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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Public and Indian Housing

Small PHA Plan Update
Annual Plan for Fiscal Year: 2002-2003

NOTE: THIS PHA PLANS TEMPLATE (HUD 50075) IS TO BE COMPLETED IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS LOCATED IN APPLICABLE PIH NOTICES

HUD 50075
OMB Approval No: 2577-0226
Expires: 03/31/2002

PHA Plan
Agency Identification

PHA Name: Housing Authority of the City of Paramount

PHA Number: CA 137

PHA Fiscal Year Beginning: (mm/yyyy) 07/2002

PHA Plan Contact Information:

Name: Darlene Aikens
Phone: (323) 260-2052
TDD: (323) 269-8654
Email (if available): daikens@lacdc.org

Public Access to Information

Information regarding any activities outlined in this plan can be obtained by contacting: (select all that apply)

☒ Main administrative office of the PHA
The Section 8 program for the Housing Authority of the City of Paramount is administered by the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA). Information regarding the plan can also be obtained by contacting Paramount City Hall.

☐ PHA development management offices

Display Locations For PHA Plans and Supporting Documents

The PHA Plans (including attachments) are available for public inspection at: (select all that apply)

☒ Main administrative office of the PHA
☐ PHA development management offices
☒ Main administrative office of the local, county or State government
☐ Public library
☐ PHA website
☐ Other (list below)

PHA Plan Supporting Documents are available for inspection at: (select all that apply)

☒ Main business office of the PHA
☐ PHA development management offices
☒ Other (list below)
Paramount City Hall

PHA Programs Administered:

☐ Public Housing and Section 8 ☒ Section 8 Only ☐ Public Housing Only

Annual PHA Plan
Fiscal Year 2002-2003
[24 CFR Part 903.7]

i. Table of Contents

Provide a table of contents for the Plan, including attachments, and a list of supporting documents available for public inspection. For Attachments, indicate which attachments are provided by selecting all that apply. Provide the attachment's name (A, B, etc.) in the space to the left of the name of the attachment. If the attachment is provided as a **SEPARATE** file submission from the PHA Plans file, provide the file name in parentheses in the space to the right of the title.

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☒ Other (List below, providing each attachment name)
Administrative Plan see attached: ca137a01

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ii. Executive Summary

[24 CFR Part 903.7 9 (r)]
At PHA option, provide a brief overview of the information in the Annual Plan

1. Summary of Policy or Program Changes for the Upcoming Year

In this section, briefly describe changes in policies or programs discussed in last year's PHA Plan that are not covered in other sections of this Update.

Prior to denying assistance for criminal activity, the PHA will consider such factors as rehabilitative treatment, and the type and longevity of the conviction for drug and alcohol related criminal activity.

2. Capital Improvement Needs

[24 CFR Part 903.7 9 (g)]
Exemptions: Section 8 only PHAs are not required to complete this component.

A. ☐ Yes ☐ No: Is the PHA eligible to participate in the CFP in the fiscal year covered by this PHA Plan?

B. What is the amount of the PHA's estimated or actual (if known) Capital Fund Program grant for the upcoming year? $ _____

C. ☐ Yes ☐ No Does the PHA plan to participate in the Capital Fund Program in the upcoming year? If yes, complete the rest of Component 7. If no, skip to next component.

D. Capital Fund Program Grant Submissions

(1) Capital Fund Program 5-Year Action Plan

The Capital Fund Program 5-Year Action Plan is provided as Attachment

(2) Capital Fund Program Annual Statement

The Capital Fund Program Annual Statement is provided as Attachment

3. Demolition and Disposition

[24 CFR Part 903.7 9 (h)]
Applicability: Section 8 only PHAs are not required to complete this section.

1. ☐ Yes ☐ No: Does the PHA plan to conduct any demolition or disposition activities (pursuant to section 18 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437p)) in the plan Fiscal Year? (If "No", skip to next component ; if "yes", complete one activity description for each development.)

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2. Activity Description

Demolition/Disposition Activity Description (Not including Activities Associated with HOPE VI or Conversion Activities)
1a. Development name: 1b. Development (project) number:
2. Activity type: Demolition ☐ Disposition ☐
3. Application status (select one) Approved ☐ Submitted, pending approval ☐ Planned application ☐
4. Date application approved, submitted, or planned for submission: (DD/MM/YY)
5. Number of units affected: 6. Coverage of action (select one) ☐ Part of the development ☐ Total development
7. Relocation resources (select all that apply) ☐ Section 8 for units ☐ Public housing for units ☐ Preference for admission to other public housing or section 8 ☐ Other housing for units (describe below)
8. Timeline for activity: a. Actual or projected start date of activity: b. Actual or projected start date of relocation activities: c. Projected end date of activity:

4. Voucher Homeownership Program

[24 CFR Part 903.7 9 (k)]

A. ☐ Yes ☒ No: Does the PHA plan to administer a Section 8 Homeownership program pursuant to Section 8(y) of the U.S.H.A. of 1937, as implemented by 24 CFR part 982 ? (If "No", skip to next component; if "yes", describe each program using the table below (copy and complete questions for each program identified.)

B. Capacity of the PHA to Administer a Section 8 Homeownership Program

The PHA has demonstrated its capacity to administer the program by (select all that apply):

☐ Establishing a minimum homeowner downpayment requirement of at least 3 percent and requiring that at least 1 percent of the downpayment comes from the family's resources

☐ Requiring that financing for purchase of a home under its section 8 homeownership will be provided, insured or guaranteed by the state or Federal government; comply with secondary mortgage market underwriting requirements; or comply with generally accepted private sector underwriting standards

☐ Demonstrating that it has or will acquire other relevant experience (list PHA experience, or any other organization to be involved and its experience, below):

5. Safety and Crime Prevention: PHDEP Plan

[24 CFR Part 903.7 (m)]

Exemptions Section 8 Only PHAs may skip to the next component PHAs eligible for PHDEP funds must provide a PHDEP Plan meeting specified requirements prior to receipt of PHDEP funds.

A. ☐ Yes ☐ No: Is the PHA eligible to participate in the PHDEP in the fiscal year covered by this PHA Plan?

B. What is the amount of the PHA's estimated or actual (if known) PHDEP grant for the upcoming year? $ _____

C. ☐ Yes ☐ No Does the PHA plan to participate in the PHDEP in the upcoming year? If yes, answer question D. If no, skip to next component.

D. ☐ Yes ☐ No: The PHDEP Plan is attached at Attachment ____

6. Other Information

[24 CFR Part 903.7 9 (r)]

A. Resident Advisory Board (RAB) Recommendations and PHA Response

1. ☒ Yes ☐ No: Did the PHA receive any comments on the PHA Plan from the Resident Advisory Board/s?

2. If yes, the comments are Attached at Attachment (File name) ca137d02

3. In what manner did the PHA address those comments? (select all that apply)

☐ The PHA changed portions of the PHA Plan in response to comments
A list of these changes is included
☐ Yes ☐ No: below or
☐ Yes ☐ No: at the end of the RAB Comments in Attachment ____.

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☒ Considered comments, but determined that no changes to the PHA Plan were necessary. An explanation of the PHA's consideration is included at the end of the RAB Comments in Attachment D.

☐ Other: (list below)

B. Statement of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan

For each applicable Consolidated Plan, make the following statement (copy questions as many times as necessary).

1. Consolidated Plan jurisdiction: City of Paramount, California

2. The PHA has taken the following steps to ensure consistency of this PHA Plan with the Consolidated Plan for the jurisdiction: (select all that apply)

☒ The PHA has based its statement of needs of families in the jurisdiction on the needs expressed in the Consolidated Plan/s.

☒ The PHA has participated in any consultation process organized and offered by the Consolidated Plan agency in the development of the Consolidated Plan.

☒ The PHA has consulted with the Consolidated Plan agency during the development of this PHA Plan.

☒ Activities to be undertaken by the PHA in the coming year are consistent with specific initiatives contained in the Consolidated Plan. (list such initiatives below)

The City of Paramount falls within the jurisdiction of the Consolidated Plan for the City of Paramount, California.

The goal of the Paramount program is to provide decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanded economic opportunities for its lower-and moderate-income residents. PHA activities that are consistent with Consolidated Plan initiatives include providing Section 8 rental assistance to eligible Paramount residents and maintaining the Family Self Sufficiency program and services for participants through the Program Administrator.

☐ Other: (list below)

3. PHA Requests for support from the Consolidated Plan Agency

☐ Yes ☒ No: Does the PHA request financial or other support from the State or local government agency in order to meet the needs of its public housing residents or inventory? If yes, please list the 5 most important requests below:

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4. The Consolidated Plan of the jurisdiction supports the PHA Plan with the following actions and commitments: (describe below)

The Five- Year Strategic Plan was completed in June 1997 in advance of PHA Agency Plan requirement. Upon further review, however, the actions and commitments within the Consolidated Plan appear to be consistent with and supportive of the PHA Plan.

C. Criteria for Substantial Deviation and Significant Amendments

1. Amendment and Deviation Definitions

24 CFR Part 903.7(r)

PHAs are required to define and adopt their own standards of substantial deviation from the 5-year Plan and Significant Amendment to the Annual Plan. The definition of significant amendment is important because it defines when the PHA will subject a change to the policies or activities described in the Annual Plan to full public hearing and HUD review before implementation.

A. Substantial Deviation from the 5-year Plan:

It is the intent of the Housing Authority of the City of Paramount and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles to adhere to the goals and objectives outlined in the 5-year strategic plan. However, the plan will be modified and re-submitted to HUD if a significant deviation from program goals and objections occurs. Significant deviation is defined by the Housing Authority as follows:

- A change in Program Administration
- A significant increase or decrease in program funding
- A significant change in the local economics, i.e, recession, depression.
- A need to respond to Acts beyond the Housing Authorities control such as an Act of God, an earthquake foe example, civil unrest, or other unforeseen significant event.
- A mandate from local government officials, specifically the governing body of the Housing Authority, to change the direction (goals and objectives) of the program.

B. Significant Amendment or Modification to the Annual Plan:

A significant amendment to the PHA one-year Agency Plan is defined as a change in program policy or procedure that would significantly impact program applicants or participants. This includes any revisions to the PHA's Administrative Plan that would change a policy or procedure contained in the PHA's Agency Plan.

Attachment_A_
Supporting Documents Available for Review

PHAs are to indicate which documents are available for public review by placing a mark in the "Applicable & On Display" column in the appropriate rows. All listed documents must be on display if applicable to the program activities conducted by the PHA.

List of Supporting Documents Available for Review		
Applicable & On Display	**Supporting Document**	**Related Plan Component**
X	PHA Plan Certifications of Compliance with the PHA Plans and Related Regulations	5 Year and Annual Plans
X	State/Local Government Certification of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan (not required for this update)	5 Year and Annual Plans
X	Fair Housing Documentation Supporting Fair Housing Certifications: Records reflecting that the PHA has examined its programs or proposed programs, identified any impediments to fair housing choice in those programs, addressed or is addressing those impediments in a reasonable fashion in view of the resources available, and worked or is working with local jurisdictions to implement any of the jurisdictions' initiatives to affirmatively further fair housing that require the PHA's involvement.	5 Year and Annual Plans
X	Housing Needs Statement of the Consolidated Plan for the jurisdiction/s in which the PHA is located and any additional backup data to support statement of housing needs in the jurisdiction	Annual Plan: Housing Needs
	Most recent board-approved operating budget for the public housing program	Annual Plan: Financial Resources
	Public Housing Admissions and (Continued) Occupancy Policy (A&O/ACOP), which includes the Tenant Selection and Assignment Plan [TSAP]	Annual Plan: Eligibility, Selection, and Admissions Policies
	Any policy governing occupancy of Police Officers in Public Housing ☐ check here if included in the public housing A&O Policy	Annual Plan: Eligibility, Selection, and Admissions Policies
X	Section 8 Administrative Plan	Annual Plan: Eligibility, Selection, and Admissions Policies
	Public housing rent determination policies, including the method for setting public housing flat rents ☐ check here if included in the public housing A & O Policy	Annual Plan: Rent Determination
	Schedule of flat rents offered at each public housing development ☐ check here if included in the public housing A & O Policy	Annual Plan: Rent Determination

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List of Supporting Documents Available for Review		
Applicable & On Display	**Supporting Document**	**Related Plan Component**
X	Section 8 rent determination (payment standard) policies ☒ check here if included in Section 8 Administrative Plan	Annual Plan: Rent Determination
	Public housing management and maintenance policy documents, including policies for the prevention or eradication of pest infestation (including cockroach infestation)	Annual Plan: Operations and Maintenance
	Results of latest binding Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) Assessment	Annual Plan: Management and Operations
	Follow-up Plan to Results of the PHAS Resident Satisfaction Survey (if necessary)	Annual Plan: Operations and Maintenance and Community Service & Self-Sufficiency
	Results of latest Section 8 Management Assessment System (SEMAP)	Annual Plan: Management and Operations
X	Any required policies governing any Section 8 special housing types ☒ check here if included in Section 8 Administrative Plan	Annual Plan: Operations and Maintenance
	Public housing grievance procedures ☐ check here if included in the public housing A & O Policy	Annual Plan: Grievance Procedures
X	Section 8 informal review and hearing procedures ☒ check here if included in Section 8 Administrative Plan	Annual Plan: Grievance Procedures
	The HUD-approved Capital Fund/Comprehensive Grant Program Annual Statement (HUD 52837) for any active grant year	Annual Plan: Capital Needs
	Most recent CIAP Budget/Progress Report (HUD 52825) for any active CIAP grants	Annual Plan: Capital Needs
	Approved HOPE VI applications or, if more recent, approved or submitted HOPE VI Revitalization Plans, or any other approved proposal for development of public housing	Annual Plan: Capital Needs
	Self-evaluation, Needs Assessment and Transition Plan required by regulations implementing §504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. See, PIH 99-52 (HA).	Annual Plan: Capital Needs
	Approved or submitted applications for demolition and/or disposition of public housing	Annual Plan: Demolition and Disposition
	Approved or submitted applications for designation of public housing (Designated Housing Plans)	Annual Plan: Designation of Public Housing
	Approved or submitted assessments of reasonable revitalization of public housing and approved or submitted conversion plans prepared pursuant to section 202 of the 1996 HUD Appropriations Act, Section 22 of the US Housing Act of 1937, or Section 33 of the US Housing Act of 1937	Annual Plan: Conversion of Public Housing

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List of Supporting Documents Available for Review		
Applicable & On Display	**Supporting Document**	**Related Plan Component**
	Approved or submitted public housing homeownership programs/plans	Annual Plan: Homeownership
	Policies governing any Section 8 Homeownership program (section _____of the Section 8 Administrative Plan)	Annual Plan: Homeownership
	Cooperation agreement between the PHA and the TANF agency and between the PHA and local employment and training service agencies	Annual Plan: Community Service & Self-Sufficiency
	FSS Action Plan/s for public housing and/or Section 8	Annual Plan: Community Service & Self-Sufficiency
	Section 3 documentation required by 24 CFR Part 135, Subpart E	Annual Plan: Community Service & Self-Sufficiency
	Most recent self-sufficiency (ED/SS, TOP or ROSS or other resident services grant) grant program reports	Annual Plan: Community Service & Self-Sufficiency
	The most recent Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHEDEP) semi-annual performance report	Annual Plan: Safety and Crime Prevention
	PHDEP-related documentation: · Baseline law enforcement services for public housing developments assisted under the PHDEP plan; · Consortium agreement/s between the PHAs participating in the consortium and a copy of the payment agreement between the consortium and HUD (applicable only to PHAs participating in a consortium as specified under 24 CFR 761.15); · Partnership agreements (indicating specific leveraged support) with agencies/organizations providing funding, services or other in-kind resources for PHDEP-funded activities; · Coordination with other law enforcement efforts; · Written agreement(s) with local law enforcement agencies (receiving any PHDEP funds); and · All crime statistics and other relevant data (including Part I and specified Part II crimes) that establish need for the public housing sites assisted under the PHDEP Plan.	Annual Plan: Safety and Crime Prevention
	Policy on Ownership of Pets in Public Housing Family Developments (as required by regulation at 24 CFR Part 960, Subpart G) ☐ check here if included in the public housing A & O Policy	Pet Policy
X	The results of the most recent fiscal year audit of the PHA conducted under section 5(h)(2) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U. S.C. 1437c(h)), the results of that audit and the PHA's response to any findings	Annual Plan: Annual Audit
	Troubled PHAs: MOA/Recovery Plan	Troubled PHAs
	Other supporting documents (optional) (list individually; use as many lines as necessary)	(specify as needed)

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Annual Statement/Performance and Evaluation Report
Capital Fund Program and Capital Fund Program Replacement Housing Factor (CFP/CFPRHF) Part 1: Summary

PHA Name:	Grant Type and Number Capital Fund Program: Capital Fund Program Replacement Housing Factor Grant No:	Federal FY of Grant:

☐ **Original Annual Statement** ☐ **Reserve for Disasters/ Emergencies** ☐ **Revised Annual Statement (revision no:)**
☐ **Performance and Evaluation Report for Period Ending:** ☐ **Final Performance and Evaluation Report**

Line No.	Summary by Development Account	Total Estimated Cost		Total Actual Cost	
		Original	Revised	Obligated	Expended
1	Total non-CFP Funds				
2	1406 Operations				
3	1408 Management Improvements				
4	1410 Administration				
5	1411 Audit				
6	1415 liquidated Damages				
7	1430 Fees and Costs				
8	1440 Site Acquisition				
9	1450 Site Improvement				
10	1460 Dwelling Structures				
11	1465.1 Dwelling Equipment—Nonexpendable				
12	1470 Nondwelling Structures				
13	1475 Nondwelling Equipment				
14	1485 Demolition				
15	1490 Replacement Reserve				
16	1492 Moving to Work Demonstration				
17	1495.1 Relocation Costs				
18	1498 Mod Used for Development				
19	1502 Contingency				
20	Amount of Annual Grant: (sum of lines 2-19)				
21	Amount of line 20 Related to LBP Activities				
22	Amount of line 20 Related to Section 504 Compliance				
23	Amount of line 20 Related to Security				

Annual Statement/Performance and Evaluation Report
Capital Fund Program and Capital Fund Program Replacement Housing Factor (CFP/CFPRHF) Part 1: Summary

PHA Name:	**Grant Type and Number** Capital Fund Program: Capital Fund Program Replacement Housing Factor Grant No:	**Federal FY of Grant:**

☐**Original Annual Statement** ☐**Reserve for Disasters/ Emergencies** ☐**Revised Annual Statement (revision no:)**
☐**Performance and Evaluation Report for Period Ending:** ☐**Final Performance and Evaluation Report**

Line No.	**Summary by Development Account**	**Total Estimated Cost**		**Total Actual Cost**	
24	Amount of line 20 Related to Energy Conservation Measures				

Annual Statement/Performance and Evaluation Report
Capital Fund Program and Capital Fund Program Replacement Housing Factor (CFP/CFPRHF)
Part II: Supporting Pages

PHA Name:	**Grant Type and Number** Capital Fund Program #: Capital Fund Program Replacement Housing Factor #:	**Federal FY of Grant:**

Development Number Name/HA-Wide Activities	General Description of Major Work Categories	Dev. Acct No.	Quantity	Total Estimated Cost		Total Actual Cost		Status of Proposed Work
				Original	Revised	Funds Obligated	Funds Expended	

Annual Statement/Performance and Evaluation Report
Capital Fund Program and Capital Fund Program Replacement Housing Factor (CFP/CFPRHF)
Part III: Implementation Schedule

PHA Name:	**Grant Type and Number** Capital Fund Program #: Capital Fund Program Replacement Housing Factor #:	**Federal FY of Grant:**

Development Number Name/HA-Wide Activities	All Fund Obligated (Quart Ending Date)			All Funds Expended (Quarter Ending Date)			Reasons for Revised Target Dates
	Original	Revised	Actual	Original	Revised	Actual	

Capital Fund Program 5-Year Action Plan

Complete one table for each development in which work is planned in the next 5 PHA fiscal years. Complete a table for any PHA-wide physical or management improvements planned in the next 5 PHA fiscal year. Copy this table as many times as necessary. Note: PHAs need not include information from Year One of the 5-Year cycle, because this information is included in the Capital Fund Program Annual Statement.

CFP 5-Year Action Plan ☐ **Original statement** ☐ **Revised statement**			
Development Number	**Development Name (or indicate PHA wide)**		
Description of Needed Physical Improvements or Management Improvements		**Estimated Cost**	**Planned Start Date (HA Fiscal Year)**
Total estimated cost over next 5 years			

PHA Public Housing Drug Elimination Program Plan

Note: THIS PHDEP Plan template (HUD 50075-PHDEP Plan) is to be completed in accordance with Instructions located in applicable PIH Notices.

Section 1: General Information/History

A. Amount of PHDEP Grant $_____

B. Eligibility type (Indicate with an "x") N1_____ N2_____ R_____

C. FFY in which funding is requested _____

D. Executive Summary of Annual PHDEP Plan

In the space below, provide a brief overview of the PHDEP Plan, including highlights of major initiatives or activities undertaken. It may include a description of the expected outcomes. The summary must not be more than five (5) sentences long

E. Target Areas

Complete the following table by indicating each PHDEP Target Area (development or site where activities will be conducted), the total number of units in each PHDEP Target Area, and the total number of individuals expected to participate in PHDEP sponsored activities in each Target Area. Unit count information should be consistent with that available in PIC.

PHDEP Target Areas (Name of development(s) or site)	Total # of Units within the PHDEP Target Area(s)	Total Population to be Served within the PHDEP Target Area(s)

F. Duration of Program

Indicate the duration (number of months funds will be required) of the PHDEP Program proposed under this Plan (place an "x" to indicate the length of program by # of months. For "Other", identify the # of months).

