.

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

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 Occ GB, p. 68]. HUD permits the PHA to determine the format and content of its applications, as well how such applications will be made available to interested families and how applications will be accepted by the PHA. However, the PHA must include Form HUD-92006, Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing, as part of the PHA's application [Notice PIH 2009-36].

FHA Policy

Depending upon the length of time between the date of application and the availability of housing, the PHA 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, the PHA 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 selected from the waiting list.

Families may obtain application forms from the PHA's office during normal business hours. Families may also request – by telephone or by mail – that an application form be sent to the family via first class mail.

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

4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The PHA 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 PHA application process.

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

The PHA 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 the PHA must provide an alternate approach that provides equal access to the program. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of the PHA's policies related to providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Limited English Proficiency

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

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST

The PHA 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 the PHA determines the family to be ineligible. Where the family is determined to be ineligible, the PHA must notify the family in writing [24 CFR 960.208(a); PH Occ 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

FHA Policy

If the PHA determines from the information provided that a family is ineligible, the family will not be placed on the waiting list. When a family is determined to be ineligible, the PHA 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

FHA Policy

The PHA 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 waiting list according to PHA preference(s) and the date and time their complete application is received by the PHA.

The PHA 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 PHA 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, the PHA 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

The PHA 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 the PHA may structure its waiting list and how families must be treated if they apply for public housing at a PHA that administers more than one assisted housing program.

4-II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST

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

FHA Policy

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

- Name and social security number of head of household
- Unit size required (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 (only if PHA offers site-based waiting lists)

The PHA may adopt one community-wide waiting list or site-based waiting lists. The PHA 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)].

FHA Policy

The PHA will maintain one single community-wide waiting list for its developments. Within the list, the PHA will designate subparts to easily identify who should be offered the next available unit (i.e. mixed populations, general occupancy, unit size, and accessible units).

The PHA will not adopt site-based waiting lists.

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 the PHA 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 PHAs maintain a single merged waiting list for their public housing, Section 8, and other subsidized housing programs [24 CFR 982.205(a)(1)].

FHA Policy

The PHA will not merge the public housing waiting list with the waiting list for any other program the PHA 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. The PHA may close the waiting list completely, or restrict intake by preference, type of project, or by size and type of dwelling unit. [PH Occ GB, p. 31].

FHA Policy

The FHA waiting list will remain open.

Reopening the Waiting List

If the waiting list has been closed, it may be reopened at any time. The PHA 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. The PHA should specify who may apply, and where and when applications will be received.

FHA Policy

The PHA 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 specify where, when, and how applications are to be received.

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

Information regarding the waiting list will be posted in the Middlesex News.

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

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

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

PHA 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

PHA 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

FHA Policy

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

FHA Policy

While the family is on the waiting list, the family must inform the PHA, within 10 business 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 the PHA 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 the PHA's request for information or updates because of the family member's disability, the PHA 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 Occ GB, p. 39 and 40]. See Chapter 2 for further information regarding reasonable accommodations.

FHA Policy

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

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

The family's response must be in writing and may be delivered in person, by mail, or by fax. Responses should be postmarked or received by the PHA not later than 15 business days from the date of the PHA letter.

If the family fails to respond within 15 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 15 business 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, no informal hearing will be offered. Such failures to act on the part of the applicant prevent the PHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore no informal hearing is required.

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

Removal from the Waiting List

FHA Policy

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

If the PHA 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 the PHA 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 the PHA's decision (see Chapter 14) [24 CFR 960.208(a)].

PART III: TENANT SELECTION

4-III.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA must establish tenant selection policies for families being admitted to public housing [24 CFR 960.201(a)]. The PHA must not require any specific income or racial quotas for any developments [24 CFR 903.2(d)]. The PHA 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 the PHA 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.

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

FHA Policy

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

4-III.B. SELECTION METHOD

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

Local Preferences [24 CFR 960.206]

PHAs are 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 the PHA to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the PHA 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)].

FHA Policy

The PHA will use the following local preference:

First priority to applicants/tenants involuntarily displaced by FHA action.

Second priority to applicants who are Framingham residents and are recently displaced from the last residence by documented governmental action through no fault or negligence of their own.

Third priority to applicants who live or work in Framingham.

Fourth priority to all other eligible applicants, in accordance with adopted HUD regulations as they may exist from time to time.

Within each priority category preference will be given to applicants as follows:

Working, disabled or elderly families

Families paying over 30% of adjusted income for rent

Veterans, surviving spouses of veterans, or families who have a household member who is serving on active duty

The PHA 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. The paycheck stub must have been issued to the working member within the last thirty days.

The PHA 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.