12 Months_____ 18 Months_____ 24 Months_____

G. PHDEP Program History

Indicate each FY that funding has been received under the PHDEP Program (place an "x" by each applicable Year) and provide amount of funding received. If previously funded programs have not been closed out at the time of this submission, indicate the fund balance and anticipated completion date. The Fund Balances should reflect the balance as of Date of Submission of the PHDEP Plan. The Grant Term End Date should include any HUD-approved extensions or waivers. For grant extensions received, place "GE" in column or "W" for waivers.

Fiscal Year of Funding	PHDEP Funding Received	Grant #	Fund Balance as of Date of this Submission	Grant Extensions or Waivers	Grant Start Date	Grant Term End Date
FY 1995						
FY 1996						
FY 1997						
FY1998						
FY 1999						

Section 2: PHDEP Plan Goals and Budget

A. PHDEP Plan Summary

In the space below, summarize the PHDEP strategy to address the needs of the target population/target area(s). Your summary should briefly identify: the broad goals and objectives, the role of plan partners, and your system or process for monitoring and evaluating PHDEP-funded activities. This summary should not exceed 5-10 sentences.

B. PHDEP Budget Summary

Enter the total amount of PHDEP funding allocated to each line item.

FFY _____ PHDEP Budget Summary **Original statement** **Revised statement dated:**	
Budget Line Item	**Total Funding**
9110 – Reimbursement of Law Enforcement	
9115 - Special Initiative	
9116 - Gun Buyback TA Match	
9120 - Security Personnel	
9130 - Employment of Investigators	
9140 - Voluntary Tenant Patrol	
9150 - Physical Improvements	
9160 - Drug Prevention	
9170 - Drug Intervention	
9180 - Drug Treatment	
9190 - Other Program Costs	
TOTAL PHDEP FUNDING	

C. PHDEP Plan Goals and Activities

In the tables below, provide information on the PHDEP strategy summarized above by budget line item. Each goal and objective should be numbered sequentially for each budget line item (where applicable). Use as many rows as necessary to list proposed activities (additional rows may be inserted in the tables). PHAs are not required to provide information in shaded boxes. Information provided must be concise—not to exceed two sentences in any column. Tables for line items in which the PHA has no planned goals or activities may be deleted.

9110 – Reimbursement of Law Enforcement	**Total PHDEP Funding: $**
Goal(s)	
Objectives	

Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount/ Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9115 - Special Initiative	**Total PHDEP Funding: $**

Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount/ Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9116 - Gun Buyback TA Match	**Total PHDEP Funding: $**

Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9120 - Security Personnel					**Total PHDEP Funding: $**		
Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9130 – Employment of Investigators					**Total PHDEP Funding: $**		
Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9140 – Voluntary Tenant Patrol					**Total PHDEP Funding: $**		
Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9150 - Physical Improvements					**Total PHDEP Funding: $**		
Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9160 - Drug Prevention					**Total PHDEP Funding: $**		
Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators

1.							
2.							
3.							

9170 - Drug Intervention					**Total PHDEP Funding: $**		
Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9180 - Drug Treatment					**Total PHDEP Funding: $**		
Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

9190 - Other Program Costs							**Total PHDEP Funds: $**
Goal(s)							
Objectives							
Proposed Activities	# of Persons Served	Target Population	Start Date	Expected Complete Date	PHEDEP Funding	Other Funding (Amount /Source)	Performance Indicators
1.							
2.							
3.							

Required Attachment B: Resident Member on the PHA Governing Board

1. ☐ Yes ☒ No: Does the PHA governing board include at least one member who is directly assisted by the PHA this year? (if no, skip to #2)

A. Name of resident member(s) on the governing board:

B. How was the resident board member selected: (select one)?
☐ Elected
☐ Appointed

C. The term of appointment is (include the date term expires):

2. A. If the PHA governing board does not have at least one member who is directly assisted by the PHA, why not?
☐ the PHA is located in a State that requires the members of a governing board to be salaried and serve on a full time basis
☒ the PHA has less than 300 public housing units, has provided reasonable notice to the resident advisory board of the opportunity to serve on the governing board, and has not been notified by any resident of their interest to participate in the Board.
☐ Other (explain):

B. Date of next term expiration of a governing board member:

C. Name and title of appointing official(s) for governing board (indicate appointing official for the next position):

Required Attachment C: Membership of the Resident Advisory Board or Boards

List members of the Resident Advisory Board or Boards: (If the list would be unreasonably long, list organizations represented or otherwise provide a description sufficient to identify how members are chosen.)

The Section 8 program for the Housing Authority of the City of Paramount is administered by the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA). HACoLA formed two separate Resident Advisory Boards (RAB), one for Section 8 participants and one for Public Housing residents. Section 8 participants from the City of Paramount participated in the Section 8 RAB, which included participants from the County of Los Angeles and other cities whose programs are administered by HACoLA.

City of Paramount Resident Advisory Board Members

Lois M. Alfaro – City of Paramount
Ada Jackson – City of Paramount
Rudy Corona – City of Paramount
John R. Wills – City of Paramount
Agustina Diaz – City of Paramount

County & Other City Resident Advisory Board Members

Luz Cepeda - City of Lakewood
Yvette Battersby – City of Lakewood
Maria Cervantes – City of Lakewood
Clint Cook – Los Angeles County
Marilyn Douglas – Los Angeles County
Debbie Edwards – Los Angeles County
Faina Golodovskaya – Los Angeles County
Karen Kelly – Los Angeles County
Louise H. Kulig – Los Angeles County
Genoveva Lopez – Los Angeles County
Augusta McBride – Los Angeles County
Patricia Munoz – Los Angeles County
Willia Najera – Los Angeles County
Willie Shivers – Los Angeles County
Millicent Lunan – Los Angeles County
Pedro Ascencio – County of Los Angeles
Lourdes Ascencio – County of Los Angeles
Elida Menjivar – County of Los Angeles
Guadalupe Chupriuski – County of Los Angeles
Sarah F. Jacques – City of Santa Fe Springs
Josephine Perez – City of Santa Fe Springs
Joesfina Lopez – City of Santa Fe Springs
Abraham Lopez – City of Santa Fe Springs
Josephine Vinson – City of Santa Fe Springs
Cam Luu – City of Lawndale
Hung Nguyen – City of Lawndale
Angela Eden – City of Lawndale
Francisco A. Escobar – City of Lawndale
Annethia Saunders – City of Santa Fe Springs
Georgiv Kononenko – City of West Hollywood
Mikhail Koren – City of West Hollywood
Naum Landov – City of West Hollywood
Lyudmila Landov – City of West Hollywood
Asya Marchevskaya – City of West Hollywood
Mira Skibinsky – City of West Hollywood
Galina Tsitrina - City of West Hollywood

REQUIRED ATTACHMENT C:

SECTION 8 RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD COMMENTS

Comment: Can an owner increase her rent?
Response: Yes an owner has to issue her a sixty day notice and send a copy to the PHA so we can do a comparable study and if rents do justify an increase it will be granted to an owner and the family always pays the difference under the housing choice voucher.

Comment: Is there a Vietnamese translator?
Response: We can make arraignments for the next meeting. Anytime there are special needs or translations please contact us before the next meeting.

Comments: An inspection was requested and wanted to know a status.
Response: John Flores who was our representative from our Public Liaison unit requested that the RAB member call him directly and he will look into it. He gave out his direct number to all RAB members.

Comments: How do we notify owners about the owner workshops that the Public Liaisons hold?
Response: We notify owners in writing about our owner workshops,

Comments: What kind of response are we getting?
Response: The first meeting we had we had about 100 owners that participated whom we explained the program to. Each workshop can cover a different topic; we can talk about abatement, inspections, new contracts, re-certifications.

Comments: Do we advertise the workshops in the newspaper?
Response: We cannot because not every owner contracts with the housing authority or participates in the section 8 program.

Comments: There is a problem where many new owners are not accepting Section 8 applicants because they might not understand the program.
Response: The current workshop the Public Liaison unit is conducting is for current owners, but we do have new owner workshops conducted by other housing authority units (Crime Safety Unit).

Comments: When a unit does not pass inspection is the rent payment held up?
Response: Depending if by the second inspection it does not pass the rent payment is held up.

Comments: Last year this is what happened to a RAB member and the owner was very upset because the payment was held up for 3 months.
Response: When this happens we send a notification is to the owner and the tenant that a second inspection was not passed and that payment will be withheld. Once inspection is passed then payment will be resumed.

Comments: How often are the inspections done?
Response: Every year we do an annual inspection. We try and do them 150 days prior to the anniversary date.

Comments: What is HUD.
Response: HUD stands for Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is where we get our funding by and also provides us with rules and regulations that we have to abide by.

Comments: As RAB members are we going to provide strategies on how to improve the Program?
Response: Yes that is the main reason for the RAB.

Comments: Is the RAB going to be given information regarding the maintenance of a unit or how to be a good tenant?
Response: These meetings are not to cover those specific subjects but eventually the Public Liaison Unit may have such tenant workshops. Workshops will cover such topics as your rights as tenants, how to be a

good tenant, what are your responsibilities as a section 8-tenant? We believe they will start next ear.

Comments: If she would like to move is she required to notify the Housing Authority?
Response: Yes, you are required to notify the housing authority with a least a 60-day notice.

Comments: A member commented that her household her mother, her son and herself and that her son would not be able to share a bedroom if they are given a 2-bedroom voucher.
Response: We do have the flexibility of giving an extra bedroom as long as we have required documents.

Comments: If there is an owner out there that has units and would like to make them available for Section 8 but doesn't have the funds to refurbish them to meet the HQS, do we provide any types of assistance.
Response: Not through our office but there are other loan programs that owner can go through.

Tape Labeled 12/1/2001 RAB Meeting #1

Comment: Could a list of all the areas with exception rents be given out?
Response: We can mail out a list to all RAB members.

Comment: A RAB member had a friend with 5 children and she was given a voucher and was not able to locate a unit. She got all the extensions that were allowable but was not able to locate a unit and eventually the voucher was canceled and she was told she would have to go back on the waiting list. Was there anyway we could keep a separate waiting list for these people that cannot locate units so that they would not be returned to the end of the waiting list.
Response: If a family cannot locate a unit after all extensions are given then we have to cancel it so that another family that may be able to use the voucher could use it.

Chapter 1
POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The housing choice voucher program was enacted as part of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA). The Act has been amended from time to time, and its requirements, as they apply to the housing choice voucher program, are described in and implemented through this Administrative Plan.

The housing choice voucher program for the Housing Authority of the City of Paramount is administered by the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (the Program Administrator). In accordance with the agreement between the two agencies, all functions and responsibilities of the staff of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (the Program Administrator), hereinafter referred to as the Program Administrator, shall be in compliance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) housing choice voucher program regulations as well as Federal, State and local Fair Housing Laws and Regulations.

A. LOCAL OBJECTIVES

The overall plan for the housing choice voucher program is designed to achieve three major objectives:

1. To provide improved living conditions and decent, safe, and sanitary housing for very low-income families while maintaining their rent payments at an affordable level.

2. To provide an incentive to private property owners to rent to lower income families by offering timely assistance payments.

3. To promote freedom of housing choice and spatial deconcentration of lower income and minority families.

Along with these objectives, the Program Administrator has adopted the following mission statement:

" To promote adequate and affordable housing, economic opportunity and a suitable living environment free from discrimination."

B. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Administrative Plan is to clearly outline the policies and procedures that govern the housing choice voucher program administered by the Program Administrator. The plan covers HUD policy, when necessary, and provides details on all the Program Administrator's discretionary policies.

The Program Administrator is responsible for complying with all changes in HUD regulations pertaining to these programs. If such changes conflict with this Plan, HUD regulations will have precedence. The original Plan and any changes must be approved by the Board of Commissioners of the agency and a copy of the plan must also be provided to HUD.

C. FAIR HOUSING POLICY

It is the policy of the Program Administrator to comply fully with all Federal, State and local nondiscrimination laws and with the rules and regulations governing Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity in housing and employment.

The Program Administrator shall not deny any family or individual the opportunity to apply for or receive assistance under the housing choice voucher program on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, age, family status, handicap or disability.

To further our commitment to full compliance with applicable Civil Rights laws, the Program Administrator will provide Federal/State/local information to Voucher holders regarding discrimination and any recourse available to them if they are victims of discrimination. Such information will be made available during the family briefing session, and all Fair Housing information and Discriminatory Complaint Forms will be made a part of the Voucher holder's briefing packet.

Except as otherwise provided in 24 CFR 8.21(c)(1), 8.24(a), 8.25, 8.31, no individual with disabilities shall be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination because the Program Administrator's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by persons with disabilities.

D. SERVICE POLICY

This policy is applicable to all situations described in this Administrative Plan when a family initiates contact with the Program Administrator, when the Program Administrator initiates contact with a family including when a family applies, and when the Program Administrator schedules or reschedules any kind of appointments.

It is the policy of the Program Administrator to be service-directed in the administration of the housing choice voucher program, and to exercise and demonstrate a high level of professionalism while providing housing services to all families.

The Program Administrator's policies and practices will be designed to provide assurances that all persons with disabilities will be provided reasonable accommodation so that they may fully access and utilize the housing program and related services. The availability of specific accommodations will be made known by including notices on the Program Administrator's forms and letters to all families, and all requests will be verified so that the Program Administrator can properly accommodate the need presented by the disability.

Requests for reasonable accommodation from persons with disabilities will be granted upon verification that they meet the need presented by the disability.

Reasonable accommodation will be made for persons with disabilities that require an advocate or accessible offices. A designee will be allowed to provide information as needed, but only with the permission of the person with the disability.

Verification of a Request for Accommodation

All requests for accommodation or modification will be verified with a reliable knowledgeable, professional.

E. FAMILY OUTREACH

Each time the Program Administrator enters into an Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) with HUD for new housing choice voucher existing units, it will be publicized in accordance with the specification in the criteria of the Equal Opportunity Housing Plan. The Program Administrator's waiting list will remain open on a continuous basis for the foreseeable future.

The Program Administrator will communicate the status of housing availability to other service providers in the community, advise them of housing eligibility factors and guidelines in order that they can make proper referrals for housing assistance.

Information regarding the program directed at prospective applicants/tenants will be disseminated in accordance with Equal Opportunity Housing Plan and HUD guidelines for Fair Housing.

F. OWNER OUTREACH

The Program Administrator encourages owners of decent, safe and sanitary housing units to lease to housing choice voucher families. The Program Administrator maintains a list of interested landlords and available units for the housing choice voucher program and updates are made regularly. When listings from owners are received, they will be compiled by the Program Administrator's staff and made available through the phone hotline.

Ongoing marketing efforts to recruit suburban owners for participation include, but are not limited to:

1. Brochures for owners
2. Realty Board presentations
3. Apartment Owner Association presentations
4. Community Center presentations
5. Presentation to organizations serving the disabled and other similar organizations.

The Program Administrator periodically evaluates the distribution of assisted families to identify areas within the jurisdiction where owner outreach should be targeted. Special outreach efforts will be used in order to encourage participation of those groups who would not normally apply or participate.

G. PRIVACY RIGHTS

Applicants and participants, including all adults in their households, are required to sign the HUD 9886 Authorization for Release of Information. This document incorporates the Federal Privacy Act Statement and describes the conditions under which HUD will release family information.

A statement of the Program Administrator's policy on release of information to prospective landlords will be included in the briefing packet that is provided to the family.

The Program Administrator's practices and procedures are designed to safeguard the privacy of applicants and program participants. All applicant and participant files will be stored in a secure location that is only to be accessed by authorized staff.

The Program Administrator's staff will not discuss family information contained in files unless there is a business reason to do so. Inappropriate discussion of family information or improper disclosure of family information by will result in disciplinary action.

H. RULES AND REGULATIONS

This Administrative Plan is set forth to define the Program Administrator's local policies for operation of the housing choice voucher program. The Program Administrator will refer to federal regulations, HUD Memos, Notices and guidelines, or other applicable laws for instruction and direction in areas that are not discretionary and therefore not addressed in this document.

I. JURISDICTION

The Housing Authority of the City of Paramount operates within the corporate boundaries of the City of Paramount.

J. MONITORING PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

In order to ensure quality control, supervisory staff will review the following functions:

1. **10%** of new applicants/contracts
2. Minimum HQS quality control inspections as dictated by SEMAP Indicator #5
3. **100**% of work completed by new staff for a minimum of 30 days

The Program Administrator's quality control unit conducts audits of:

1. **5**% of annual re-certifications/interim re-certifications
2. **100**% of all new contracts

The Program Administrator's Program Integrity/Fraud Prevention Team will use credit checks, and other similar tools to confirm eligibility for:

1. **20%** of all new applicants
2. A random sample of program participants

K. TERMINOLOGY

The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles is referred to as “the Program Administrator” or “HA” throughout this document.

“Family” is used interchangeably with “Applicant” or “Participant” and can refer to a single person family.

“Tenant” refers to participants in terms of their relation to landlords. “Landlord” and “owner” are used interchangeably.

“Disability” is used where “handicap” was formerly used.

“Non-citizens Rule” refers to the regulation effective on June 19, 1995 restricting assistance to U.S. citizens and eligible immigrants.

“HQS” means the Housing Quality Standards required by regulations as enhanced by the Program Administrator.

The housing choice voucher program was formally known as the Section 8 program, the Rental Certificate program and the Rental Voucher program. *

*Pursuant to the mandate of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, the rental certificate and rental voucher programs merged into the new housing choice voucher program. This plan contains information regarding the policies governing the housing choice voucher program. All references to the rental certificate program have been deleted from this plan.

Chapter 2
ADMISSION ELIGIBILITY FACTORS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will define the criteria used by the Program Administrator to admit families into the program and also clarify the circumstances that may lead to a denial of admission. The intent of the policies outlined below is to strive for consistency and objectivity in evaluating the eligibility of families who apply for the programs. The criteria listed in this chapter will be the only factors used to review eligibility, to minimize the possibility of bias or discrimination. Selection shall be made without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, source of income, or disability/handicap. If denied admission, the applicant will be notified in writing with an explanation of the denial. The applicant will have the opportunity to request a hearing if they do not agree with the decision.

Eligibility Factors and Requirements

To be eligible for admission, an applicant must meet HUD's criteria, as well as any permissible additional criteria established by the Program Administrator.

As prescribed by HUD, the eligibility criteria are:

1. The applicant/applicant group must meet the definition of a "family". This term if defined in a later portion of this chapter.

2. An applicant family must be within the appropriate Income Limits,

3. An applicant family must furnish Social Security numbers for all family members age six and over, birth certificates, and valid California identification.

4. An applicant family must have an eligible immigrant status as defined by HUD, and

5. An applicant family must submit signed criminal background consent forms for all adult household members (including live-in aides) eighteen years of age or older.

A. FAMILY COMPOSITION

HUD provides the definition of an Elderly family in program regulation, but gives discretion to the local HA administering the program to define what groups of persons constitute a non-elderly family.

The applcant must qualify as a Family. The definition of family includes the following:

1. An elderly family whose head or spouse (or sole) member is an elderly (at least 62 years of age), disabled, or handicapped. It may include two or more elderly,

disabled, or handicapped persons living together, or one or more of these persons living with one or more live-in attendant.

2. A family group consists of two or more persons sharing residency and whose income and resources are available to meet the family needs. There must be a relation by blood, marriage or operation of law. The following is to be considered as relation by blood: mother, father, children, cousin, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, grandfather and grandmother. The group of two could also be a single person who is pregnant or in the process of adopting or securing legal custody of any individual under the age of eighteen.

3. A family group consisting of two or more persons who provide evidence of a significant relationship determined to be stable by the Program Administrator.

4. The remaining member of a tenant family. A remaining member of a tenant family includes a pregnant person whose pregnancy was terminated after admission to the program. However, if the pregnancy is terminated before admission to the program, the individual will no longer constitute a family. The remaining member of a tenant family will be reassigned another bedroom size Voucher, provided there is funding available. The remaining member of a tenant family does not include a live-in attendant of the former family whose service was necessary to care for the well-being of an elderly, disabled or handicapped head of household, or spouse and whose income was not included for eligibility purposes; or

5. A single person who lives alone, or intends to live alone, does not qualify as an elderly person, displaced person or as the remaining member of a tenant family.

Stable Relationship

When the applicant group is not related by blood, marriage, or operation of law, the Program Administrator will require that the applicant group provide evidence of a stable relationship.

The Program Administrator defines a stable relationship as:

a) A relationship that has been in existence for a minimum of six months, and
b) The parties provide financial support for each other.

Acceptable documentation of a stable relationship includes lease agreements indicating that the parties have lived together for at least six months, utility bills, other joint bills and/or bank account(s) (need to provide for a six month period), and, on a case by case basis, letters from a social service provider or religious organization confirming the relationship.

Head of Household

The head of household is considered to be the person designated by the family or the Program Administrator to sign program-related documents. However since rental assistance is provided to the entire family, it is expected that every family member will uphold the Program Administrator's rules and regulations. Emancipated minors who qualify under State law will be recognized as head of household.

Spouse of Head

Spouse means the husband or wife of the head of household. The marriage partner who, in order to dissolve the relationship, would have to be divorced. This includes the partner in a common-law marriage.

Live-In Attendants

A family may include a live-in attendant if the live-in attendant meets the following stipulations:

1. Is determined by the Program Administrator to be essential to the care and well being of an elderly person or a person with a disability,

2. Is not obligated for the support of the person(s), and

3. Would not be living in the unit except to provide care for the person(s), and

4. Must submit a signed criminal background consent form.

A live-in attendant is different from a family member in the following:

1. An attendant's income will not be used to determine eligibility of family.

2. An attendant is not subject to the Non-Citizen Rule requirements.

3. An attendant is not considered a remaining member of the tenant family, which means that they are not entitled to retain the housing choice voucher if the eligible family member(s) move off the program voluntarily, is terminated, or expires.