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 the PHA'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, the PHA may skip non-ELI families on the waiting list in order to select an ELI family.

If a PHA also operates a housing choice voucher (HCV) program, admissions of extremely low-income families to the PHA's HCV program during a PHA fiscal year that exceed the 75 percent minimum target requirement for the voucher program, shall be credited against the PHA'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 the PHA fiscal year; (2) ten percent of waiting list admissions to the PHA's housing choice voucher program during the PHA fiscal year; or (3) the number of qualifying low-income families who commence occupancy during the fiscal year of PHA 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.

FHA Policy

The PHA 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 and disabled families at its inception (and has retained that character) or the PHA 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 and disabled families [24 CFR 960.102]. Elderly family means a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age. Disabled family means a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person with disabilities [24 CFR 5.403]. The PHA must give elderly and disabled families equal preference in selecting these families for admission to mixed population developments. The PHA 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, the PHA 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. The PHA 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]

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

Among the designated developments, the PHA 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, the PHA 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 cohead 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, the PHA 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 affect on their admission or continued occupancy in public housing or their position on 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)].

FHA Policy

The development at John J. Brady was built as an elderly housing development.

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

The PHA'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 the PHA's deconcentration policies must be included in its annual plan [24 CFR 903.7(b)].

The PHA'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)].

In accordance with the Congressional mandate in the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, the Framingham Housing Authority has adopted the federally required policies to provide for deconcentration of poverty and to encourage income mixing in all Family (general occupancy) developments. FHA offers the plan below to facilitate both deconcentration and income mixing in FHA developments. The goals of the plan are to provide a sufficient mixture of extremely lowincome, very low, and lowincome Households at all FHA developments, and to avoid circumstances wherein higher income or lowerincome developments are created with respect to the Authoritywide average income.

Definitions

For the purposes of the FHA's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP), LowerIncome Households are defined as Households whose annual income does not exceed eighty (80) percent of the Framingham area median income (AMI), with adjustments for smaller and larger Households, as determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. In accordance with 24 CFR 5.603, HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 80% of the median income for the area

on the basis of HUD's findings that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low household incomes. However, with regard to state developments, state income rules of eligibility as defined in 760 CMR 5.00 or any successor regulations will apply. Within this category of LowerIncome Households, the following definitions apply:

1. LowIncome Household

A LowIncome Household is defined as a Household whose annual income exceeds fifty (50) percent but *does not* exceed eighty (80) percent of the Framingham AMI, with adjustments for smaller and larger Households, as determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development or Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

1. Very LowIncome Household

A Very LowIncome Household is defined as a Household whose annual income exceeds thirty (30) percent of the Framingham AMI but *does not* exceed fifty (50) percent of the AMI for the area with adjustments for smaller and larger Households, as determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development or Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

1. Extremely LowIncome Household

An Extremely LowIncome Household is defined as a Household whose annual income does not exceed thirty (30) percent of the AMI for the Framingham area, with adjustments for smaller and larger Households, as determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Broad Range of Incomes (IncomeMixing)

It is the goal of FHA to attain, within a reasonable period of time, a resident population in each development composed of LowerIncome Households with a broad range of incomes. FHA will make an effort to assure that each of its developments will include Households with a broad range of incomes generally representative of the range of LowerIncome Households in the City of Framingham.

To achieve and maintain the basic objective of housing Households with a broad range of incomes, FHA will review its waiting list to determine whether there is a representative income mix of Low, VeryLow, and ExtremelyLow Income Households. If there is not a representative income mix, FHA will consider strategies to encourage a greater income mix including, but not limited to, conducting targeted outreach efforts and/or establishing income Preferences.

Regardless of any discretionary strategies the FHA may adopt to achieve the goal of income mixing, the FHA will ensure that it meets the following targeting requirements as set forth by federal regulation:

In federal developments only, at least 40% of new admissions to the FHA's public housing program during each fiscal year will be Extremely-Low Income Households.

FHA may reduce the required percentage of public housing apartments to which ExtremelyLow Income Households must be admitted to the extent that the FHA has credits, in the same fiscal year, for admissions of ExtremelyLow Income Households to its Section 8 tenantbased assistance program beyond the number required for that program. However, the FHA may not have more credits than the lesser of the following:

Ten percent of the total number of Households admitted to the Section 8 tenantbased assistance program during the fiscal year; **OR**

The number of the FHA's public housing apartments in developments located in census tracts with a poverty rate of 30 percent or more that are made available and filled by eligible Households who are not ExtremelyLow income Households.

During any fiscal year and regardless of the number of credits from Section 8 tenant-based assistance admissions, at least 30 percent of FHA admissions to public housing apartments will be Extremely-Low income Households.