Relatives are not automatically excluded from being a live-in attendant, but they must meet all the stipulations in the live-in attendant definition described above.

A live-in attendant may only reside in the unit with the approval of the Program Administrator. Written verification will be required from a reliable, knowledgeable professional, such as a doctor, social worker, or caseworker. The verification provider must certify that a live-in attendant is needed for the care of the family member who is elderly, and/or disabled and the verification must include the hours of care that will be provided.

The live-in attendant will be subject to a criminal background check. Repeat criminal offenses and/or a requirement to register as a lifelong sex offender will be grounds for denial of the request.

With authorization from the assisted family, the landlord and the Program Administrator, a live-in attendant may have a family member live in the assisted unit as long as it does not create overcrowding in the unit. The Program Administrator will not increase the family's subsidy to accommodate the family of a live-in attendant.

Split Households before Voucher Issuance

When a family breakup occurs while on the waiting list due to divorce or legal separation, it is the responsibility of the two families to decide which will take the position/placement on the waiting list. However, if no decision or court determination is made, the Program Administrator will make the decision taking into consideration the following:

1. Which family member applied as head of household.
2. Which family unit retains the children or any disabled or elderly members.
3. Restrictions that were in place at the time the family applied.
4. Role of domestic violence or any other infraction.
5. Recommendation of social service agencies or qualified professionals.

Multiple Families in the Same Household

When families apply which consist of two families living together, (such as a mother and father, and a daughter with her own husband or children), if they apply as a family unit, they will be treated as one family unit.

Joint Custody of Children

Children who are subject to a joint custody agreement but live with one parent at least 51% of the time will be considered members of the household. Furthermore, when both parents on the waiting list are trying to claim the child, the parent whose address is listed in the school records will be allowed to claim the school-age child as a dependent.

Where court orders exist and provide guidance on custody issues, the Program Administrator will follow the directives outline in the court documents.

B. INCOME LIMITATIONS

In order to be eligible for assistance, an applicant must be either:

1. An extremely low-income family, i.e.; the family's gross income may not exceed 30% of the average median income for Los Angeles County, as established by HUD; or
2. A low-income family whose gross income does not exceed more than 80% of the average median income for Los Angeles County.

In order to meet the income targeting requirements established in the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA), 75% of all new admissions will be required to meet the definition of an extremely low-income family. To achieve the required balance, it may be

necessary to skip over otherwise eligible family. Should this be necessary, the families that have been skipped over will retain the time and date of application and will be admitted as soon as an appropriate opening becomes available.

The Program Administrator will admit eligible low income families, whose income do not exceed 80% of the AMI, on a first come, first serve basis, according to their local preference ranking.

Families whose Annual Income exceeds the income limit will be denied admission and offered an informal review.

Income Limits for Other Programs

Periodically, HUD has provided funding to the Program Administrator for projects involving preservation opt-outs and/or the expiration of a project based housing choice voucher contract. The income limits applicable to those projects are provided through specific regulation by HUD. The Program Administrator will follow HUD directives in determining admissions for such programs.

C. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS REQUIREMENTS

Families are required to provide verification of Social Security Numbers for all family members prior to admission, if they have been issued a number by the Social Security Administration. This requirement also applies to persons joining the family after the admission to the program. HACoLA will not require proof of a social security number for children age 5 and under.

Failure to furnish verification of Social Security Numbers is grounds for denial or termination.

D. CITIZENSHIP/ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS

Eligibility for assistance is contingent upon a family's submission of signed declarations of U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. In order to receive assistance, a family member must be an U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant. Each family member, regardless of age, must submit a signed declaration of U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. The Program Administrator may request verification of the declaration by requiring presentation of alien resident card, birth certificate, social security card, naturalization document, or other appropriate documentation.

For the Citizenship/Eligible immigration requirement, the status of each member of the family is considered individually before the family's status is defined.

Mixed Families

An Applicant family is eligible for assistance as long as at least one member is a citizen or eligible immigrant. Families that include eligible and ineligible individuals are called "mixed" family. Such applicant families will be given notice that their assistance will be prorated and that they may request a hearing if they contest this determination.

No eligible members

Applicant families that include no eligible members will be ineligible for assistance. Such families will be denied admission and offered an opportunity for a hearing.

Appeals

The applicant is entitled to an informal review.

E. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Program Administrator is requesting a criminal background check for all adult household members (including live-in aides) eighteen years of age or older applying for Section 8 Rental Assistance in order to comply with HUD mandates. A criminal conviction alone may or may not result in the denial of assistance. Other factors such as disclosure on the Criminal Background Consent Form, completion of a drug or alcohol rehabilitative treatment program, type and longevity of the conviction may also be taken into consideration.

Applicant Screening Standards

The following are policies established by the Program Administrator to screen all new applicants and any persons added to the household of a family currently participating in the Section 8 program.

1. **Applicant(s) previously evicted from federally assisted housing for drug-related criminal activity.**

   Persons evicted from public housing, Indian housing, Section 23, or any Section 8 program because of a drug-related criminal activity shall be denied assistance for a three-year period beginning on the date of such eviction. However, the Program Administrator may waive the three-year prohibition period if the person who committed the drug-related crime has successfully completed an approved supervised drug rehabilitation program after the date of the eviction or if the circumstances leading to the eviction no longer exist (i.e. the individual responsible for the original eviction is imprisoned or is deceased).

2. **Applicant(s) convicted for the manufacture of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.**

   The Program Administrator shall deny admission if the applicant or any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacture or production of Methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

3. **Applicant(s) currently engaging in the illegal use of a drug.**

   The Program Administrator shall deny admission where the preponderance of evidence indicates that there is a pattern of illegal use of a drug by the applicant or any household member and that this pattern may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by others regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted.

The Program Administrator may waive this policy if the person provides sufficient evidence that they are no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance and has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program.

4. **Applicant(s) subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement.**
   The Program Administrator shall deny admission if the applicant or any household member is subject to lifetime registration as a sex offender under a state registration program, regardless of longevity of conviction or completion of any rehabilitative program.

5. **Applicant(s) with a pattern of alcohol abuse.**

   The Program Administrator shall deny admission where the preponderance of evidence indicates that there is a pattern of abuse of alcohol by the applicant or any household member and this pattern may threaten the health, safety, or peaceful enjoyment of the premises.

   The Program Administrator may waive this policy if the person provides sufficient evidence that they are no longer engaging in the abuse of alcohol and has successfully completed a supervised alcohol rehabilitation program.

6. **Applicant(s) currently engaging or who have recently engaged in criminal activities.**

   The Program Administrator shall deny admission if the applicant or any household member has been convicted for any of the following activities, for a period of three years following the end of a conviction or incarceration (which ever is later), with no further arrest or convictions other than minor traffic violations:

   - Drug-related criminal activity;
   - Violent criminal activity;
   - Other criminal activity which may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity;
   - Other criminal activity that would threaten the health or safety of the owner or the Program Administrator staff, contractor or subcontractors or vendors.

   The Program Administrator may waive the three year period for drug-related criminal activity if the person provides sufficient evidence that they are no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance and has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program.

7. **Applicant(s) engaging in fraud or bribery associated with any federal housing program.**

   The Program Administrator shall deny admission if the applicant or any household member has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program. The Program Administrator may make

an exception in determining admission if the family member(s) who participated or were culpable for the action do not reside in the assisted unit.

Requests for Criminal Records by Project-based Section 8 Owners

Project-based Section 8 Owners, that have contracts with the Program Administrator, may request that the Program Administrator obtain criminal records, on their behalf, for the purpose of screening applicants. The Program Administrator will, however, charge a fee in order to cover costs associated with the review of criminal records.

Project-based owners must submit the following items in order for the Program Administrator to process criminal records. Owner requests must include:

1. A copy of a signed consent form from each adult household members, age 18 years and older. Included in the consent form must be a legible name, the date of birth, a California Identification Number, and a Social Security number. This information will be used for the sole purpose of distinguishing persons with similar names or birth dates.

2. An owner's criteria or standards for prohibiting admission of drug criminals in accordance with HUD regulations (§ 5.854 of 24 CFR Parts 5 et al.), and for prohibiting admission of other criminals (§ 5.855 of 24 CFR Parts 5 et al.).

Once criminal records are obtained by the Program Administrator, a determination will be made as to whether a criminal act, as shown by a criminal record, can be used as a basis for applicant screening. The Program Administrator will base its determination in accordance with HUD regulations and the owner criteria.

It is important to note that the Program Administrator will not disclose the applicant's criminal conviction record nor the content of that record to the owner.

Ineligible Households

Households will be considered ineligible if any household member over the age of 18 years is convicted of a criminal act that falls within the seven Applicant Screening Standards listed above. The Program Administrator will allow the household to apply for rental assistance if the household member who committed the criminal act will not be a part of the assisted household; and as long as all other admission requirements are met.

Confidentiality of Criminal Records

Criminal records received by The Program Administrator shall be maintained confidential, not misused, nor improperly disseminated and kept locked during non-business hours. Also, all criminal records will be destroyed no later than 30 days after a final determination is made.

Disclosure of Criminal Records to Family

The applicant or household member requesting to be added to the lease will be provided with a copy of the criminal record upon request and an opportunity to dispute the record. Applicants

will be provided an opportunity to dispute the record at an informal review. Participants may contest such records at an informal hearing.

Explanations and Terms

The following terms are used to determine eligibility when an applicant or a family member is added to an already assisted household and is undergoing a criminal background check.

"Drug" means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substance 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.

"Household" means the family and the Program Administrator -approved live-in aide.

"Incident" includes but is not limited to arrests, convictions, no contest pleas, fines, city ordinance violations or other credible preponderance of evidence.

"Pattern" is defined as the use of a controlled substance or alcohol if there is more than one incident during the previous twelve months.

"Premises" is the building or complex or development in which the public or assisted housing dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

"Preponderance of 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. The intent is not to prove criminal liability, but to establish that the act(s) occurred. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

"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. Violent criminal activity also includes activity within the family, such as during domestic disputes.

"Sufficient evidence" may include all or a number of personal certification along with supporting documentation from the following sources 1) probation officer; 2) landlord; 3) neighbors; 4) social service workers; 5) review of verified criminal records.

F. OTHER CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION

The Program Administrator may apply the following criteria, in addition to the HUD eligibility criteria, as grounds for denial of admission to the program.

1. The family must have not have violated any family obligations during a previous participation in the Section 8 program. The Program Administrator will review situations, on a case by case basis, for violations that are more than five years old.

2. No family member may have committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

3. The applicant must not be a past participant of any Section 8 or public housing program who has failed to satisfy liability for amounts owed to the Program Administrator for unpaid rent or damages.

   On a case-by-case basis, the Program Administrator may provide that applicant the opportunity to repay any such debt in full as a condition of admissions. The Program Administrator will not enter into a repayment agreement for this purpose.

4. The applicant must not be a member, officer or employee of the Program Administrator who formulates policy or influences decisions with respect to the Section 8 Program or a public official or a member of the local governing body or member of Congress.

5. No member of the family may have engaged in drug related or violent criminal activity. If either as a result of standardized inquiry or the receipt of a verifiable referral, and there is indication that the family or any family member is engaged in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity, the Program Administrator may conduct closer inquiry to determine whether the family should be denied admission.

   The Program Administrator may check criminal history for all adult household members to determine whether any member of the family has engaged in violent or drug-related criminal activity.

6. No family household member may have engaged in or threaten abusive or violent behavior toward the Program Administrator personnel.

   "Abusive or violent behavior towards City of Paramount or Program Administrator personnel" includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of expletives that are generally considered insulting, racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that customarily used to insult or intimidate, may be cause for termination of assistance or denial of admissions.

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

F. SUITABILITY OF FAMILY

The Program Administrator may take into consideration any of the additional criteria for admission in Section E above, but may not otherwise screen for factors that relate to the suitability of the applicant family as tenant. It is the responsibility of the owner to screen applicants for suitability.

The Program Administrator will assist and advise applicants on how to file a compliant if they have been discriminated against by an owner.

G. INELIGIBLE FAMILIES

Families from the Section 8 waiting list who are determined to be ineligible will be notified in writing of the reason for denial and given an opportunity to request an informal review.

Families referred by contracted Community-Based Organizations (CBO's), will be sent a denial letter and referred to the CBO if there are any further questions.

Chapter 3
APPLICATIONS PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the policies and procedures that govern the initial application, placement and denial of placement on the City of Paramount's waiting list, as well as limitations on whom may apply. The policies outlined in this chapter are intended to ensure that all families who express an interest in housing assistance are given an equal opportunity to apply. The primary purpose of the intake function is to gather information about the family so that an accurate, fair, and timely decision relative to the family's eligibility may be made. As such, applicants are placed on the waiting list in accordance with this plan.

A. HOW TO APPLY

Interested person(s) may apply by calling the Program Administrator's special application telephone number. Families who wish to apply for any of the Program Administrator's programs must complete a written application form. Applications will be made available in an accessible format to persons with disabilities upon their request.

The application process is composed of two phases:

1. **Preliminary Registration Waiting /Interest List**

   All families wishing to receive housing choice voucher rental assistance are initially placed on a preliminary registration waiting list. This is essentially an interest list. Families are placed on preliminary waiting list according to the date and time of their call. Preliminary information regarding the family's address, income, family composition, and disability status is collected. However, this information is not verified until the family is placed on the active waiting list. Applicants receive a postcard to confirm that their name has been placed on the preliminary waiting list.

2. **Waiting List**

   When the Program Administrator determines that there is sufficient funding to issue additional vouchers, a pool of potential new applicants is drawn from the preliminary waiting list. Families move onto the active waiting list according to the date and time of their initial call. Once a family has been place on the active waiting list, they will be asked to complete a housing choice voucher application and provide all the necessary income forms. At this point, all information will be confirmed through a third party. Families must meet all admissions requirements to be issued a housing choice voucher.

B. OPENING AND CLOSING OF WAITING LIST

The Program Administrator has maintained a continuously open waiting list for the City of Paramount for over ten years. For the foreseeable future, the Program Administrator plans to continue this process indefinitely. However, should it become necessary to close and then re-open the waiting list, the Program Administrator will follow the process outlined below.

Opening the Waiting List

When the Program Administrator opens the waiting list, it will advertise through public notice in the following newspapers, minority publications, and media entities.

- The Los Angeles Times
- The Los Angeles Independent

The Program Administrator's public notification will contain:

- The dates, times, and locations where families may apply.
- The programs for which applications will be taken.
- A brief description of the program(s).
- A statement that public housing residents must submit a separate application if they want to apply to housing choice voucher.
- Limitations, if any, on whom may apply.
- Fair Housing Logo.

The notices will be made in an accessible format to persons with disabilities if requested. The notices will provide potential applicants with information that includes the Program Administrator's telephone number and address, how to submit an application, information on eligibility requirements, and the availability of local preferences, if applicable.

Additional time for submission of an application after the stated deadline will be given as a reasonable accommodation at the request of a person with a disability.

C. LIMITS ON WHO MAY APPLY

Upon opening the waiting list, the Program Administrator will disclose the criteria defining what families may apply for assistance under a public notice.

If there are sufficient applications from elderly families, disabled families, and displaced singles, applications will not be accepted from other singles.

D. CLOSING THE WAITING LIST

Should it become necessary to close the waiting list, the Program Administrator will use the same advertising methods described above.

Notification of impending closure will be provided to the public for a minimum of 30 days.

E. TIME OF SELECTION

When funding is available, families will be selected from the waiting list in their preference-determined sequence, regardless of family size.

If there is ever insufficient funding to subsidize the unit size of the family at the top of the waiting list, the Program Administrator will not admit any other applicant until funding is available for the first applicant.

Families may be skipped over to meet the income targeting requirements mandated in QWHRA.

F. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Once the applicant is transferred from the Preliminary Registration Waiting list to the active waiting list, an application will be mailed to the applicant. The application is due back within ten (10) days from the date it was mailed. If the application is returned undeliverable, the Program Administrator will make one more attempt to contact the applicant via mail. If the second application is returned as undeliverable, the applicant will be cancelled from the waiting list.

Periodically, registrants will call to check their status on the waiting list and learn that they have been cancelled because mail was returned undeliverable. In extenuating circumstances, such as a long-term illness, or other family emergency, the registrant may be reinstated. However, the registrant must be able to provide documentation of the circumstances. Such requests will be reviewed and approved (or denied) on a case by case basis by the supervisor of the Applications & Eligibility Unit.

Once an application is returned, the information provided will be used to determine if the applicant is eligible for a tenant selection preference and will assist the Program Administrator in determining what income forms the applicant must complete.

If an applicant is found ineligible based on the information provided on the documents or a failure to return the documents by the due date, the applicant will be provided written notice of the reason for their disqualification and their right to request an informal appeal hearing.

The application will capture the following information:

- Name of adult members and age of all members
- Sex and relationship of all members
- Street address and phone number
- Mailing address
- Amount(s) and source(s) of income received by household members
- Information regarding disabilities relating to program requirements
- Information related to qualification for preference(s)

- Social Security numbers
- Race/Ethnicity
- Citizenship/eligible immigration status
- Convictions for drug related or violent criminal activity
- Request for specific accommodation(s) needed to fully utilize program and services
- Previous address
- Current and previous landlords' names and addresses
- Emergency contact person and address
- Program integrity questions regarding previous participation in HUD programs

Applicants are required to inform the Program Administrator in writing within 30 days of effective date of any changes in family composition, income, and address, as well as any changes in their Preference status. (See chapter 4 for preferences) Applicants must also comply with requests from the Program Administrator to update information.

G. INTERVIEW SESSIONS/MAILINGS

The Program Administrator will use both mailing and interview sessions to obtain income, asset and family composition information from applicants.

Request for Information via Mail

During times of high activity, the Program Administrator will mail income and asset forms to applicants. Applicants will be given 10 working days to complete and return all required forms. If forms are not returned in a timely manner, the applicant will receive a final notice. The final notice will provide an additional five-day grace period. If the required forms are not returned, as specified, the application will be cancelled. The Program Administrator will provide additional time, with appropriate documentation, as a reasonable accommodation and in special circumstances such as an illness and/or death in the family.

Application Interview process

During times for regular activity (average volume), the Program Administrator utilizes a full application interview to discuss the family's circumstances in greater detail, to clarify information that has been provided by the family, and to ensure that the information is complete.

Applicants are given two opportunities to attend an interview session. If the applicant does not respond to the second invitation, the application is cancelled. The Program Administrator will allow for a third interview appointment as a reasonable accommodation and in special circumstances such as illness. Additionally, an applicant may request that the Applications and

Eligibility assign someone to conduct the interview at the applicant home, as a reasonable accommodation.

All applicants must complete the following requirements:

1. At minimum, the Head of Household must attend the interview. The Program Administrator requests that all adult members of the household attend when possible. This assures that all members receive information regarding their obligations and allows the Program Administrator to obtain signatures on critical documents quicker.

2. All adult members must sign the HUD-9886, General Release of Information form, and all supplemental forms required by the Program Administrator.

3. Citizenship Declaration forms must be completed for all household members, regardless of age.

4. Identification information for all family members such as birth certificates, driver's licenses or California ID cards, whichever is applicable based on the age of the family member, must be submitted for all members of the household regardless of age.

Information provided by the applicant will be verified including citizenship status, full time student status and other factors related to preferences, eligibility and rent calculation. Verifications must not be older than 60 days old at the time of issuance.

If they are requested, exceptions for any of the above listed items will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions will be granted based upon hardship. Reasonable accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities. In these cases, a designee will be allowed to provide some information, but only with permission of the person with a disability.

Under both processes, all local preferences claimed on the application while the family is on the waiting list will be verified. Preference is based on current status so the qualifications for preference must exist at the time the preference is verified regardless of the length of time an applicant has been on the waiting list. (See chapter 4 for preferences)

SECONDARY REVIEWS/CREDIT REPORTS

Before issuing a housing choice voucher, the Program Administrator will request a credit report for 20% of all new families. Of those families all adults, 18 years of age and older, who will reside in the assisted household will have their credit report reviewed by the Program Administrator staff. Applicant's claiming that they have zero income will automatically undergo a credit review and will be included as part of the 20% of households undergoing credit reviews.

The information contained in the credit report will be used to confirm the information provided by the family. Specifically, the credit report will be used to confirm:

- Employment – A credit report will list any employers that the applicant has listed in any recent credit applications. If the credit report reveals employment, for any adult household member, within the last twelve months that was not disclosed, the family will be asked to

provide additional documents to clear up the discrepancy. Failure to disclose current employment may result in cancellation of the family's application.

- Aliases - A credit report can provide information on other names that have been used for the purposes of obtaining credit. Common reasons for use of other names include a recent marriage or a divorce. If an alias has not been disclosed to the Program Administrator, the family will be asked to provide additional evidence of the legal identity of adult family members.

- Current and previous addresses - A credit report can provide a history of where the family has lived. This is particularly important because the Program Administrator provides a residency preference. If the family has provided one address to the Program Administrator and the credit report indicates a different address, the family will be asked to provide additional proof of residency. This may include a history of utility bills, bank statements, school enrollment record for children, credit card statements or other relevant documents. Failure to provide adequate proof will result in the denial of a residency preference.

- Credit card and loan payments – A credit report will usually include a list of the family's financial obligations. Examples of the items that may show up include car loans, mortgage loans, student loans and credit card payments. The Program Administrator will review this information to confirm the income and asset information provided by the family. If the family's current financial obligations (total amount of current monthly payments) exceed the amount of income reported by the family, the Program Administrator will ask the family to disclose how they are currently meeting their financial obligations. Accounts that have been charged off or significantly delinquent are not included in this calculation. Failure to provide adequate proof of income will result in termination of the application.

- Multiple Social Security numbers – A credit report may list multiple Social Security numbers if an adult family member has used different Social Security numbers to obtain credit. If the credit report information does not match the information provided by an adult member of the family, the family member will be required to obtain written confirmation of the Social Security number that was issued to him/her from the Social Security Administration.

A family will not be issued a housing choice voucher until all discrepancies between the information provided by the family and the information contained in the credit report have been cleared.

When discrepancies are found, the family will be contacted by telephone or by mail. In most cases, the family will be allowed a maximum of 10 days to provide the additional documentation. On a case by case basis, as a reasonable accommodation, the family may be granted additional time. If additional time is granted, the family will receive a letter confirming the new deadline. No additional extension will be granted thereafter.

When the credit report reveals multiple discrepancies that are not easily communicated over the telephone, the Program Administrator will set up a face-to-face interview with the applicant. The Program Administrator will schedule up to two interview appointments. An additional interview may be scheduled as a reasonable accommodation. Failure to appear at the interview session will result in cancellation of the application.

Additionally, failure to provide the necessary information will result in cancellation of the application.

H. DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE

If an application is denied due to failure to attend an interview (initial or secondary), or for failure to provide eligibility related information, the applicant will be notified in writing and offered an opportunity to request an informal review. It is the applicant's responsibility to reschedule the interview if s/he misses the appointment. If the applicant does not reschedule or misses two scheduled meetings, the Program Administrator will reject the application and remove the applicant's name from the waiting list.

The Program Administrator may at any time deny program assistance to an applicant because of actions or failure to act by members of the family such as any member of the family to sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.

I. FINAL DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

If the applicant family is determined to be eligible after all applicable paperwork has been reviewed, they will be invited to attend a Briefing Session at which time they will receive information regarding their rights and responsibilities and they will be issued a housing choice voucher.

Chapter 4
ESTABLISHING PREFERENCES AND MAINTAINING THE WAITING LIST

INTRODUCTION

It is the Paramount HA and the Program Administrator's objective to ensure that the families are placed on the waiting list in the proper order so that an offer of assistance is not delayed to any family, or made to any family prematurely.

By maintaining an accurate waiting list, the Program Administrator will be able to perform the activities which ensure that an adequate pool of qualified applicants will be available so that program funds are used in a timely manner.

A. APPLICATION POOL

The waiting list will be maintained in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The application will be a permanent file.

2. Applications equal in preference will be maintained by date and time.

3. All applicants must meet income requirements outlined in Chapter 2, "Eligibility for Admission".

Special Admissions

Applicants who are admitted under Special Admissions, rather than from the waiting list, are identified by codes in the automated system and are not maintained on separate lists.

Applicants who are admitted under targeted funding which are not identified as a Special Admission are identified by codes in the automated system and are not maintained on separate waiting lists.

B. LOCAL PREFERENCES

The Program Administrator will apply a system of local preferences in determining admissions for the program. Local Preferences are weighted highest too lowest, in the following order:

1. Date and Time of registration on the housing choice voucher Preliminary Waiting List.
2. Jurisdictional Preference – Families who live and/or work in the jurisdiction of the Housing Authority will be admitted before families outside of the Program Administrator’s jurisdiction.
3. As required by State law, the Program Administrator will give preference to Veterans.

4. The Program Administrator will admit elderly and/or disabled singles over other singles. "Other Singles" denotes a one-person household in which the individual member is neither elderly, disabled, nor displaced by government action. Such applicants will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with their date and time of applications, but cannot be selected for assistance before any elderly or disabled single regardless of any preferences.

An applicant will not be granted any preference if any member of the family has been evicted from any federally assisted housing during the past five years because of drug-related criminal activity. The Program Administrator may grant an exception to such a family if the responsible member has successfully completed a rehabilitation program.

VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCES

Residency Preference: For families who are residing in, or have at least one adult member who works or has been hired to work, or is a full-time participant in an educational or training program in the jurisdiction of the City of Paramount, and who are not currently nor have been living in subsidized or low income housing during the previous six months.

In order to verify that an applicant is a resident, the Program Administrator will require a minimum of three months residency as shown by the following documents: current rent receipts, leases, utility bills, employer or agency records, school records, drivers licenses or credit reports.

In cases where the family's Head of the Household or spouse works or has been offered a job in the jurisdiction of the City of Paramount, a statement from the employer will be required.

For families whose adult household member is a full-time participant in an educational or training program in the jurisdiction of the City of Paramount, a statement from the program officials will be required.

For families previously living in subsidized or low income housing, a statement from the agency's official verifying the date of termination of participation/residence will be required.

Veteran's Preference

Acceptable documentation regarding veteran's status will include a DD-214 (discharge documents), proof of receipt of veteran's benefits, or documentation from the Veteran's Administration.

C. EXCEPTIONS FOR SPECIAL ADMISSIONS

If HUD awards the Program Administrator program funding that is targeted for specifically named families, the Program Administrator will admit these families under a Special Admission procedure. Special admissions families will be admitted outside of the regular waiting list process. They do not have to qualify for any preferences, nor are they required to be on the program waiting list. They are not counted in the limit on non-federal preference admissions. The Program Administrator maintains separate records of these admissions. The following are examples of types of program funding that may be designated by HUD for families living in a specified unit:

1. A family displaced because of demolition or disposition of a public or Indian housing project;

2. A family residing in a multifamily rental housing project when HUD sells forecloses or demolishes the project;

3. For housing covered by the Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990;

4. A family residing in a project covered by a project-based housing choice voucher HAP contract at or near the end of the contract term; and

5. A non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or HOPE 2 project.

Change in Circumstances

Changes in an applicant's circumstances while on the waiting list may affect the family's entitlement to a preference. Applicants are required to notify the Program Administrator in writing, within 30 days, when their circumstances change, including any change of address.

D. FINAL VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCES

Preference information on applications will be updated as applicants are selected from the waiting list. At that time, the Program Administrator will obtain necessary verifications of preference at the interview and by third party verification.

E. PREFERENCE DENIAL

If the Program Administrator denies a preference, the Program Administrator will notify the applicant in writing of the reasons why the preference was denied and offer the applicant an opportunity for a review. If the preference denial is upheld as a result of the review, the applicant will be placed on the waiting list without benefit of the preference. Applicants may exercise other rights if they believe they have been discriminated against.

If the applicant falsifies documents or makes false statements in order to qualify for any preference, they will be removed from the Waiting List.

F. REMOVAL FROM WAITING LIST AND PURGING

If an applicant fails to respond to a mailing from the Program Administrator within the time frame indicated, they will be removed from the waiting list. An extension may be considered an accommodation if requested in advance by a person with a disability. If a letter is returned by the Post Office without a forwarding address, the applicant will be removed without further notice and the envelope and letter will be maintained in the file. If a letter is returned with a forwarding address, it will be re-mailed to the address indicated.

If an applicant is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, they will not be entitled to reinstatement unless the Program Administrator verifies family/health/work emergency.

The waiting list will be purged by a mailing to all applicants to ensure that the waiting list is current and accurate. The mailing will ask for current information and confirmation of continued interest.

The same guidelines will be used for failure to respond to this mailing. Notices will be made available in accessible format upon the request of a person with a disability.

Chapter 5
SUBSIDY STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

Program regulation requires that the Program Administrator establish subsidy standards that determine the number of bedrooms needed for families of different sizes and compositions. Such standards must provide for a minimum commitment of subsidy while avoiding overcrowding. The standards in determining the Voucher size must be within the minimum unit size requirements of HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

This Chapter lays out the factors used in determining the Voucher size issued to a family initially and when there is a move to a new unit, as well as the Program Administrator's procedures for handling changes in family size, selection of unit size that are different from the voucher size and requests for waivers.

A. DETERMINATION OF VOUCHER SIZE

Subsidy standards and determination of voucher bedroom size are based upon the number of family members who will reside in the assisted dwelling unit. The Program Administrator's subsidy standards for determining voucher size shall be applied in a manner consistent with Fair Housing guidelines and HQS.

All standards in this section relate to the number of bedrooms on the voucher, not the family's actual living arrangements.

The unit size on the Voucher remains the same as long as the family composition remains the same.

In determining the family unit size, the Program Administrator will follow HUD prescribed regulations as outlined below:

1. The subsidy standards must provide for the smallest number of bedrooms needed to house a family without overcrowding.

2. The subsidy standards must be consistent under HQS.

3. The subsidy standards must be applied consistently for all families of like size and composition.

4. A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family in determining the family unit size.

5. A family that consists of a pregnant woman (with no other persons) must be treated as a two-person family.

6. Any live-in attendant (approved by the Program Administrator) must be counted in determining the family unit size;

7. Unless a live-in attendant resides with the family, the unit size for any family consisting of a single person must be either zero or one bedroom, as determined under the Program Administrator's subsidy standards.

In accordance with the requirements listed above, the unit size designated on the voucher should be assigned using the following Program Administrator standards:

1. As of June 13, 2000, at issuance or reissuance, the Head of Household (and spouse, if applicable) will be allowed one bedroom and one bedroom will be assigned to each two additional persons thereafter. Prior to June 13, 2000, subsidy standards were based on two-persons per bedroom.

2. For initial issuance, the bedroom size assigned should not require more than two persons to occupy the same bedroom. The family may choose and live within a suitable unit in any grouping that is acceptable to the family.

3. A zero-bedroom unit may be issued to a single person who intends to live alone.

4. An additional bedroom may be assigned if a family member must use a separate bedroom due to medical reasons, if approved under a waiver by the Program Administrator.

5. The Program Administrator may require the family to use the living room for sleeping purposes for no more than one person provided that the unit meets other HQS. The family may be required to move into a larger size dwelling unit if the Program Administrator determines that the family is overcrowded.

6. If the family decides to move and the family composition has changed, the Program Administrator will issue a voucher based on the family's current composition.

7. Every family member, regardless of age, is to be counted as a person. Under this definition, family members also include the unborn child of a single pregnant woman, attendants who reside in the unit and all children who have been temporarily removed from the home and placed in foster care.

THE PRECEDING PRINCIPLES RESULT IN THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS:

1. *WHEN ASSISTANCE IS ISSUED OR RE-ISSUED*

Number of Bedrooms	**# Of Persons in Household (Single HOH)**	**# Of Persons in Household (HOH & Spouse)**
0- bedroom	1	N/A
1- bedroom	1	2
2- bedroom	3	4
3- bedroom	5	6
4- bedroom	7	8
5- bedroom	9	10
6- bedroom	11	12

2. *CONTINUING ASSISTANCE**

Number of Bedrooms	**# Of Persons in Household (Single HOH)**	**# Of Persons in Husehold (HOH & Spouse)**
0- bedroom	1	N/A
1- bedroom	1	3
2- bedroom	3	5
3- bedroom	5	7
4- bedroom	7	9
5- bedroom	9	11
6- bedroom	11	13

*** Continuing assistance refers to cases where an additional person(s) joins the family and the family will continue to occupy the same rental unit, i.e. no move is involved.**

B. OCCUPANCY STANDARDS WAIVER

The standards discussed above should apply to the vast majority of assisted families. However, in some cases, the health or disability of one or more family members may warrant the assignment of a larger or smaller unit size than the unit size that would result from a strict application of the standards. A departure from the standards is permissible to the extent that it is based on the health or disability of the family member(s).

Example of possible exceptions include but are not limited to:

1. Persons who cannot occupy the same bedroom because of a verified medical or health reason.

2. Elderly persons or persons with disabilities who may require a live-in attendant.

Requests based on health related reasons must be verified, in writing, by a doctor or other medical professional. The request must specify the reason for the request and how providing a larger bedroom would improve or accommodate the medical condition.

A unit supervisor who has not been involved in the initial determination will review the request, any prior determination and make a decision based on the specifics of the individual case (on a case by case basis). After the decision is made, a letter notifying the applicant or participant of the decision regarding the waiver will be sent by the reviewing supervisor.

C. EXCEPTIONS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Exceptions will also be made to accommodate foster children. The Los Angeles County Department of Family and Children (DCFS) services has very specific housing guidelines that must be met by foster families. In order to assure that foster children are able to remain with designated housing choice voucher foster families, the Program Administrator will utilize the

guidelines published by the Los Angeles County DCFS ,or specified in a court order, in situations involving foster children.

D. CHANGES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Under program regulations, the Program Administrator has the right and responsibility to approve whom can and cannot be a part of the assisted household. The family must obtain approval of any additional family member before that person occupies the unit. Exceptions to this rule include additions by birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody. In these cases, the family must inform the Program Administrator of the changes within 30 days. The family should provide written notification to the owner or management of the property.

The family may request a larger voucher size than indicated by the Program Administrator's subsidy standards. This request must be made in writing within 15 days of the Program Administrator's determination of bedroom size. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger bedroom size.

The Program Administrator will not increase the family's voucher size due to additions unless the addition creates an over-crowding situation for the family.

All new household members who are 18 years of age and older will go through a credit and criminal background check before receiving approval to join the assisted household. Criminal records will only be used to screen new household members. They will not be used for lease enforcement or eviction of residents already receiving tenant-based rental assistance.

E. UNIT SIZE SELECTED

The family may select a different size dwelling than that listed on the voucher. There are three criteria to consider in this situation:

1. The Program Administrator uses the Payment Standard for the voucher size or the unit size selected by the family, whichever is less.

2. Utility Allowance: The utility allowance used to calculate the gross rent is based on the actual size of the unit the family selects, regardless of the size authorized on the Family's voucher.

3. Housing Quality Standards: The standards allow two persons per living/sleeping room and permit maximum occupancy levels (assuming a living room is used as a living/sleeping area).

F. FLEXIBILITY OF UNIT SIZE ACTUALLY SELECTED

In accordance with regulations, a family may rent a larger dwelling unit than designated, provided that the rent for the unit is comparable and the family's total rent contribution (rent to the owner plus any applicable utility costs) does not exceed 40% of the family's adjusted monthly income (applies only if the gross rent for the unit exceeds the payment standard). Regardless of the number of bedrooms stated on the voucher, the Program Administrator shall

not prohibit a family from renting an otherwise acceptable unit because it is too large for the family.

The family may also rent smaller units, if the unit must meet other HQS and the unit is appropriate for the family size. The Program Administrator recognized that it is particularly hard for larger families to located appropriate housing given local market conditions. Therefore, the Program Administrator will allow families to request a waiver to move into a smaller unit as long as the unit complies with all HQS requirements, including space requirements.

Chapter 6
DETERMINING THE TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT

INTRODUCTION

The accurate calculation of Annual Income and Adjusted Income will ensure that families are not paying more or less money for rent than their obligation under the regulations. This Chapter defines the allowable deductions from Annual Income and how the presence or absence of household members may affect the Total Tenant Payment (TTP). The policies outlined in this Chapter address those areas, which allow the Program Administrator discretion to define terms and to develop standards in order to assure consistent application of the various factors that relate to the determination of TTP.

The policies herein contained effect how the TTP is calculated at admission and during the annual recertification process.

A. INCOME AND ALLOWANCES

Income: The Program Administrator will include income from all sources, unless otherwise specifically exempted through program regulations, for the purposes of calculating the TTP. In accordance with this definition, income from all sources of each member of the household is counted.

Annual Income is defined as the gross amount of income anticipated to be received by the family during the 12 months after certification or recertification. Gross income is the amount of income prior to any HUD allowable expenses or deductions, and does not include income which has been excluded by HUD. Annual income is used to determine whether or not applicants are within the applicable income limits.

Adjusted Income is defined as the annual income minus any HUD allowable deductions. The following deductions will be applied in the TTP calculation:

1. Dependent allowance: $480 each for family members (other than the head or spouse), who are minors, and for family members who are 18 and older who are full-time students or who are disabled. This allowance does not apply to foster children.

2. "Elderly" allowance: $400 for families whose head or spouse is 62 or over or disabled.

3. Allowable medical expenses for all family members are deducted for "elderly" families.

4. Childcare expenses for children under 13 are deducted when childcare is necessary to allow an adult member to work or attend school.

5. Expenses for attendant care or auxiliary apparatus for persons with disabilities if needed to enable the individual or an adult family member to work.

"Minimum Rent" and Minimum Family Contribution.

Minimum family contribution in the Voucher program is $25.

The Program Administrator will waive the minimum rent requirement in cases where the family documents that they do not currently have any source of income such as in the case of some homeless families. In such cases, the family will be re-evaluated in six months. All families are required to report changes in income within 30 days.

B. DEFINITION OF TEMPORARILY/PERMANENTLY ABSENT

The Program Administrator must compute all applicable income of every family member who is on the lease, including those who are temporarily absent. In addition, the Program Administrator must count the income of the spouse or the head of the household if that person is temporarily absent, even if that person is not on the lease.

Income of persons permanently absent will not be counted. If the spouse is temporarily absent and in the military, all military pay and allowances (except hazardous duty pay when exposed to hostile fire and any other exceptions to military pay HUD may define) is counted as income.

It is the responsibility of the household to report changes in family composition. The Program Administrator will evaluate absences from the unit using this policy.

Absence of Entire Family

These policy guidelines address situations when the family is absent from the unit, but has not moved out of the unit. In cases where the family has moved out of the unit, the Program Administrator will terminate assistance in accordance with appropriate termination procedures contained in this Plan.

Families are required both to notify the Program Administrator before they move out of a unit and to give the Program Administrator information about any family absence from the unit.

Families must notify the Program Administrator if they are going to be absent from the unit for more than 30 consecutive days.

If the family fails to notify the Program Administrator of an absence of longer than 30 consecutive days, or if the entire family is absent from the unit for more than 60 consecutive days, the unit will be considered to be vacated and the assistance will be terminated. The Program Administrator at all times shall reserve the right to exercise its

judgement regarding extensions on family absence from the unit on a case-by-case basis. However, HUD regulations require the Program Administrator to terminate assistance if the entire family is absent from the unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days.

"Absence" means that no family member is residing in the unit, and the unit has not been vacated. In order to determine if the family is absent from the unit, the Program Administrator may:

- Write letters to the family at the unit
- Telephone the family at the unit
- Interview the owner
- Interview neighbors
- Verify if utilities are in service
- Conduct an interim HQS Inspection

If the absence which resulted in termination of assistance was due to a person's disability, and the Program Administrator can verify that the person was unable to notify the Program Administrator in accordance with the family's responsibilities, and if funding is available, the Program Administrator may reinstate the family as an accommodation if requested by the family.

Absence of Any Member

Any member of the household will be considered permanently absent if s/he is away from the unit for 180 consecutive days except as otherwise provided in this Chapter.

Absence due to Medical Reasons

If any family member leaves the household to enter a facility such as a hospital, nursing home, or rehabilitation center, the Program Administrator will seek advice from a reliable qualified source as to the likelihood and timing of their return. If the verification indicates that the family member will be permanently confined to a nursing home, the family member will be considered permanently absent. If the verification indicates that the family member will return in less than 180 consecutive days, the family member will not be considered permanently absent.

If the person who is determined to be permanently absent is the sole member of the household, assistance will be terminated in accordance with the Program Administrator's "Absence of Entire Family" policy.

Absence due to Incarceration

If the sole member of the household is incarcerated for more than 30 consecutive days, s/he will be considered permanently absent and the Program Administrator will initiate proposed termination procedures to terminate assistance.

Any member of the household, other than the sole member, will be considered permanently absent if s/he is incarcerated for 60 consecutive days. Once a family member is removed from the family composition, the family must seek the approval of the Housing Authority prior to allowing the family member to re-join the assisted household. Failure to adhere to this policy can result in termination of assistance.

The Program Administrator will determine if the reason for any family member's incarceration is for drug-related or violent criminal activity and, if appropriate, will pursue termination of assistance for the family if deemed appropriate.

Foster Care and Absences of Children

If the family includes a child or children temporarily absent from the home due to placement in foster care, the Program Administrator will request information from the appropriate agency to determine when the child/children will be returned to the home.

If the time period is to be greater than 180 days from the date of removal of the child/ren, the Voucher size may be temporarily reduced. If children are removed from the home permanently, the voucher size will permanently reduced in accordance with the Program Administrator's subsidy standards.

Absence of Adult

If neither parent remains in the household and the appropriate agency has determined that another adult is to be brought into the assisted unit to care for the children for an indefinite period, the Program Administrator will treat that adult as a visitor for up to the first 180 days.

If during or by the end of that period, court-awarded custody or legal guardianship has been awarded to the caretaker, the Voucher will then be transferred to the caretaker.

If custody or legal guardianship has not been awarded by the court, but the action is in process, the Program Administrator will secure verification from social services staff or the attorney as to the status.

If the appropriate agency cannot confirm the guardianship status of the caretaker, the Program Administrator will review the status at 120 day intervals.

The caretaker will be allowed to remain in the unit, as a visitor, until a determination of custody is made or up to 12 months total.

The Program Administrator will transfer the Voucher to the caretaker, in the absence of a court order, if the caretaker has been in the unit for more than 12 months and it is reasonable to expect that custody will be granted.

When the Program Administrator approves a person to reside in the unit as caretaker for the children, this person's income will be counted in the TTP for the family pending a final disposition. The Program Administrator will work with the appropriate service agencies and the owner to provide a smooth transition in these cases.

If a member of the household is subject to a court order that restricts him/her from the home for more than 180 days, the person will be considered permanently absent.

If an adult family member leaves the household for any reason, the family must report the change in family composition to the Program Administrator within 30 days.

The family will be required to notify the Program Administrator in writing within 30 days when a family member leaves the household for any reason or moves out. The notice must contain a certification by the family as to whether the member is temporarily or permanently absent. The family member will be determined permanently absent if verification is provided.