Deconcentration

The admissions policies contained in this ACOP are designed to deconcentrate poverty. This objective will be achieved by bringing higherincome Households into lowerincome developments and/or lower income Households into higherincome developments. While information regarding specifics of each development is contained each year in the FHA's Annual Plan, which is submitted to HUD, below is an outline of FHA's

deconcentration policy.

The FHA will accomplish the deconcentration goal in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner. While targeting certain levels of income for admission to FHA public housing, FHA will not intentionally concentrate lowerincome Households, as defined below, in one public housing development or building within a development.

Deconcentration – Identification Procedures

Annually, the FHA will calculate the average income at all FHA Family developments (“the Authority wide average income”). The Authority will also calculate the average income of all Households at each Development separately (“the Development average income”). Developments in which the Development average income is *above* 115% of the Authoritywide average income will be considered “higherincome” developments. Likewise, Developments in which the Development average income is *below* 85% of the Authoritywide average income will be considered “lowerincome” Developments.

Definitions

The Authoritywide average income: The average income of all Households residing in FHA Family developments. Such an average is used as a base measure from which Developments are either determined to be “higherincome” or “lowerincome” for purposes of the FHA’s deconcentration policy.

The Development average income: The average income of all Households residing in a single FHA Family Housing development.

Higherincome Development: A development in which the Development average income is above 115% of the Authoritywide average income.

Lowerincome Development: A development in which the Development average income is below 85% of the Authoritywide average income.

Remedial Action

Based upon the abovementioned analysis, the FHA will review the need to offer

incentives to eligible families that would help accomplish the deconcentration objectives at individual developments.

Should the average income at a development(s) vary more than 15% from the Authority-wide average, the FHA may utilize some or all of the policies and/or incentives listed below:

Establish an income Preference in order to reach Applicant Households with lower or higher incomes as appropriate.

Initiate affirmative marketing strategies to all eligible income groups.

Provide additional applicant consultation and information.

Provide additional supportive services and amenities.

Provide rent incentives authorized by Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (“QHWRA”).

Targeting investment and capital improvements towards a development(s) below 85% of the Authoritywide average income.

Monitoring

The FHA will annually monitor the income levels of Households residing in FHA public housing and placed on the waiting list to assess its progress in attaining deconcentration and income mixing goals. The FHA will calculate and compare the average Household incomes at each development with the Authoritywide average, as described above. In addition, the income status of Applicants on the FHA’s waiting list will be analyzed to determine the percentage of Applicants with “Low,” “Very Low” and “Extremely Low” incomes.

The FHA will also ascertain its progress in meeting HUD’s incometargeting goal requiring 40% of new admissions must be ExtremelyLow Income Households in federal developments. If the monitored data indicates any problem, FHA will alter its marketing and deconcentration strategies in accordance with this policy and federal requirements.

Order of Selection [24 CFR 960.206(e)]

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

PHA Policy

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

When selecting applicants from the waiting list, the PHA will match the characteristics of the available unit (unit size, accessibility features, unit type) to the applicants on the waiting lists. The PHA 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.

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

4-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

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

PHA Policy

The PHA 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 the PHA 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 the PHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore no informal hearing will be offered.

4-III.D. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW

HUD recommends that the PHA 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 the PHA 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 the PHA [Notice PIH 2012-10].

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)].

FHA Policy

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

The head of household and the spouse/cohead will be strongly encouraged to attend the interview together. However, either the head of household or the spouse/cohead 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 the PHA.

The interview will be conducted only if the head of household or spouse/cohead 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 documentation of social security numbers, the PHA will allow the family to retain its place on the waiting list for **30 days**. If not all household members have disclosed their SSNs at the next time a unit becomes available, the PHA 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, the PHA will proceed with the interview. If the PHA 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, the PHA 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 10 business days of the interview (Chapter 7 provides details about longer submission deadlines for particular items, including documentation of Social Security numbers and eligible noncitizen status). If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension. If the required documents and information are not provided within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of denial (see Chapter 3).

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

Interviews will be conducted in English. For Limited English Proficient (LEP) applicants, the PHA will provide translation services in accordance with the PHA's LEP plan.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the PHA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, the PHA will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time.

Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews without PHA approval will have their applications made inactive based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. The second appointment letter will state that failure to appear for the appointment without a request to reschedule will be interpreted to mean that the family is no longer interested and their application will be made inactive. Such failure to act on the part of the applicant prevents the PHA from making an eligibility determination, therefore the PHA will not offer an informal hearing.

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

The PHA must verify all information provided by the family (see Chapter 7). Based on verified information related to the eligibility requirements, including PHA suitability standards, the PHA 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)].