If an adult child goes into the military and leaves the household, they will be considered permanently absent.

Time extensions may be granted as an accommodation upon request by a person with a disability.

Students

Full time students who attend school away from the home and live with the family during school recess will be considered temporarily absent from the household. Such members will continued to be counted for the purpose of determining the family's appropriate voucher size.

Visitors

Any person not included on the HUD-50058 who has been in the unit more than 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 days in a 12-month period, will be considered to be living in the unit as an unauthorized household member.

Absence of evidence of any other address will be considered verification that the visitor is a family member.

Statements from neighbors and/or the owner will be considered in making the determination.

Use of the unit address as the visitor's current residence for any purpose that is not explicitly temporary shall be construed as permanent residence.

The burden of proof that the individual is a visitor rests on the family. In the absence of such proof, the individual will be considered an unauthorized member of the family and the Program Administrator will terminate assistance since prior approval was not requested for the addition.

In a joint custody arrangement, if the minor is in the household less than 180 calendar days per year, the minor will be considered to be an eligible visitor and not a family member.

Reporting Additions to Owner and HA

Reporting changes in household composition is both a HUD and the Program Administrator requirement.

The family obligations require the family to receive advance the Program Administrator approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit. The Program Administrator shall notify the family of its determination (approve or deny addition) in writing. No persons should move in to the unit until approval from the Program Administrator has been received. If the family does not obtain prior written approval from the Program Administrator, any person the family has permitted to move in will be considered an unauthorized household member.

Families are required to report any additions to the household resulting from the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child in writing to the Program Administrator within 30 days of the move-in date.

An interim reexamination will be conducted for any additions to the household.

In addition, the lease may require the family to obtain prior written approval from the owner when there are changes in family composition.

The Program Administrator will conduct a credit and criminal background check on all new potential family members, 18 years of age and older, as part of the approval process.

Reporting Absences to The Program Administrator

Reporting changes in household composition is both a HUD and the HA requirement.

If a family member leaves the household, the family must report this change to the Program Administrator, in writing, within 30 days of the change and certify as to whether the member is temporarily absent or permanently absent. When available to do so, an adult family member who is leaving the household should remove him/herself in writing from the lease and housing choice voucher family composition.

The Program Administrator will conduct an interim evaluation for changes, which affect the TTP in accordance with the interim policy.

C. AVERAGING INCOME

When Annual Income cannot be anticipated for a full twelve months, the Program Administrator may annualize current income and conduct an interim reexamination if income changes.

If there are bonuses or overtime which the employer cannot anticipate for the next twelve months, bonuses and overtime received the previous year may be used.

Income from the previous year may be analyzed to determine the amount to anticipate when third-party or check-stub verification is not available.

If by averaging, an estimate can be made for those families whose income fluctuates from month to month, this estimate will be used so that the housing payment will not change from month to month.

The method used depends on the regularity, source and type of income.

D. MINIMUM INCOME

There is no minimum income requirement. Families who report zero income may be required to attend an interim reexamination periodically, up to once a quarter, at the Program Administrator's discretion.

E. INCOME OF PERSON PERMANENTLY CONFINED TO NURSING HOME

Persons who are permanently confined to a nursing home will be considered to be out of the home and removed from the family composition. If the person is the sole member of the household, assistance will be terminated.

F. REGULAR CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS

Regular contributions and gifts received from persons outside the household are counted as income for calculation of the TTP.

Any contribution or gift received every 3 months or more frequently will be considered a "regular" contribution or gift. This includes payments made on behalf of the family such as payments for a car, credit card bills, rent and/or utility bills and other cash or non-cash contributions provided on a regular basis. It does not include casual contributions or sporadic gifts.

If the family's expenses exceed its known income, the Program Administrator will question the family about contributions and gifts. If the family indicated that it is able to meet the extra expenses due to gifts or contributions from persons outside the household, the amount provided will be included in the family's TTP.

G. ALIMONY AND CHILD SUPPORT

Regular alimony and child support payments are counted as income for TTP calculation.

If the amount of child support or alimony received is less than the amount awarded by the court, the Program Administrator must use the amount awarded by the court unless the family can verify that they are not receiving the full amount. Acceptable verification in such cases may include:

Verification from the agency responsible for enforcement or collection.

Documentation of child support or alimony collection action filed through a child support enforcement/collection agency, or has filed an enforcement or collection action through an attorney.

It is the family's responsibility to supply a certified copy of the divorce decree.

H. LUMP-SUM RECEIPTS

Lump-sum additions to Family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including lump-sum payments under health and accident insurance and worker's compensation), capital gains, and settlement for personal or property losses, are not included as income but may be included in assets.

Lump-sum payments caused by delays in processing periodic payments (unemployment or welfare assistance) are counted as income. Lump sum payments from Social Security or SSI are excluded from income, but any amount remaining will be considered an asset. Deferred periodic payments which have accumulated due to a dispute will be treated the same as periodic payments which are deferred due to delays in processing.

Attorney Fees

The family's attorney fees may be deducted from lump-sum payments when computing annual income if the attorney's efforts have recovered a lump-sum compensation, and the recovery paid to the family does not include an additional amount in full satisfaction of the attorney fees.

I. CONTRIBUTIONS TO RETIREMENT FUNDS - ASSETS

Contributions to company retirement/pension funds are handled as follows:

1. While an individual is employed, include as assets only amounts the family can withdraw without retiring or terminating employment.

2. After retirement or termination of employment, include any amount the individual elects to receive as a lump sum.

J. ASSETS DISPOSED OF FOR LESS THAN FAIR MARKET VALUE

The Program Administrator must count assets disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years preceding certification or reexamination. The Program Administrator will count the difference between the market value and the actual payment received in calculating total assets.

Assets disposed of as a result of foreclosure or bankruptcy, divorce or separations are not considered to be assets disposed of for less than fair market value.

The Program Administrator's minimum threshold for counting assets disposed of for less than Fair Market value is $5,000. If the total value of assets disposed of within a one-year period is less than $5,000, they will not be considered an asset.

K. CHILD CARE EXPENSES

Child care expenses for children under 13 years of age may be deducted from annual income if they enable an adult to work or attend school full time.

In the case of a child attending school, only care during non-school hours can be counted as child care expenses.

Child care expenses cannot be allowed as a deduction if there is an adult household member capable of caring for the child who can provide the child care. Examples of those adult members who would be considered *unable* to care for the child include:

The abuser in a documented child abuse situation, or

A person with disabilities or older person unable to take care of a small child, as verified by a reliable knowledgeable source.

Families will be given a child care allowance based on the following guidelines:

Child care to work: The maximum child care expense allowed must be less than the amount earned by the person enabled to work. The "person enabled to work" will be the adult member of the household who earns the least amount of income from working.

Child care for school: The number of hours claimed for child care may not exceed the number of hours the family member is attending school (including one hour travel time to and from school).

Amount of Expense: The Program Administrator will determine local average costs as a guideline. If the hourly rate materially exceeds the guideline, the Program Administrator may calculate the allowance using the guideline.

L. MEDICAL EXPENSES

When it is unclear in the HUD rules as to whether or not to allow an item as a medical expense, IRS Publication 502 will be used as a guide.

The Program Administrator will allow as medical expense the actual out-of-pocket amounts which are owed and anticipated to be paid by the family during the reexamination period. Expenses from the previous year may be analyzed to determine the amount to anticipate when other verification is not available.

Nonprescription medicines will be counted toward medical expenses for families who qualify if the family furnishes legible receipts.

Acupressure, acupuncture and related herbal medicines, and chiropractic services will be considered allowable medical expenses.

M. PRORATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED" FAMILIES

Applicability

Proration of assistance must be offered to any "mixed" applicant or participant family. A "mixed" family is one that includes at least one U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible members.

"Mixed" families that were participants on June 19, 1995, and that do not qualify for continued assistance must be offered prorated assistance. Applicant mixed families are entitled to prorated assistance. Families that become mixed after June 19, 1995 by addition of an ineligible member are entitled to prorated assistance.

Prorated Assistance Calculation

Prorated assistance is calculated by determining the amount of assistance payable if all family members were eligible and multiplying by the percent of the family members who actually are eligible. TTP is the gross rent minus the prorated assistance.

N. REDUCTION IN BENEFITS

If the family's benefits, such as Social Security, Social Supplemental Insurance or CalWORKs grant, are reduced through no fault of the family, the Program Administrator will use the net amount of the benefit.

If the family's benefits were reduced due to family error, omission, or misrepresentations, the Program Administrator will use the gross amount of the benefit.

O. UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS

The Utility Allowance is intended to help defray the cost of utilities not included in the rent and is subtracted from TTP to establish the family's rent to the owner. The allowances are based on rates and average consumption studies, not on a family's actual consumption. The Program Administrator will review the Utility Allowance Schedule on an annual basis and revise it if needed (10% increase or decrease).

The approved utility allowance schedule is given to families along with Voucher. The utility allowance is based on the actual unit size selected.

Where families provide their own range and refrigerator, the Program Administrator will establish an allowance adequate for the family to purchase or rent a range or refrigerator, even if the family already owns either appliance. Allowances for ranges and refrigerators will be based on the lesser of the cost of leasing or purchasing the appropriate appliance over a 12-month period.

If the Utility Allowance exceeds the family's TTP, the Program Administrator will provide a Utility Reimbursement Payment for the family each month. The check will be made out directly to the family’s Head of Household on record.

Chapter 7
VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

HUD regulations require that the factors of eligibility be verified by the HA. Applicants and program participants must furnish proof of their statements whenever required by the Program Administrator, and the information they provide must be true and complete. The Program Administrator's verification requirements are designed to maintain program integrity. This Chapter explains the Program Administrator's procedures and standards for verification of preferences, income, assets, allowable deductions, family status, and when there are changes in family members. The Program Administrator will ensure that proper authorization from the family is always obtained before making verification inquiries.

A. METHODS OF VERIFICATION AND TIME ALLOWED

The Program Administrator will verify information through the five methods of verification acceptable to HUD in the following order:

1. Third-Party Written
2. Third-Party Oral
3. Review of Documents
3. Certification/Self-Declaration
4. Credit Reports

The Program Administrator will allow two weeks for return of third-party verifications and two weeks to obtain other types of verifications before going to the next method.

For applicants, verifications may not be more than 60 days old at the time of Voucher issuance. For participants, income forms are valid for 120 days from date of receipt.

Third-Party Written Verification

Third-party verification is used to verify information directly with the source. Third-party written verification forms will be sent and returned via first class mail. The family will be required to sign an authorization for the information source to release the specified information.

Verifications received electronically directly from the source are considered third party written verifications.

The Program Administrator will not accept verifications delivered by the family except computerized printouts from the following agencies:

* Social Security Administration
* Veterans Administration
* Welfare Assistance

* Unemployment Compensation Board
* City or County Courts
* Child Support Enforcement Agencies

Third-Party Oral Verification

Oral third-party verification will be used when written third-party verification is delayed or not possible. When third-party oral verification is used, staff will be required to document both the paper and computer file, noting with whom they spoke, the date of the conversation, and the facts provided. If oral third party verification is not available, the Program Administrator will compare the information to any documents provided by the Family. If provided by telephone, the Program Administrator must originate the call.

Review of Documents

In the event that third-party written or oral verification is unavailable, or the information has not been verified by the third party within two weeks, the Program Administrator will annotate the file accordingly and utilize documents provided by the family as the primary source if the documents provide complete information.

All such documents, excluding government checks, will be photocopied and retained in the applicant file. In cases where documents are viewed which cannot be photocopied, staff viewing the document(s) will complete a Certification of Document Viewed or Person Contacted form.

The Program Administrator will accept the following documents from the family provided that the document is such that tampering would be easily noted:

* Printed wage stubs
* Computer print-outs from the employer
* Signed letters (provided that the information is confirmed by phone)
* Other documents noted in this Chapter as acceptable verification

The Program Administrator will accept faxed documents.

The Program Administrator will not accept photo copies.

If third-party verification is received after documents have been accepted as provisional verification, and there is a discrepancy, the Program Administrator will utilize the third party verification.

Self-Certification/Self-Declaration

When verification cannot be made by third-party verification or review of documents, families will be required to submit a self-certification.

Self-certification means a notarized statement/affidavit/certification/statement under penalty of perjury and must be witnessed.

B. RELEASE OF INFORMATION

The family will be required to sign specific authorization forms when information is needed that is not covered by the form HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information.

Each member requested to consent to the release of information will be provided with a copy of the appropriate forms for their review and signature.

Family refusal to cooperate with the HUD prescribed verification system will result in denial of admission or termination of assistance because it is a family obligation to supply any information requested by the Program Administrator or HUD.

C. COMPUTER MATCHING

Where allowed by HUD and/or other State or local agencies, computer matching will be done.

D. ITEMS TO BE VERIFIED

All income not specifically excluded by the regulations.

Zero-income status of household.

Full-time student status including High School students who are age 18 or over.

Current assets including assets disposed of for less than fair market value in preceding two years.

Child care expense where it allows an adult family member to be employed or to further his/her education.

Total medical expenses of all family member in households whose head or spouse is elderly or disabled.

Disability assistance expenses to include only those costs associated with attendant care or auxiliary apparatus which allow an adult family member to be employed.

Identity

U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status.

Social Security Numbers for all family members 6 years of age or older.

Preference status, based upon Local preferences.

Displacement status of single applicants who are involuntarily displaced through no fault of their own.

Familial/Marital status when needed for head or spouse definition.

Disability for determination of preferences, allowances or deductions.

E. VERIFICATION OF INCOME

This section defines the methods the Program Administrator will use to verify various types of income.

Employment Income

Verification forms request the employer to specify the:

Dates of employment

Amount and frequency of pay

Date of the last pay increase

Likelihood of change of employment status and effective date of any known salary increase during the next 12 months

Year-to-date earnings

Estimated income from overtime, tips, bonus pay expected during next 12 months

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Employment verification form completed by the employer.

2. Check stubs or earning statements which indicate the employee's gross pay, frequency of pay or year-to-date earnings.

3. W-2 forms plus income tax return forms.

4. Income tax returns signed by the family may be used for verifying self-employment income, or income from tips and other gratuities.

In cases where there are questions about the validity of information provided by the family, the Program Administrator will require the most recent federal income tax statements.

Social Security, Pensions, Supplementary Security Income (SSI), Disability Income

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Benefit verification form completed by agency providing the benefits.

2. Award or benefit notification letters prepared and signed by the providing agency.

3. Computer report electronically obtained or in hard copy.

4. Bank statements for direct deposits.

Unemployment Compensation

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Verification form completed by the unemployment compensation agency.

2. Computer printouts from unemployment office stating payment dates and amounts.

3. Payment stubs.

Welfare Payments or General Assistance

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. The Program Administrator verification form completed by payment provider.

2. Written statement from payment provider indicating the amount of grant/payment, start date of payments, and anticipated changes in payment in the next 12 months.

3. Computer-generated Notice of Action.

Alimony or Child Support Payments

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

1. Copy of a separation or settlement agreement or a divorce decree stating amount and type of support and payment schedules.

2. Computerized official printout of payments made if through a state agency.

3. A notarized letter from the person paying the support.

4. Copy of latest check and/or payment stubs from Court Trustee. The Program Administrator must record the date, amount, and number of the check.

5. Family's self-certification of amount received and of the likelihood of support payments being received in the future, or that support payments are not being received.

6. If payments are irregular, the family must provide:

A copy of the separation or settlement agreement, or a divorce decree stating the amount and type of support and payment schedules.

A statement from the agency responsible for enforcing payments to show that the family has filed for enforcement.

A welfare notice of action showing amounts received by the welfare agency for child support.

A written statement from an attorney certifying that a collection or enforcement action has been filed.

Net Income from a Business

In order to verify the net income from a business, the Program Administrator will view IRS and financial documents from prior years and use this information to anticipate the income and expenses for the next 12 months.

Acceptable methods of verification include:

1. IRS Form 1040, including:
   Schedule C (Small Business)
   Schedule E (Rental Property Income)
   Schedule F (Farm Income)

2. 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.

3. Audited or unaudited financial statement(s) of the business.

4. Third party verification forms for each customer/contract indicating the amounts of income received in a specified time period.

Expenses for rent and utilities will not be allowed for operations or businesses based in the subsidized unit, as these expenses are a required family contribution in the housing choice voucher program and are calculated based upon the family's income.

Child Care Business

If an applicant/participant is operating a licensed day care business, income and expenses will be verified as with any other business.

If the applicant/participant is operating a cash and carry operation (which may or may not be licensed), the Program Administrator will require that the applicant/participant complete a form for each customer which indicates: name of person(s) whose child (children) is/are being cared for, phone number, number of hours child is being cared for, method of payment (check/cash), amount paid, and signature of person.

If child care services were terminated, a third-party verification will be sent to the parent whose child was cared for.

Recurring Gifts

The family must furnish a self-certification containing the following information:

- The person who provides the gifts
- The value of the gifts
- The regularity (dates) of the gifts
- The purpose of the gifts

Zero Income Status

Families claiming to have no income will automatically undergo a credit review. The information contained in the credit report will be used to confirm the information provided by the family. The Program Administrator will also utilize records provided by the Department of Public Social Services.

The Program Administrator may check records of other departments in the jurisdiction that have information about income sources of customers.

Full-Time Student Status

Only the first $480 of the earned income of full time students 18 years or older (including those who are temporarily absent), other than head or spouse, will be counted towards family income.

Financial aid, scholarships and grants received by full time students are not counted towards family income.

Verification of full time student status includes:

1. Written verification from the registrar's office or other school official.

2. School records indicating enrollment for sufficient number of credits to be considered a full-time student by the educational institution.

F. INCOME FROM ASSETS

Acceptable methods of verification include, in this order:

Savings Account Interest Income and Dividends

Will be verified by:

1. Account statements, passbooks, certificates of deposit, or the Program Administrator verification forms completed by the financial institution.

2. Broker's statements showing value of stocks or bonds and the earnings credited the family. Earnings can be obtained from current newspaper quotations or oral broker's verification.

3. IRS Form 1099 from the financial institution, provided that the Program Administrator must adjust the information to project earnings expected for the next 12 months.

Interest Income from Mortgages or Similar Arrangements

1. A letter from an accountant, attorney, real estate broker, the buyer, or a financial institution stating interest due for next 12 months. (A copy of the check paid by the buyer to the family is not sufficient unless a breakdown of interest and principal is shown.)

2. Amortization schedule showing interest for the 12 months following the effective date of the certification or recertification.

Net Rental Income from Property Owned by Family

1. IRS Form 1040 with Schedule E (Rental Income).

2. Copies of latest rent receipts, leases, or other documentation of rent amounts.

3. Documentation of allowable operating expenses of the property: tax statements, insurance invoices, bills for reasonable maintenance and utilities, and bank statements or amortization schedules showing monthly interest expense.

G. VERIFICATION OF ASSETS

Family Assets

The Program Administrator will require the necessary information to determine the current cash value, (the net amount the family would receive if the asset were converted to cash).

1. Verification forms, letters, or documents from a financial institution or broker.

2. Passbooks, checking account statements, certificates of deposit, bonds, or financial statements completed by a financial institution or broker.

3. Quotes from a stock broker or realty agent as to net amount family would receive if they liquidated securities or real estate.

4. Real estate tax statements if the approximate current market value can be deduced from assessment.

5. Financial statements for business assets.

6. Copies of closing documents showing the selling price and the distribution of the sales proceeds.

7. Appraisals of personal property held as an investment.

Assets Disposed of for Less than Fair Market Value (FMV) during two years preceding effective date of certification or recertification:

1. For all Certifications and Recertifications, the Program Administrator will obtain the Family's certification as to whether any member has disposed of assets for less than fair market value during the two years preceding the effective date of the certification or recertification.

2. If the family certifies that they have disposed of assets for less than fair market value, verification [or certification] is required that shows: (a) all assets disposed of for less than FMV, (b) the date they were disposed of, (c) the amount the family received, and (d) the market value of the assets at the time of disposition. Third party verification will be obtained wherever possible.

H. VERIFICATION OF ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME

Child Care Expenses

1. Written verification from the person who receives the payments is required. If the child care provider is an individual, s/he must provide a statement of the amount they are charging the family for their services and whether any of the amounts owed have been or will be paid by sources outside the family.

2. Verifications must specify the child care provider's name, address, telephone number, the names of the children cared for, the number of hours the child care occurs, the rate of pay, and the typical yearly amount paid, including school and vacation periods.

3. Family's certification as to whether any of those payments have been or will be paid or reimbursed by outside sources.

Medical Expenses

Families who claim medical expenses or expenses to assist a person(s) with disability will be required to submit a certification as to whether or not any expense payments have been, or will be, reimbursed by an outside source. All expense claims will be verified by one or more of the methods listed below:

1. Written verification by a doctor, hospital or clinic personnel, dentist, pharmacist, of (a) the anticipated medical costs to be incurred by the family and regular payments due on medical bills; and (b) extent to which those expenses will be reimbursed by insurance or a government agency.

2. Written confirmation by the insurance company or employer of health insurance premiums to be paid by the family.

3. Written confirmation from the Social Security Administration's written of Medicare premiums to be paid by the family over the next 12 months. A computer printout will be accepted.

4. For attendant care:

   a. A reliable, knowledgeable professional's certification that the assistance of an attendant is necessary as a medical expense and a projection of the number of hours the care is needed for calculation purposes.

   b. Attendant's written confirmation of hours of care provided and amount and frequency of payments received from the family or agency (or copies of canceled checks the family used to make those payments) or stubs from the agency providing the services.

5. Receipts, canceled checks, or pay stubs that verify medical costs and insurance expenses likely to be incurred in the next 12 months.

6. Copies of payment agreements or most recent invoice that verify payments made on outstanding medical bills that will continue over all or part of the next 12 months.

7. Receipts or other record of medical expenses incurred during the past 12 months that can be used to anticipate future medical expenses. The Program Administrator may use this approach for general medical expenses such as non-prescription drugs and regular visits to doctors or dentists, but not for one-time, nonrecurring expenses from the previous year.

8. The Program Administrator will use mileage at the IRS rate, or cab, bus fare, or other public transportation cost for verification of the cost of transportation directly related to medical treatment.

Assistance to Persons with Disabilities

1. In All Cases:

   (a) Written certification from a reliable, knowledgeable professional that the person with disabilities requires the services of an attendant and/or the use of auxiliary apparatus to permit him/her to be employed or to function sufficiently independently to enable another family member to be employed.

   (b) Family's certification as to whether they receive reimbursement for any of the expenses of disability assistance and the amount of any reimbursement received.

2. Attendant Care:

(a) Attendant's written certification of amount received from the family, frequency of receipt, and hours of care provided.

(b) Certification of family and attendant and/or copies of canceled checks family used to make payments.

3. Auxiliary Apparatus:

(a) Receipts for purchases or proof of monthly payments and maintenance expenses for auxiliary apparatus.

(b) In the case where the person with disabilities is employed, a statement from the employer that the auxiliary apparatus is necessary for employment.

I. VERIFYING NON-FINANCIAL FACTORS

Verification of Legal Identity

In order to prevent program abuse, the Program Administrator will require applicants to furnish verification of legal identity for all family members.

The documents listed below will be considered acceptable verification of legal identity for adults. If a document submitted by a family is invalid or otherwise questionable, more than one of these documents may be required.

Certificate of Birth, naturalization papers
Church issued baptismal certificate
Current, valid Driver's license
U.S. military discharge (DD 214)
U.S. passport
Company/agency Identification Card
Department of Motor Vehicles Identification Card
Hospital records

Documents considered acceptable for the verification of legal identity for minors may be one or more of the following:

Certificate of Birth
Adoption papers
Custody agreement
Health and Human Services ID

Verification of Marital Status

Verification of divorce status will be a certified copy of the divorce decree, signed by a Court Officer.

Verification of a separation may be a copy of court-ordered maintenance or other records.

Verification of marriage status is a marriage certificate.

Familial Relationships

The following verifications may be required if applicable:

- Verification of relationship:
  * Official identification showing names
  * Birth Certificates
  * Baptismal certificates

- Verification of guardianship:
  * Court-ordered assignment
- Verification from social services agency
- School records
  * Affidavit of parent

- Evidence of a stable family relationship:
  * Joint bank accounts or other shared financial transactions
  * Leases or other evidence of prior cohabitation
  * Credit reports showing relationship

Verification of Permanent Absence of Adult Member

If an adult member who was formerly a member of the household is reported permanently absent by the family, the Program Administrator may require one or more of the following as verification:

1. Husband or wife institutes divorce action.

2. Husband or wife institutes legal separation.

3. Order of protection/restraining order obtained by one family member against another.

4. Proof of another home address, such as utility bills, canceled checks for rent, drivers license, or lease or rental agreement, if available.

5. Statements from other agencies such as social services or a written statement from the owner or manager that the adult family member is no longer living at that location.

6. If the adult family member is incarcerated, a document from the Court or prison should be obtained stating how long they will be incarcerated.

7. A notarized statement by the adult member of the household removing him/herself from the lease and housing choice voucher household and providing a forwarding address and effective date of the move.

Verification of Change in Family Composition

The Program Administrator may verify changes in family composition (either reported or unreported) through letters, telephone calls, utility records, inspections, owners, neighbors, credit data, school or DMV records, and other sources.

Verification of Disability

Verification of disability must be receipt of SSI or SSA disability payments under Section 223 of the Social Security Act or 102(7) of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 6001(7) or verified by appropriate diagnostician such as physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist, rehabilitation specialist, or licensed social worker, using the HUD language as the verification format.

Verification of Citizenship/Eligible Immigrant Status

To be eligible for assistance, individuals must be U.S. citizens or eligible immigrants. Individuals who are neither may elect not to contend their status. Eligible immigrants must fall into one of the categories specified by the regulations and must have their status verified by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Each family member must declare their status once. Assistance cannot be delayed, denied, or terminated while verification of status is pending except that assistance to applicants may be delayed while the Program Administrator hearing is pending.

(a) Citizens or Nationals of the United States are required to sign a declaration under penalty of perjury.

(b) Eligible Immigrants who were Participants and 62 or over on June 19, 1995, are required to sign a declaration of eligible immigration status and provide proof of age.

(c) Noncitizens with eligible immigration status must sign a declaration of status and verification consent form and provide their original immigration documents which are copied front and back and returned to the family. The Program Administrator verifies the status through the INS SAVE system. If this primary verification fails to verify status, the Program Administrator must request within ten days that the INS conduct a manual search.

(d) Ineligible family members who do not claim to be citizens or eligible immigrants must be listed on a statement of ineligible family members signed by the head of household or spouse.

(e) Noncitizen students on student visas are ineligible members even though they are in the country lawfully. They must provide their student visa but their status will not be verified and they do not sign a declaration but are listed on the statement of ineligible members.

Failure to Provide. If an applicant or participant family member fails to sign required declarations and consent forms or provide documents, as required, they must be listed as an ineligible member. If the entire family fails to provide and sign as required, the family may be denied or terminated for failure to provide required information.

Time of Verification. For applicants, verification of U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status occurs at the same time as verification of other factors of eligibility for final eligibility determination. For participants, it is done at the first regular recertification after June 19, 1995. For family members added after other members have been verified, the verification occurs at the first recertification after the new member moves in. Once verification has been completed for any covered program, it need not be repeated except that, in the case of port-in families, if the initial HA does not supply the documents, the Program Administrator must conduct the determination.

Extensions of Time to Provide Documents. Extensions must be given for persons who declare their eligible immigration status but need time to obtain the required documents. The length of the extension shall be based on individual circumstances. The Program Administrator will generally allow up to 30 days to provide the document or a receipt issued by the INS for issuance of replacement documents.

Acceptable Documents of Eligible Immigration. The regulations stipulate that only the following documents are acceptable unless changes are published in the Federal Register.

Resident Alien Card (I-551)
Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-151)
Arrival-Departure Record (I-94)
Temporary Resident Card (I-688)
Employment Authorization Card (I-688B)
Receipt issued by the INS for issuance of replacement of any of the above documents that shows individual's entitlement has been verified

A birth certificate is not acceptable verification of status. All documents in connection with U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status must be kept five years.

Verification of Social Security Numbers

Social Security numbers must be provided as a condition of eligibility for all family members age six and over if they have been issued a number. Social Security numbers will be verified through a Social Security Card issued by the Social Security Administration. If a family member cannot produce a Social Security Card, only the documents listed below showing his or her Social Security Number may be used for verification. The family is also required to certify in writing that the document(s) submitted in lieu of the Social Security Card information provided is/are complete and accurate:

A driver's license

Identification card issued by a Federal, State or local agency

Identification card issued by a medical insurance company or provider (including Medicare and Medicaid)

An identification card issued by an employer or trade union

An identification card issued by a medical insurance company

Earnings statements or payroll stubs

Bank Statements

IRS Form 1099

Benefit award letters from government agencies

Retirement benefit letter

Life insurance policies

Court records such as real estate, tax notices, marriage and divorce, judgment or bankruptcy records

Verification of benefits or Social Security Number from Social Security Administration

New family members ages six and older will be required to produce their Social Security Card or provide the substitute documentation described above together with their certification that the substitute information provided is complete and accurate. This information is to be provided at the time the change in family composition is reported to the Program Administrator.

If an applicant or participant is able to disclose the Social Security Number but cannot meet the documentation requirements, the applicant or participant must sign a certification to that effect provided by the Program Administrator. The applicant/participant or family member will have an additional 60 days to provide proof of the Social Security Number. If they fail to provide this documentation, the family's assistance will be terminated.

If the family member states they have not been issued a number, the family member will be required to sign a certification to this effect.

Medical Need for Larger Unit

A written certification that a larger unit is medically necessary must be obtained from a reliable, knowledgeable medical professional.

Secondary Review/Credit Checks

As of July 1999, the Program Administrator has been using Credit Reports obtained from reliable sources to conduct secondary verifications for all applicants and a randomly selected portion of ongoing program participants. Starting in January 2001, HACoLA will obtain credit reports for 20% of new families.

The methodology used to evaluate the information obtained from the credit report in relation to new applicants is outlined in Chapter Three.

For continuously assisted families, the Program Administrator will routinely select, at random, a pre-identified number of families to undergo a secondary verification. Approximately 1,500- 2,000 families will be reviewed annually. The secondary review will include a comparison between the information contained in the credit report, for each adult household member, and the information provided by the family to he Program Administrator for eligibility purposes. Specifically, the Program Administrator will review the credit to verify:

- Employment – If the credit report reveals employment during the subsidized period that was not disclosed to the Program Administrator, the family will be required to provide documentation that the employment did not occur or provide information regarding the amount of earnings received during the employment period.

  If the family contends that the employment was made up for the purposes of obtaining credit or was erroneously placed on the credit report, the family must supply a letter from the employers listed confirming such information. On a case by case basis, the Program Administrator may accept a certified statement from the family.

  If the family failed to disclose employment for a period longer than six months, the Program Administrator will propose termination of the family's assistance and seek repayment of any overpayment.

  If the family failed to disclose employment for less than six months, the family will be required to attend a counseling interview and re-sign all program documents re-enforcing the family's obligations. The family will also be required to repay any overpayment amount. A second violation of this nature will result in a proposed termination.

- Assets - The credit report information will be used to verify assets, particularly, large items such as real estate property. If the credit report reveals that the family owns property, the family will be required to provide the appropriate documentation regarding the property.

  If all documentation confirms that the family (any family member) owns real estate property that was purposely concealed, the Program Administrator will propose termination of assistance and seek repayment of any overpayment amount.

  On a case by case basis, the Program Administrator will work with families that did not knowingly and willingly conceal assets during their eligibility review to preserve the family's rental assistance, if possible.

- Aliases - A credit report can provide information on other names that have been used for the purposes of obtaining credit. Common reasons for use of other names include a recent marriage or a divorce. If an alias has not been disclosed to the Program Administrator, the family will be asked to provide additional evidence of the legal identity of adult family members.

- Current and previous addresses – For a continuously assisted family, it is assumed that the family's primary residence is the assisted address. If the credit report

indicates the continuous use of an address, other than that of the assisted unit during the subsidized period, the family will be asked to provide documentation that the assisted address is being used as the family's primary residence. This may include a history of utility bills, bank statements, school enrollment record for children, credit card statements or other relevant documents. Failure to provide adequate proof may result in termination of assistance.

If the family is not using the subsidized unit as their primary residency and/or is subletting the assisted unit, the file will be referred for proposed termination and the Program Administrator will seek full repayment of any overpayment amount.

- Credit card and loan payments – A credit report will usually include a list of the family's financial obligations. Examples of the items that may show up include car loans, mortgage loans, student loans and credit card payments. The Program Administrator will review this information to confirm the income and asset information provided by the family. If the family's current financial obligations (total amount of current monthly payments) exceed the amount of income reported by the family, the Program Administrator will ask the family to disclose how they are currently meeting their financial obligations. Accounts that have been charged off or significantly delinquent are not included in this calculation. Failure to provide adequate proof of income will result in the file being referred for proposed termination. Additional, the Program Administrator will seek full repayment of any overpayment amount.

- Multiple Social Security numbers – A credit report may list multiple Social Security numbers if an adult family member has used different Social Security numbers to obtain credit. If the credit report information does not match the information provided by an adult member of the family, the family member will be required to obtain written confirmation of the Social Security number that was issued to him/her from the Social Security Administration.

Whenever a violation results in a proposed termination, the family is entitled to request an informal hearing. The procedures governing the informal hearing process are outlined in chapter 19.

Chapter 8
VOUCHER ISSUANCE AND BRIEFINGS

INTRODUCTION

The HA's objectives are to assure that families selected to participate are successful in obtaining an acceptable housing unit, and that they have sufficient knowledge to derive maximum benefit from the program and to comply with program requirements. When families have been determined to be eligible, the Program Administrator will conduct a mandatory briefing to ensure that families know how the program works. The briefing will provide a broad description of owner and family responsibilities, the Program Administrator's procedures, and how to lease a unit. The family will also receive a briefing packet that provides more detailed information about the program. This Chapter describes how briefings will be conducted, the information that will be provided to families, and the policies for how changes in the family composition will be handled.

A. ISSUANCE OF HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS

When funding is available, the Program Administrator will issue Vouchers to applicants whose eligibility has been determined.

The number of vouchers issued must ensure that the Program Administrator stays as close as possible to 100% lease-up. The Program Administrator performs a calculation to determine whether applications can be processed, the number of vouchers that can be issued, and to what extent the Program Administrator can over-issue.

The Program Administrator may over-issue vouchers only to the extent necessary to meet leasing goals. All vouchers that are over-issued must be honored. If the Program Administrator finds it is over-leased, it must adjust future issuance of vouchers in order not to exceed the ACC budget limitations for the fiscal year.

B. BRIEFING TYPES AND REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

Initial Applicant Briefing

A full HUD-required briefing will be conducted for applicant families who are determined to be eligible for assistance. The briefings will be conducted in groups or individual meetings. Families who attend group briefings and still have the need for individual assistance will be referred to the appropriate staff person.

Briefings will be conducted in English.

The purpose of the briefing is to explain the documents in the Voucher holder's packet to families so that they are fully informed about the program. This will enable them to utilize the program to their advantage, and it will prepare them to discuss it with potential owners and property managers.

The Program Administrator will not issue a Voucher to a family unless the household representative has attended a briefing and signed the Voucher. Applicants who provide prior notice of inability to attend a briefing will automatically be scheduled for the next briefing. Applicants who fail to attend scheduled briefings, without prior notification and approval of the Program Administrator, may be denied admission based on failure to supply information needed for certification. The Program Administrator will conduct individual briefings for families with disabilities at their home, upon request by the family, if required for reasonable accommodation.

Briefing Packet

The documents and information provided in the briefing packets will comply with all HUD requirements. The Program Administrator also includes other information and/or materials which are not required by HUD.

The family is provided with the following information and materials:

1. The term of the Voucher, and the Program Administrator policy for requesting extensions to the term of the Voucher or suspensions of the certificate/voucher.

2. A description of the method used to calculate the assistance payment, information on payment standards, and utility allowances.

3. How the maximum allowable rent is determined, including the rent reasonableness standard.

4. Guidance and materials to assist the family in selecting a unit, such as proximity to employment, public transportation, schools, shopping, and the accessibility of services. Guidance will also be provided to assist the family to evaluate the prospective unit, such as the condition, whether the rent is reasonable, average utility expense, energy efficiency, and security.

5. The boundaries of the geographical area in which the family may lease a unit including an explanation of portability.

6. The Program Administrator Standard Lease and HUD lease addendum.

7. The Request for Tenancy Approval form, owner certification, and a description of the procedure for requesting approval for a unit.

8. The Program Administrator policy on providing information about families to prospective owners.

9. The Subsidy Standards, when and how exceptions are made and how the Voucher size relates to the unit size selected.

10. The HUD brochure, “A Good Place to Live” on how to select a unit that complies with HQS.

11. The HUD brochure on lead-based paint and information about where blood level testing is available.

12. Information on Federal, State and local equal opportunity laws including the pamphlet “Fair Housing: It’s Your Right” and the form for reporting suspected discrimination.

13. A list of owners or other parties willing to lease to assisted families or help in the search and/or known units available for the Voucher issued.

14. If the family includes a person with disabilities, notice that the Program Administrator will provide a list of available accessible units known to the Program Administrator.

15. The Family Obligations under the program.

16. The grounds for termination of assistance because of family action or failure to act.

17. When the Program Administrator is required to offer an informal hearing, how to request the hearing, and the hearing procedures.

Other Information to be Provided at the Briefing

The person conducting the briefing will also describe how the program works and the relationship between the family and the owner, the family and the Program Administrator, and the Program Administrator and the owner.

The briefing presentation emphasizes:

Family and owner responsibilities

Where a family may lease a unit inside and outside its jurisdiction

How portability works for families eligible to exercise portability

Advantages to moving to areas with low concentration of poor families if family is living in a high poverty census tract in the HA’s jurisdiction

The Family Self Sufficiency program and its advantages

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the Program Administrator will ensure compliance with CFR 8.6 to ensure effective communication.

Move Briefing

A move briefing will be held for participants who will be reissued Vouchers to move, and who have been recertified within the last 120 days, and have given notice of intent to vacate to their owner. This briefing includes incoming and outgoing portable families. Families whose recertifications are older than 120 days must be recertified in order to be briefed to move.

Families failing to attend a scheduled move briefing twice will be denied a new Voucher based on failure to provide required information.

Owner Briefing

Briefings are held for owners at least annually. All owners receive a mailed invitation. Prospective owners are also welcome. The purpose of the briefing is to assure successful owner participation in the program.

C. ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN AREAS WITHOUT LOW INCOME OR MINORITY CONCENTRATION

At the briefing, families are encouraged to search for housing in non-impacted areas and the Program Administrator will provide assistance to families who wish to do so.

The assistance provided to such families includes:

Direct contact with owners.
Counseling with the family.
Providing information about services in various non-impacted areas.
Meeting with neighborhood groups to promote understanding.
Formal or informal discussions with owner groups
Formal or informal discussions with social service agencies
Meeting with rental referral companies or agencies
Meeting with fair housing groups or agencies

The Program Administrator will maintain a database of available housing submitted by owners in all neighborhoods within its jurisdiction to ensure greater mobility and housing choice to very low-income households. The listings will be made available to Voucher holders who are actually seeking housing.

D. SECURITY DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS

Leases Effective Prior to October 2, 1995

The amount of Security Deposit which could have been collected by owners under contracts effective prior to October 2, 1995 is:

Under the Certificate Program, the owner could have collected a Security Deposit in an amount not to exceed Total Tenant Payment or $50.00, whichever is greater, for non-lease-in-place families.

For the Voucher Program, the owner, at his/her discretion, could have collected a Security Deposit in an amount not to exceed (the Program Administrator's policy):

- The greater of 30% of adjusted monthly income or $50.

Leases Effective on or after October 2, 1995

Security deposits charged by owners may not exceed those charged to unassisted families (nor the maximum prescribed by State or local law.)

For lease-in-place families, responsibility for first and last month's rent is not considered a security deposit issue. In these cases, the owner should settle the issue with the family prior to the beginning of assistance.

E. TERM OF VOUCHER

During the briefing session, each household will be issued a Voucher which represents a contractual agreement between the Program Administrator and the Family specifying the rights and responsibilities of each party. It does not constitute admission to the program, which occurs when the lease and contract become effective.

Expirations

The Voucher is valid for a period of sixty calendar days from the date of issuance. The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval and Lease within the sixty-day period unless an extension has been granted by the Program Administrator.

If the Voucher has expired, and has not been extended by the Program Administrator or expires after an extension, the family will be denied assistance. The family will not be entitled to a review or hearing. If the family is currently assisted, they may remain as a participant in their unit if there is an assisted lease/contract in effect.

Suspensions

When a Tenancy Approval is received, the Program Administrator will not deduct the number of days required to process the request from the 60-day term of the Voucher.

Extensions

The Program Administrator may grant extensions to Vouchers.

A family may request an extension of the Voucher time period. All requests for extensions must be received in writing prior to the expiration date of the Voucher.

Extensions are permissible at the discretion of the Program Administrator up to a maximum term of 180 days, primarily for these reasons:

> Extenuating circumstances such as hospitalization or a family emergency for an extended period of time which has affected the family's ability to find a unit within the initial sixty-day period. Verification is required.
>
> The Program Administrator is satisfied that the family has made a reasonable effort to locate a unit, including seeking the assistance of the Program Administrator, throughout the initial sixty-day period. A completed Proof of Effort form is required.
>
> The family was prevented from finding a unit due to disability accessibility requirements or large size (four bedroom or larger) unit requirement. The Proof of Effort form is part of the required verification.

The Program Administrator extends in one or more 30-day increments for a maximum of 60 days. The Housing Supervisor has authority to extend beyond the maximum term of 180 days. Such matters will be considered on an individual basis and must be supported by verifiable third party documentation.

Assistance to Voucher Holders

Families who require additional assistance during their search may call the Marketing List for a listing of available units. Information regarding the Marketing List will be presented at the briefing session.

The Program Administrator will assist families with negotiations with owners and provide other assistance related to the families' search for housing.

F. VOUCHER ISSUANCE DETERMINATION FOR SPLIT HOUSEHOLDS

In those instances when a family assisted under the housing choice voucher program becomes divided into two otherwise eligible families due to divorce, legal separation, or the division of the family, and the new families cannot agree as to which new family unit should continue to receive the assistance, and there is no determination by a court, the Program Administrator shall consider the following factors to determine which of the families will continue to be assisted:

1. Which of the two new family units has custody of dependent children.
2. Which family member was the head of household when the Voucher was initially issued (listed on the initial application).
3. The composition of the new family units, and which unit contains elderly or disabled members.
4. Whether domestic violence was involved in the breakup.
5. Which family members remain in the unit.

6. Recommendations of social service professionals.

Documentation of these factors will be the responsibility of the requesting parties.

If documentation is not provided, the Program Administrator will terminate assistance on the basis of failure to provide information necessary to complete the annual recertification.

Where the breakup of the family also results in a reduction of the size of the Voucher, the family will be required to move to a smaller unit if the current owner is unwilling to accept the rent level of the smaller sized certificate.