FHA Policy

The PHA 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.

The PHA 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)].

FHA Policy

If the PHA determines that the family is ineligible, the PHA 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).

If the PHA 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 the PHA can move to deny the application. See Section 3-III.G for the PHA's policy regarding such circumstances.

Upon making an eligibility determination, the PHA must provide the family a notice of VAWA rights as well as the HUD VAWA self-certification form (form HUD-538250066) in accordance with the Violence against Women Act of 2013, and as outlined in 16-VII.C. The notice and self-certification form must accompany the written notification of eligibility determination. This notice must be provided in both of the following instances: (1) when a family is notified of its eligibility; or (2) when a family is notified of its ineligibility.

EXHIBIT 4-1: LOCAL PREFERENCES- POLICY OPTIONS

- **Involuntarily Displaced**: This preference is available to applicants and tenants who have been involuntarily displaced by FHA action.
- **Displaced by Governmental Action**: This preference is for applicants who are Framingham residents and are recently displaced from the last residence by documented governmental action through no fault or negligence of their own.
- **Residency Preference**: For families who live, work, or have been hired to work in the jurisdiction.
- **Veteran's Preference**: This preference is available to current members of the U.S. Armed Forces, veterans, or surviving spouses of veterans.
- **Disability Preference**: This preference is extended to disabled persons or families with a disabled member as defined in this ACOP.
- **Working Preference**: Families where the head and/or spouse/cohead is employed. [or who are active participants in accredited educational and training programs designed to prepare the individual for the job market]. This preference is automatically extended to an applicant family if the head and spouse, or sole member is age 62 or older, or is a person with disabilities.
- **Rent Burden**: This preference applies to families paying more than 30% of their adjusted income for rent. To qualify for the rent burden preference, the applicant must pay rent directly to the landlord or agent.

EXHIBIT 4-1: (Continued)

SYSTEMS OF PREFERENCES-POLICY OPTIONS

Local preferences will be aggregated using the following system: (select only one system of aggregating):

Each preference will receive an allocation of points. The more preference points an applicant has, the higher the applicant's place on the waiting list.

- 10 points** **First priority to applicants/tenants involuntarily displaced by FHA action.**
- 10 points** **Second priority to applicants who are Framingham residents and are recently displaced from the last residence by documented governmental action through no fault or negligence of their own.**
- 5 points** **Third priority to applicants who live or work in Framingham.**
Fourth priority to all other eligible applicants, in accordance with adopted HUD regulations as they may exist from time to time.

Within each priority category preference shall be given to applicants as follows:

- 2 points** **Working, disabled or elderly families.**
- 2 points** **Veterans' preference.**
- 2 points** **Families paying over 30% of adjusted income for rent.**

Notwithstanding the priority and preference categories above forty percent (40%) of all new admissions shall be to families who are extremely low income. (income not exceeding thirty percent (30%) of the area median.)

EXHIBIT 4-1: (Continued)

VERIFICATION OF WAITING LIST PREFERENCES - POLICY OPTIONS

- **Residency Preference:** For families who live, work or have been hired to work in the jurisdiction of the PHA.

In order to verify that an applicant is a resident, the PHA will require a minimum of two of the following documents: rent receipts, leases, utility bills, employer or agency records, school records, drivers licenses, voters registration records, credit reports, statement from household with whom the family is residing.

For families who have been hired to work in the jurisdiction of the PHA, a statement from the employer will be required.

- **Veterans Preference:** This preference is available to current members of the U.S. Armed Forces, veterans, or surviving spouses of veterans. The PHA will require U.S. government documents which indicate that the applicant qualifies under the above definition.

The use of a residency preference will not have the purpose or effect of delaying or otherwise denying admission to the program based on the race, color, ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, or age of any member of an applicant family.

- **Disability Preference:** This preference is extended to disabled persons or families with a disabled member as defined in this ACOP.

The PHA will require appropriate documentation from a knowledgeable professional. The PHA will not inquire as to the nature or extent of the disability.

An award letter or other proof of eligibility for Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income will be acceptable.

- **Working Preference:** This preference is available for families whose head and/or spouse/cohead is employed or to families whose head and/or spouse/cohead is elderly or disabled.

The PHA will require a statement from the employer.

- **Involuntary Displacement:** Families who claim they are being or have been displaced due to either a formally declared disaster or government action: written verification by the displacing or declaring unit or agency of government.

- **Rent Burden:** Paying more than 30% of adjusted income for rent:

Families will be required to verify their income and the amount of rent they are obligated to pay, and the period of time they have been residing in the unit.

Families must furnish copies of rental receipts/the lease/canceled checks/money orders. The PHA may contact the landlord directly by mail or telephone.

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