G. REMAINING MEMBER OF FAMILY - RETENTION OF VOUCHER

To be considered the remaining member of the family, the person must have been previously approved by the Program Administrator to be living in the unit.

A live-in attendant, by definition, is not a member of the family and will not be considered a remaining member of the Family.

In order for a minor child to continue to receive assistance as a remaining family member:

1. The court has to have awarded emancipated minor status to the minor, or

2. The Program Administrator has to have verified that social services and/or the Juvenile Court has arranged for another adult to be brought into the assisted unit to care for the child(ren) for an indefinite period.

A reduction in family size may require a reduction in the Voucher size.

H. FAMILY VOLUNTARILY RELINQUISHES HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER.

The family may voluntarily relinquish their housing choice voucher at any time. In such cases, the HA will provide the owner of the property with a 30 day notice indicating that rental assistance will terminate based on the family's request. The family will become fully liable for the contract rent after the 30 days.

Generally, the Program Administrator will not re-instate a family once a request for voluntary termination has been received. However, as a reasonable accommodation, the Program Administrator will review requests for reinstatements received within six months and make a determination on a case by case basis.

If a family voluntarily relinquishes their housing choice voucher in lieu of facing termination, the Program Administrator will continue to seek to re-cover any monies that may be due the Housing Authority as a result of misrepresentation or other breach of program regulations.

Chapter 9
THE NEW CONTRACT PROCESS REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL AND CONTRACT EXECUTION

INTRODUCTION

After families are issued a voucher, they may search for a unit anywhere within the HA's jurisdiction, or outside of the HA's jurisdiction if they qualify for portability. The family must find an eligible unit under the program rules, with an owner who is willing to enter into a Housing Assistance Payments Contract with the Program Administrator. This Chapter defines the types of eligible housing, the HA's policies which pertain to initial inspections, lease requirements, owner disapproval, and the processing of Requests for Tenancy Approval (RTA).

A. REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL

The family must submit the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) and a copy of the proposed Lease during the term of the voucher. Both the owner and the Voucher holder must sign the Request for Tenancy Approval.

The Program Administrator will not permit the family to submit more than one RTA at a time.

The Request will be approved if:

1. The unit is an eligible type of housing
2. The unit meets HUD's Housing Quality Standards (and any additional criteria as identified in this Administrative Plan)
3. The rent is reasonable
4. The security deposit amount is approvable
5. The proposed lease complies with HUD and the HA's requirements, and State and local law
6. The owner is approvable, and there are no conflicts of interest

Disapproval of RTA

If the HA determines that the Request cannot be approved for any reason, the owner and the family will be notified in writing. The Program Administrator will instruct the owner and family of the steps that are necessary to approve the Request.

The owner will be given five calendar days to submit an approvable RTA from the date of disapproval unless the reason for the disapproval is the result of multiple failed inspections (three or more failed HQS inspections).

When, for any reason, an RTA is not approved, the HA will furnish another RTA form to the family along with the notice of disapproval so that the family can continue to search for eligible housing.

The Program Administrator will suspend the term of the Voucher while the RTA is being processed. Therefore, the length of time allotted to a family for the purpose of locating another unit will be based on the number of days left on the term of the voucher at the time the RTA was submitted to the Program Administrator.

B. ELIGIBLE TYPES OF HOUSING

The Program Administrator will approve any of the following types of housing in the Voucher program:

- Single Family Dwellings – including condos and townhouses.
- Manufactured homes where the family leases the mobile home and the pad.
- Manufactured homes where the family owns the mobile home and leases the pad.
- Multifamily Dwellings (apartment buildings).
- Units owned but not subsidized by the HA (HUD-prescribed requirement).

A family can own a rental unit but cannot reside in it while being assisted, except in the cases involving manufactured homes when the family owns the mobile home and leases the pad. A family may lease in and have an interest in a cooperative housing development.

The HA may not permit a Voucher holder to lease a unit which is receiving Project-Based housing choice voucher assistance or any duplicative rental subsidies.

Ineligible Housing Types

The HA will not approve:

A unit occupied by the owner or by any person with an interest in the unit, other than manufactured homes described above.

Nursing homes or other institutions that provide care.

School dormitories and institutional housing.

Structure that have not been properly converted. Owners will be required to show permits for all conversion work when the integrity and/or soundness of a structure is in question.

Converted garages or other structures not intended to be living areas.

Any other types of housing prohibited by HUD.

Restrictions On Renting To Relatives

In accordance with HUD policy, the family may not rent a unit from a relative. An owner is considered to be a relative of the assisted family if he/she is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member in the assisted household.

Exceptions may be made to this policy as a reasonable accommodation for persons with a disability. The Program Administrator will review all such requests on a case by case basis. The family will be required to provide documentation of disability and how the particular unit, owned by the relative, could benefit the disabled person. Failure to provide adequate documentation, within the specified time period (two weeks), will be grounds for denial of such request.

In all cases, the owner of the assisted unit may not reside in the unit with the assisted household, at any time during the term of the Housing Assistance Payment Contract (HAP) between the the Program Administrator and the owner.

C. LEASE REVIEW

Owner's Lease

The Program Administrator will review the lease, particularly noting optional charges and compliance with regulations and State/local law. However, this is merely a cursory review as HUD regulations no longer require the Program Administrator to approve an owner's private lease.

When needed, the Program Administrator may require the owner and family to execute a lease rider that changes the rent amount on the owner's original lease.

The Program Administrator will provide the owner with the HUD required Tenancy Addendum as well.

The Program Administrator's Model Lease

As indicated above, the owner has the option to use his/her own private lease or use the Program Administrator's model lease.

The Program Administrator's model lease is a provisionary lease that outlines all the terms and conditions of the tenancy but does not include the effective date of the lease or the amount of rent the owner may collect. These items are negotiated after the unit has passed inspection.

The effective date of the lease and the contract rent are provided in a lease rider that must be executed by the owner and the family of the assisted unit. Both parties must comply with this requirement in order for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract to go into effect.

The effective date of the lease and the HAP contract will be based on the date the unit passed inspection or the family took possession of the unit, whichever is later. For this

purpose, the family is considered to be in possession of the unit when the family has a key to the unit and the unit is fully available for the family's exclusive use.

Separate Agreements

Separate agreements are not necessarily prohibited. Families and owners will be advised of the prohibition of illegal side payments for additional rent, or for items normally included in the rent of unassisted families, or for items not shown on the approved lease.

Owners and families may execute separate agreements for services (parking space), appliances (other than range and refrigerator) and other items that are not included in the lease if the agreement is in writing and approved by the Program Administrator.

Any appliances, services or other items which are routinely provided to unassisted families as part of the lease (such as air conditioning, dishwasher or garage) or are permanently installed in the unit, cannot be put under separate agreement and must be included in the lease. For there to be a separate agreement, the family must have the option of not utilizing the service, appliance or other item.

The Program Administrator is not liable for unpaid charges for items covered by separate agreements and nonpayment of these agreements cannot be cause for eviction.

If the family and owner have come to a written agreement on the amount of allowable charges for a specific item, so long as those charges are reasonable and not a substitute for higher rent, they will be allowed.

All agreements for special items or services must be attached to the lease approved by the Program Administrator. If agreements are entered into at a later date, they must be approved by the Program Administrator and attached to the lease.

D. INITIAL INSPECTIONS

See Chapter 10, "Housing Quality Standards and Inspections".

E. RENT LIMITATIONS

In accordance with HUD regulations, at the time the family initially receives assistance for a new unit, the family's share of the rent for the unit (includes utilities and the rent to the owner) may not exceed more than 40% of the family's adjusted monthly income if the gross rent for the unit exceeds the payment standard.

If the gross rent (rent plus utilities) does not exceed the payment standard, the family may contribute more than 40% of their monthly income towards rent.

Although HUD does not place any limits on the amount that a family may contribute towards rent (if the family is a continuing family or the gross rent for an initial lease does not exceed the payment standard), the Program Administrator is concerned about affordability. Therefore, whenever a family is contributing more than 60% of their adjusted family income towards rent, the family will be required to attend an affordability

counseling session at the Program Administrator. Trained staff will review the family's financial situation and review the family's ability to meet their rental obligation. If the family discloses that they are concerned about their ability to meet their rental obligation, the Program Administrator will work with the family to help them locate another affordable unit. If the family indicates that they are able to meet all of their current financial obligations, the family will be allowed to proceed with their request to move into the unit. A notation will be made in the family's file.

F. RENT REASONABLENESS

A rent reasonable test will be used to determine if the rent amount request by the owner can be approved. The Program Administrator's rent reasonableness policy, including appeals process, is covered in Chapter 11 on this plan.

G. INFORMATION TO OWNERS

The Program Administrator is required to provide prospective owners with the address of the applicant and the names and addresses of the current and previous owner if known. The Program Administrator will make an exception to this requirement if the family's whereabouts must be protected due to domestic abuse or witness protection. The Program Administrator will not release any other information regarding the family.

The Program Administrator will inform owners that it is the responsibility of the owner to determine the suitability of prospective tenants. Owners will be encouraged to screen applicants for rent payment history, eviction history, damage to units, and other factors related to the family's suitability as a tenant.

Information regarding the Program Administrator's policy on this subject is included in the briefing packet and as an attachment to the Request for Tenancy Approval. This policy will apply uniformly to all families and owners.

In addition to the information listed above, the Program Administrator provides owner workshops at least twice a year. At the workshops, current and prospective owners are given an overview of the program and information about any significant program changes. There is also ample time for a question and answer session.

H. OWNER DISAPPROVAL

For purposes of this section, "owner" includes a principal or other interested party.

The Program Administrator may disapprove the owner for the following reasons:

> HUD has informed the HA that the owner has been disbarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under 24 CFR part 24.
>
> HUD has informed the HA that the federal government has instituted an administrative or judicial action against the owner for violation of the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements and such action is pending.

HUD has informed the HA that a court or administrative agency has determined that the owner violated the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements.

The owner has violated obligations under a housing assistance payments contract under housing choice voucher of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f).

The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt act in connection with any federal housing program.

The owner has engaged in drug trafficking.

The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with the HQS for units leased under the tenant-based programs or with applicable housing standards for units leased with project-based housing choice voucher assistance or leased under any other federal housing program.

I. CHANGE IN TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT (TTP) PRIOR TO HAP EFFECTIVE DATE

When the family reports changes in factors that will affect the Total Tenant Payment (TTP) prior to the effective date of the HAP contract, the information will be verified and the TTP will be recalculated. If the family does not report any change, the Program Administrator need not obtain new verifications before signing the HAP Contract, even if verifications are more than 60 days old.

J. CONTRACT EXECUTION PROCESS

Provided that the unit passes inspection, the Program Administrator will prepare the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract for execution. The family and the owner will execute the lease agreement, and the owner and the HA will execute the HAP Contract. Copies of the documents will be furnished to the parties who signed the respective documents.

The Program Administrator makes every effort to execute the HAP Contract before the commencement of the lease term. The HAP Contract may not be executed more than 60 days after commencement of the lease term and no payments will be made until the contract is executed.

The following Program Administrator representative(s) is/are authorized to execute a contract on behalf of the Program Administrator: housing choice voucher program Director, housing choice voucher program Assistant Director, housing choice voucher Assistant Managers and housing choice voucher Housing Supervisors.

Owners must provide the current address of their residence (not a Post Office box). If families lease properties owned by relatives, the owner's current address will be compared to the subsidized unit's address.

Owners must provide an Employer Identification Number or Social Security Number, and may also be required to provide a copy of their driver's license or other photo identification.

Determining the Contract Effective Date

The effective date and the amount of the rental payment is communicated in writing to both the owner and family.

If the owner and the family have entered into a lease and provide a copy of the lease with the Request for Tenancy Approval, the effective date of the contract will be either:

(a) the date the unit passed inspection (for families residing in the unit prior to the inspection date) or:
(b) the date that the Program Administrator authorized the owner to allow the family to take possession of the unit.

The contract effective date will be based on the later of these two dates. If the owner and the family have not executed a lease prior to the HAP contract negotiation process, then the HAP contract will become effective once the lease has been properly executed by both parties.

Proof Of Ownership

In addition to the items listed above, the Program Administrator also requires owners to provide proof of ownership of the assisted unit. Acceptable documents include a recorded grant deed, a property tax bill, property insurance documentation and/or if the property was recently acquired, copies of closing escrow documents.

The Program Administrator also uses property profile information obtained from a private vendor to confirm ownership.

Generally, the Program Administrator will only require one form of proof of ownership. However, if ownership is questionable, additional documentation will be requested and must be provided prior to executing a HAP contract. Failure to provide the requested information within a reasonable period of time, generally not more than 30 days, will result in a cancellation of the RTA.

Establishing Eligibility To Execute Hap Contract And Other Related Documents

In cases involving multiple owners, the Program Administrator will accept the signature of a designee on all contracts and related paperwork if all the legal owners have jointly agreed on the person/persons who may act on their behalf.

To establish signature and/or payment authority, the Program Administrator requires that all persons who have interest in the property sign a letter of authorization giving one or more parties the right to sign contracts, other program documents and/or receive payments on behalf of the owners.

In cases involving a partnership, the Program Administrator may request the partnership agreement or incorporation documents to determine who is designated to act on the group's behalf.

The Program Administrator will not execute a HAP contract until all the proper authorization, from all the appropriate parties, has been provided. Failure to provide information needed to establish authority to execute the HAP contract within a reasonable time, generally 30 days, may result in a cancellation of the RTA.

Once the Program Administrator has established proper authorization, the letter of authorization will remain in effect until superceded by another authorization or the HAP contract is terminated. All changes or modification to the instructions provided in the current letter of authorization, must be provided in writing.

Payment To The Owner

Once the HAP Contract is executed, the Program Administrator begins processing payments to the owner. Owners will have the option to receive a paper check delivered to them via mail or to enroll in the Program Administrator's direct deposit program. In either case, payments will be made by the first of each month.

If an owner misplaces a paper check, they must notify the Program Administrator as soon as possible. The Program Administrator will accept report of missing payment both via a telephone call and/or in writing. The Program Administrator will verify that the check has not been cashed and place an order to stop payment with the appropriate financial institution before issuing a replacement.

K. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP

A change in ownership does not require execution of a new contract.

The Program Administrator will process a change of ownership only upon the written request of the previous or new owner and only if accompanied by a copy of the escrow statement or other document showing the transfer of title and the Employee Identification Number or Social Security number of the new owner.

In order to complete a change of ownership, the old owner and the new owner must jointly completely a release and assumption form. This form releases the old from the contract and obligates the new owner. The Program Administrator will provide this document once a request for a change is received.

In cases, such as foreclosures, where the old owner is not available, the new owner must sign an assumption contract. This document will be provided by the Program Administrator. When the document has been executed, the Program Administrator will send a copy of the assumption form, the HAP contract and the lease to the new owner.

Chapter 10
HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS

Introduction

This chapter describes the Program Administrator's procedures for implementing Housing Quality Standards (HQS), conducting different HQS inspections, and setting standards for the timeliness of repairs. It also explains the responsibilities of the owner and family, and the consequences for noncompliance with HQS by owner and family. HQS is the HUD minimum quality standards for tenant-based programs. All assisted housing must comply with HQS, both at the initial occupancy of the dwelling unit, and during the term of the assisted lease. HQS applies to the building and premises, as well as the unit.

The Program Administrator may enhance these minimum standards, provided that by doing so, the Program Administrator does not overly restrict the number of units available for leasing.

A. TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

The Program Administrator conducts inspections using the HQS set forth by HUD with some modifications. The modifications adopted by the Program Administrator are meant to ensure that assisted units are safe in relation to other units rented throughout Los Angeles County without being overly restrictive. Efforts will be made at all times to encourage owners to provide housing above the HQS minimum standards.

The types of inspections conducted by the Program Administrator are described below.

1. **New Contract Inspections**: initial HQS inspections conducted seven to ten working days following the receipt of a Request for Tenancy Approval.

2. **Annual Inspections**: inspections, which are conducted up to 150 days prior to the anniversary date of the Program Administrator contract.

3. **Follow-up Inspections**: inspections conducted within 30 days after a unit has failed the initial, interim, or annual inspection.

4. **Interim Inspections**: inspections that are conducted at the request of the owner, family, or agency (usually as a result of a violation of HQS or violation of the lease).

5. **Move-out Inspections**: inspections conducted at the owner's request if a damage claim is to be submitted for contracts effective before October 2, 1995. (Damage claim procedures are not applicable for contracts effective after October 2, 1995).

6. **Lateral Inspections:** inspections conducted when a family moves from one unit to a similar unit within the same complex

7. **Quality control Inspections:** inspections conducted by Unit Supervisors for at least 5 percent of total scheduled inspections.

B. DESCRIPTION OF HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS)

In order for a unit to pass an HQS inspection, the following standards must be met:

Walls:

- Any exterior or interior surfaces with peeling or chipping paint must be scraped and painted with unleaded paint or replaced.
- In areas where plaster or drywall is sagging, severely cracked, or otherwise damaged, it must be repaired or replaced.
- All walls in a tub or shower area must be covered with ceramic tile or other material that is impervious to water to prevent water damage and eventual deterioration.

Windows:

- All window sashes must be in good condition, solid, intact, and fit properly in the window frame. Damaged or deteriorated sashes must be replaced.
- Windows must be weather-stripped as needed to ensure a weather tight seal.
- If window security bars or security screens are present on emergency exit windows, they must be equipped with a quick release system. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the family is instructed on the use of the system.

Doors:

- All exterior doors must be solid core and weather tight to avoid any air or water infiltration, have no holes, and have all trim intact.
- All interior doors must have no holes, have all trim intact, and be openable without the use of a key.
- All exterior doors must have dead bolt locks.

Floors:

- All wood floors must be sanded to a smooth surface and sealed. Any loose or warped boards must be resecured and made level. If the boards can not be leveled, they must be replaced.

- All floors must not have any serious defects such as severe bulging or leaning, large holes, loose surface materials, severe buckling, missing parts or other serious damage.

Sinks:

- All sinks and commode water lines must have shut off valves, unless faucets are wall-mounted.

- All sinks must have functioning stoppers

Smoke Detectors:

- Each assisted unit must be equipped with at least one properly working battery-operated **or** hard -wired smoke detector that is installed on each level of the unit.

- Whenever possible, smoke detectors should be installed in a hallway adjacent to a bedroom.

- If an assisted unit is occupied by a household with hearing-impaired persons, a permanently installed smoke detector designed for people with hearing-impairments must be located in each bedroom that is occupied by a hearing-impaired person.

Lead Based Paint:

- A visual assessment of all painted surfaces of any unit which was built before 1978 and is intended to house a child under the age of 6, will be conducted to identify any deteriorated paint.

- If deteriorated paint is discovered as a result of the visual assessment, the property owner will be required to stabilize each deteriorated paint surface in accordance with 24 CFR Part 35.1330 (a) and (b) before the participants occupy the unit.

- If the unit is already occupied, and contains deteriorated paint, the paint stabilization must be completed within 30 days from the date that the owner was notified of the results of the visual assessment.

- Any violation of these standards will cause the unit to be labeled uninhabitable.

Additional Housing Quality Standards

HUD has identified the items listed above. In addition to these items, all assisted units must also be in compliance with the following local building code regulations in order to pass an HQS inspection.

Double Cylinder locks – Under the Building Code Regulations for Los Angeles County, double-keyed deadbolts, or any other lock requiring special knowledge or a tool to open, are prohibited in a residential unit. All doors that provide an exit from the residence must be openable from the inside without the need of a key or any other special knowledge, effort or tool.

Swimming pools – Under the Building Code Regulations for Los Angeles County, all swimming pools must be enclosed by a gate from 48 inches to 60 inches tall. The gate must be self-closing with a self-closing latch and a protected panel must surround the latch. The Program Administrator will enforce this ordinance in multifamily structures.

Earthquake straps for water heaters – Under the Building Code regulations for Los Angeles County, all water heaters must be strapped at 1/3 intervals from the top to the bottom of the heater, for seismic stability.

Units inhabited by a child with an environmental intervention blood lead level –

- Within 15 days after being notified by a public health department or other medical health care provider that a child of less than 6 years of age living in an assisted unit has been identified as having an environmental intervention blood lead level, the Program Administrator will perform a risk assessment of the dwelling unit in which the child lived at the time the blood was last sampled and the common areas servicing the dwelling unit. When the risk assessment is complete, the Program Administrator shall immediately provide the report of the risk assessment to the owner of the dwelling unit.

- If the child identified as having an environmental intervention blood lead level is no longer living in the unit when the designated party receives notification from the public health department or other medical health care provider, but another household receiving tenant-based rental assistance is living in the unit or is planning to live there, the requirements of this section still apply.

- If a public health department has already conducted an evaluation of the dwelling unit, or the designated party conducted a risk assessment of the unit and common areas servicing the unit between the date the child's blood was last sampled and the date when the designated party received the notification of the environmental intervention blood lead level, the requirements of these paragraphs do not apply.

- After receiving information from a source other than a public health department or other medical health care provider that a child of less than 6 years of age living in an assisted dwelling unit may have an environmental intervention blood lead level, the Program Administrator will immediately verify the information with a public health department or other medical health care provider. If verification is received that indicates the child has an environmental intervention blood lead level, the verification will constitute notification to the Program Administrator under the first paragraph, and the Program Administrator will conduct a risk assessment of the unit where the child lived when the blood was last sampled and provide the report of the risk assessment to the owner of the dwelling unit.

- Within 30 days after receiving the risk assessment report from the Program Administrator or the evaluation from the public health department, the property owner shall complete the reduction of identified lead-based paint hazards in accordance with the *abatement* (35.1325), and/or *interim controls* (35.1330), sections of the September 15, 1999 Final Rule (24 CFR Part 35 et al.).

- Hazard reduction is considered complete when clearance is achieved and the clearance report states that all lead-based paint hazards identified in the risk assessment have been treated with interim controls or abatement or when the public health department certifies that the lead-based paint hazard reduction is complete.

- If the owner does not complete the hazard reduction required by this section, the dwelling unit is in violation of Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

- The owner shall notify building residents of any evaluation or hazard reduction activities (Sec. 35.125).

- The Program Administrator will report the name and address of a child identified as having an environmental intervention blood lead level to the public health department within 5 working days of being so notified by any other medical health care professional.

- At least quarterly, the Program Administrator shall attempt to obtain the names and/or addresses of children of less than 6 years of age with an identified environmental intervention blood lead level from the Los Angeles County Health Department Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP).

- At least quarterly, the Program Administrator will also report an updated list of the addresses of units receiving assistance under a tenant-based rental assistance programs to the CLPPP. However, the report(s) are not required if CLPPP states that they do not wish to receive them.

- If the Program Administrator obtains names and addresses of environmental intervention blood lead level children from the CLPPP it will match information on cases of environmental intervention blood lead levels with the names and addresses of families receiving tenant-based rental assistance, unless the public health department performs such a matching procedure. If a match occurs, the Program Administrator will carry out the requirements of this section.

C. INSPECTIONS SCHEDULE

To promote decent, safe, and sanitary housing, the Program Administrator conducts an inspection in accordance with HQS at least annually, up to 150 days prior to the anniversary date of the contract. Interim inspections may be scheduled and conducted between anniversary dates.

The family must allow the Program Administrator to inspect the unit at a reasonable time and with reasonable notice. The Program Administrator will notify the family and/or

owner in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the inspection with exception of New Contract inspections (see Section I, New Contract Inspection).

Inspections will be conducted on a thirty-day cycle. HQS deficiencies that cause a unit to fail must be corrected by the owner, unless the family is responsible for the deficiencies (see section E). The Program Administrator's inspectors will determine who is responsible for the deficiencies in the assisted unit at the time of inspection.

1. **Inspection:** the family is notified of the date and time of the inspection appointment by mail.

   An individual over eighteen years of age must be present to allow entry for the inspector. If the family is unable to be present, they must reschedule the appointment so that the inspection can be completed within 14 calendar days from the first inspection.

   If the family fails to contact the Program Administrator to reschedule the inspection, or if the family misses two (2) inspection appointments, the Program Administrator will consider the family to be in violation of the Certified Statement of Family Obligation agreement and will initiate termination procedures in accordance with the Program Administrator's policy for proposed termination.

2. **Follow-up inspection**: if an assisted unit fails a HQS inspection, the family and owner will be notified, in writing, of the failed items. The owner and family will be given 30 days from the notification letter to make the appropriate corrections and to notify the Program Administrator so that a follow-up inspection can be scheduled. Furthermore, the letter will serve notice that the Program Administrator will terminate contract in 60 days if indeed the unit fails again. If the family is not at home for the follow-up inspection appointment, a calling card will be left at the unit with instructions. A second follow-up inspection will be scheduled automatically and the owner and family will be notified by mail.

3. **Final Inspection**: if an assisted unit fails the final inspection, the Program Administrator contract will be terminated 30 days after the final inspection was failed.

Inspections will be conducted on business days between the hours of 7:00a.m.and 5:00p.m.

D. WHEN DEFICIENCIES MUST BE CORRECTED

Emergency items which endanger the family's health or safety must be corrected within 24 hours of inspection or verbal/written notification but no longer than 48 hours total from the time of inspection.

In cases where the owner or responsible party cannot be notified verbally, i.e. weekends, the Program Administrator will have a written notification mailed the day of the inspection.

The following items are considered life-threatening emergencies and will cause a unit to be labeled uninhabitable:

- Gas leaks
- Major plumbing problems
- Utilities not in service
- No running water
- No functioning toilet
- Unstable roof/structure

In cases where the unit is deemed uninhabitable, the family will be issued a certificate/voucher within 24 hours so that they can make arrangements to secure another residence if necessary.

If the emergency repair item(s) are not corrected in the time period required by the Program Administrator, and the **owner** is responsible, the housing assistance payment will be abated and the contract will be terminated.

If the emergency repair item(s) are not corrected in the time period required by the Program Administrator, and the family has violated the Certified Statement of Obligation, the Program Administrator will terminate the family's assistance but will not abate the payment to owner for that month.

If repairs are completed and the family wishes to move back into the unit, a new RLA will need to be submitted for that unit and the New Contract Process will need to be completed again.

Serious HQS Violation

In order to assist Housing Inspectors in making a determination regarding the condition of an assisted unit, HQS has compiled a list of serious deficiencies, that although not life threatening, due constitute a serious violation. If such conditions exist in a unit, an inspection may fail the unit. This list is provided to both owners and family prior to all inspections.

Serious HQS Violations:

1. No TRP/Drainpipe on water heater. Clogged toilets/sinks/wash basins/bathtubs
2. Torn carpet or linoleum flooring posing a tripping hazard
3. Stretched carpet when a potential hazard exists
4. Broken mirrors, cabinets, etc.
5. Missing smoke detectors
6. Vermin infestation (fleas, roaches, termites, mice, & rats)
7. Double cylinder locks
8. Exterior/common grounds rubbish/debris/overgrown grass/weeds
9. Large holes/cracks/uneven concrete in walkway
10. Building with major peeling of wood trim/paint- directly effecting family's unit
11. Large porcelain chips in bathtubs/sinks/wash basin exposing black surfaces/rust
12. Burner knobs missing on stove
13. Inoperable stove/refrigerator
14. Bathrooms where no windows are present and exhaust fans are missing/inoperable
15. Flammable products stored near water heaters
16. Signs of leaking/water damage on ceiling/roof
17. Broken windows and larger cracks which pose a potential hazard

18. Algae/debris in swimming pool
19. Loose hand rails
20. Missing/cracked switch cover plates
21. Closet doors off track
22. Bedroom window security bar release mechanism is inoperable
23. Inoperable window locks

Generally all conditions listed above must be corrected within 30 days. For major repairs, the Inspections Housing Unit Supervisor or Housing Supervisor may approve an extension beyond 30 days. However, this extension cannot exceed 60 days.

E. DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

In accordance with family obligations, the following deficiencies are considered the responsibility of the family:

- Family-paid utilities not in service,
- Failure to provide or maintain family-supplied appliances
- Damages to the unit or premises caused by a household member or guest beyond normal wear and tear.

"Normal wear and tear" is defined as items that could be charged against the family's security deposit under state law or court practice.

The owner is responsible for all other HQS violations. In cases such as vermin infestation, where burden of responsibility is not immediately clear, the Program Administrator's inspector will be responsible for determining the responsible party.

F. CONSEQUENCES OF VERIFIED OWNER-RELATED DEFICIENCIES

The owner has a responsibility to maintain the unit in accordance with all HQS. When it has been determined that a unit on the program fails to meet HQS, the owner of that unit is responsible for completing the necessary repair(s) in the time period specified by the Program Administrator. At the time the determination of a departure from HQS is made, the assistance payments to the owner will be abated.

Abatement

Abatement is defined as withholding Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) to the owner for the period of time the unit is out of compliance with HQS requirements.

HAP will be withheld (abated) if:

1. The assisted unit fails the first and second housing inspections due to owner-related deficiencies.

2. The Program Administrator has verified that there were serious health and safety hazards at the assisted unit, and the owner did not complete the needed repairs within 24 hours. Examples of serious health and safety conditions include but are

not limited to: major plumbing stoppages, unstable roof or structures, gas leaks, and lack of any utilities that are the owner's responsibility to supply.

Furthermore, families that reside in units that have been abated will be issued a Voucher and will have the option to move even if the assisted unit passes inspection at the third and final inspection (this excludes participants of the Moderate Rehabilitation Program).

Under normal circumstances, the Program Administrator will inspect an abated unit 30 days after the abatement notification has been issued. If an owner has completed the necessary repairs prior to the next scheduled inspection, he/she may request an earlier inspection date. Requests for earlier repair dates will be reviewed and accommodated in a case by case basis.

If the assisted unit fails the third and final housing inspection, or if the inspector cannot gain entry, termination of the HAP Contract will be proposed. Although, the Program Administrator is prohibited from implementing rent abatement for family-caused deficiencies, abatement will apply if family-caused and owner-related deficiencies exist together.

Payments

A notice of abatement will be sent to the owner stating the effective abatement date, deficiencies noted, repair(s) which need to be made, and the date of the next inspection (generally within 30 days).

The Program Administrator will stop payment on the day of the failed inspection. Payments will be placed on hold for the next month and the owner will be required to return payment to the Program Administrator for each day the unit is not in compliance.

If the owner makes repairs during the abatement period, HAP payments will resume on the day the Program Administrator's inspector has verified the corrections and the unit passes inspection.

No retroactive payments will be made to the owner for the period of time the rent was abated and the unit did not comply with HQS. The notice of abatement states that the family is not responsible for the Program Administrator's portion of rent that is abated. However, the family is responsible to pay its portion of the rent while abatement is in effect.

G. CONSEQUENCES OF VERIFIED FAMILY-CAUSED DEFICIENCIES

The family has a responsibility to maintain the assisted unit in good condition and to notify the owner of needed repairs. If non-emergency violations of HQS are determined to be the responsibility of the family, the Program Administrator will require the family to make any repair(s) or corrections within the 30-day cycle. Housing assistance can be terminated if an assisted unit continues to fail housing inspections for family-caused deficiencies (See Section E, "Determination of Responsibility") or the family fails to keep scheduled appointment(s).

Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Assisted Housing Unit Supervisor.

If it has been concluded that all deficiencies are family-caused, the owner's rent will not be abated for such items.

H. NEW CONTRACT INSPECTION

After the RTA is received, the new contract (initial) inspection will be conducted in order to:

1. Determine if the unit, including common areas, meets the HQS as defined in this plan.

2. Document the current condition of the unit. This will serve as the basis to evaluate the future condition of the unit, i.e. excessive wear and tear.

If the unit fails the initial HQS inspection, the unit will be scheduled for a follow-up inspection within 10 working days. The owner can request an inspection sooner if repairs have been made prior to the follow-up inspection date.

On a new contract inspection, the owner will be given up to 30 days to correct the deficiencies depending on the amount and complexity of the work to be done.

In both cases discussed above, the owner will be given two additional inspections, if they are necessary for repair work to be satisfactorily completed.

If the time period given by the Program Administrator to correct the deficiencies has lapsed, or the maximum number of 3 failed inspections has occurred, the family must select another unit.

I. TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

If the owner is responsible for repairs, and fails to correct all the deficiencies cited by the end of the abatement period, the owner will be sent a HAP Contract Proposed Termination notice. The abatement will remain in effect until the effective date of the termination,

When the Program Administrator Contract has been terminated, the family will be required to move in order to continue receiving rental assistance.

RTA submitted for units that have been terminated due to abatement will be reviewed on a case by case basis. In cases where the RTA is accepted, the family will be brought in for counseling on their situation.

Quality Control Inspections

To ensure efficient program operations, it is essential for management to apply sound quality control practices. The purpose of Quality Control inspections is to objectively ascertain that each inspector is conducting accurate and complete inspections, and to

ensure that there is consistency among inspectors in application of the Housing Quality Standards.

Quality Control inspections will be performed by the Unit Supervisor on 5 percent of the conducted inspections.

Garages

A rental unit does not need to include the use of a garage if the structure is detached. In cases where the lease will not include the use of the garage, the owner must provide a written statement that will be kept in the family's file. The notice must include a statement including that the owner will ensure that the garage/structure will be free of hazardous material so as to ensure the health and safety of the family utilizing the main structure on the property for housing.

In cases where the garage is attached to the main structure, the garage must be included as part of the lease.

Garage Conversion - The Program Administrator will not count improperly converted structures as sleeping rooms.

In cases where an owner has modified the rental unit without obtaining the proper city and/or County building permits, the Program Administrator will rely on the legal property description for the purposes of negotiating the rent and determining how many actual sleeping rooms are in the rental unit.

Chapter 11
SETTING PAYMENT STANDARDS AND DETERMINING RENT REASONABLENESS

INTRODUCTION

The Program Administrator is responsible to ensure that the rents charged by owners are reasonable based upon objective comparables in the rental market. When the Program Administrator has determined that the unit meets the minimum HQS, that the lease is approvable, and that the rent is reasonable, it will make timely payments to the owner and notify the owner of the procedures for rent adjustments in the Voucher programs. This Chapter explains the Program Administrator's procedures for setting and adjusting the Payment Standards and conducting rent reasonableness surveys.

A. PAYMENT STANDARDS FOR THE VOUCHER PROGRAM

HUD regulations allow the Program Administrator to set Payment Standards at a level that is between 90% to 110% of the Fair Market Rent for Los Angeles County. The Program Administrator must set the payment standard at a level that is high enough to ensure that families are able to affordable quality housing while also balancing the need to provide assistance to as many families on the waiting list as possible.

The Program Administrator will review the payment standards at least annually to determine whether an adjustment should be made for some or all unit sizes. The following provides a list of the factors that will be used to evaluate the adequacy of the payment standard and/or be used to make a determination to adjust standards, as appropriate.

Assisted Families' Rent Burdens

The Program Administrator will review reports showing the percent of income used for rent by Voucher families to determine the extent to which the rent burden is more than 50% of income.

If more than 40% of program families in the overall program, or for a specific unit size, are contributing in excess of 50% of their adjusted monthly income towards rent, the Program Administrator will consider increasing the voucher payment standards. The payment standard will not be raised if:

- The payment is already at the maximum level HUD will allow (110%).
- The Program Administrator would have to reduce the number of new admissions by 20% or more for the upcoming year in order to fund the increase.

Success Rate of Voucher Holders

The Program Administrator will periodically review the success rate of Voucher holders. If 25% or more of new admissions and/or families wishing to move are unable to use the

Vouchers due to current rental rates in Los Angeles County, the Program Administrator will consider increasing the payment standard for particular unit sizes and/or the entire program, as appropriate.

The payment standard will not be increased if:

- The payment is already at the maximum HUD will allow (110%)
- The Program Administrator would have to reduce the number of new admissions by 20% or more for the upcoming year in order to fund the increase

Rent Reasonableness Data Base

The Program Administrator will review the rent information in the rent reasonableness data bank and compare it to the payment standards established for the Voucher program. If the rent reasonableness review indicated that the payment standards are higher than the average rental unit in Los Angeles County, the payment standard for the specific unit size, or all payment standards, will be lowered to reflect the current market rents.

Quality of Units Selected

The HA will review the quality of units selected by participant families before determining any change to the Payment Standard to ensure that Payment Standard increases are only made when needed to reach the mid-range of the market.

File Documentation

A file will be retained in the Program Administrator Administrative Support Unit for at least three years to document the analysis and findings to justify whether or not the Payment Standard was changed.

B. RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS

Rent reasonableness determinations are made when units are placed under HAP Contract for the first time and when an owner requests a rent increase for the Voucher Program. The Program Administrator will determine and document on a case-by-case basis that the approved rent:

1. Does not exceed rents currently charged on new leases by the same owner for an equivalent assisted or unassisted unit in the same building or complex, and
2. Is reasonable in relation to rents currently charged by other owners for comparable units in the unassisted market.

Three comparable units will be used for each rent determination. Of these, one may be from the first category, and the remaining two should be from the second category. In cases where three comparable units are not available, due either to the unit's location, age or other special features, two comparables may be used to determine the appropriate rent, one from each category identified above.

All comparables must be based on the rent that the unit would command if leased in the current market. Leased in the current market means that the unit has been leased within the last 12 months.

The data for other unassisted units will be gathered from newspapers, realtors, professional associations, inquiries of owners, market surveys, and other available sources.

The Program Administrator will consider the census tract in which the unit is located to be the market area for the purposes of obtaining rent comparables. If a unit is located in a census tract that is primarily industry, or where no comparable units can be found, the Program Administrator will seek rent comparables in neighboring census tracts. In such cases, may require an inspector to go out to do a visual check of the two neighborhoods to ensure comparability.

The following items will be used for rent reasonableness documentation:

Number of Bedrooms
Facilities
Location
Quality
Amenities
Date Built
Unit Type
Management and Maintenance Services

The HA maintains a computer database which includes data on unassisted units for use by staff in making rent reasonableness determinations. The data is updated on an ongoing basis and purged when it is more than twelve months old.

In order for a unit to be considered comparable to another the units must:

- Located in the same census tract.
- Have been built within ten years of each other.
- Have three or more similar services and/or amenities.
- Have the same number of bedrooms.
- Be the same unit type. Single family structure will generally not be compared to multifamily structures. However, the Program Administrator may make an exception in unique cases where no other selection of rental units exists in the area.

Appealing a Rent Comparability Determination

If the owner of the property disagrees with the rent reasonable determination, the owner may verbally (or in writing) appeal the decision and request that the Program Administrator conduct a second survey. In such cases, the Program Administrator will attempt to find a different set of rental units or may use a list of rental units submitted by the owner.

Before using a list of rental units submitted by the owner, the Program Administrator would confirm that the units are indeed comparable using the criteria outlined above. If the units are not comparable, the Program Administrator will not use these units in the rent comparability survey and the owner will be notified of the decision.

At the owner's request, the Program Administrator will release information on the unit addresses used in the rent comparability survey. If the owner finds that the information used by the Program Administrator is incorrect, the Program Administrator will re-verify the rental comps used and re-determine the rent comparability for the unit

The Program Administrator will base the rent offer to the owner on the highest of the two survey results.

Rent Increases

The Program Administrator will use the same criteria defined above to determine if a request for a rent increase meets the rent comparability requirement. If the new rent is not rent comparable the Program Administrator will advise both the owner and the family that the increase cannot be approved.

The owner may than exercise any of the following options:

- Appeal the rent comparability determination using the steps outlined above.
- Adjust his/her request for a rent increase.
- Serve the family with 30-day notice.

CHAPTER 12
RECERTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the Program Administrator's policy for conducting recertifications, inspections, and interim recertifications. These activities are conducted in accordance with HUD regulations that require that the HA recertify the income, household composition of participating families and inspect the assisted unit at least annually. HUD also requires that families report any income or family composition changes as they occur to the Program Administrator. This chapter also defines the reporting requirements and procedures for the interim recertifications that address these changes.

A. ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

The Program Administrator must conduct two activities on an annual basis. These activities include the following:

1. Recertification of income and family composition.
2. HQS Inspection.

To ensure timely annual recertifications to meet HUD requirements, the Program Administrator produces a monthly listing of units under contract and assigns files to Eligibility Clerks 120 days in advance of the anniversary date. At this time the contract rent is reviewed, the unit is inspected to assure it meets the HQS and adjustments to the TTP are made due to changes in income and/or rent.

Annual Inspections: See "HQS and Standards" Chapter

Rent Adjustments: See Chapter on "Rent Reasonableness, Rent adjustments, and Payment Standards".

B. RE-EXAMINATION NOTIFICATION TO THE FAMILY

Participating families are advised of the annual recertification requirement and the importance of reporting income and family composition changes as they occur during the initial certification.

Procedure

To maintain program efficiency and integrity, the Program Administrator at its own discretion may conduct recertification interviews by mail or in-person. In either case, all participants will be notified by mail 120 days prior to their anniversary date of the pending recertification. Those that are required to attend interviews will also be notified of the interview appointment at the same time.

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities who are unable to come into the Program Administrator's office will be granted an accommodation of conducting the interview at the person's home or by mail, upon verification (physician or medical documentation) that the accommodation requested meets the need presented by the disability.

Requirements to attend

If it is determined that a participant (family) will need to come to the Program Administrator's office then all adult household members 18 years and older will be required to attend the recertification interview.

If the head of household is unable to attend the interview, the appointment will be rescheduled if it takes place before the anniversary date.

Failure to respond to notification

The written notification must state which family members are required to attend the interview appointment. The family may call to reschedule the appointment up to one working day before the scheduled interview date.

If the family does not appear for the recertification interview, and has not rescheduled or made prior arrangements with the Program Administrator, a second appointment will be schedule.

If the family fails to appear for the second appointment, and has not rescheduled or made prior arrangements, a third appointment will not be scheduled. The Program Administrator will then propose termination.

If the family is able to provide documentation of an emergency situation that prevented them from attending or making prior arrangements, the Unit Supervisor at his/her own discretion may, on a case by case basis reschedule the appointment.

C. RE-EXAMINATION

To assure that tenancy is restricted to participants meeting the eligibility requirements for continued occupancy and are charged appropriate rents; the eligibility status of each participant is reexamined on an annual basis per HUD requirements.

At the initial, first interim or annual certification on or after June 19, 1995, participants must report and verify their U.S citizenship/eligible immigration status by signing and submitting a declaration of eligibility, verification of consent form (if necessary), and appropriate immigration documentation (resident alien card, naturalization, etc.).

When families move to another dwelling unit, a recertification is completed and the anniversary date changed.

Documents required from the family

In addition to the notification letter that is sent to the participant (family), the Program Administrator will also provide written instructions and appropriate forms that need to be submitted to complete the reexamination. The required forms and documentation are

the following:

1. Documentation of income for all family members
2. Documentation of assets
3. Documentation of medical or child care expenses
4. Certified statement of family obligations
5. Consent for Release of Information (signed by all household members over eighteen (18) years of age)

Verification of these documents will be conducted in accordance with the Program Administrator's procedures and guidelines described in this plan.

Tenant rent increases

If the tenant rent increases, a thirty (30) day notice of increase in rent is mailed to the family before the anniversary date.

If less than thirty days are remaining before the anniversary date, the new tenant rent will be effective on the first of the month following the thirty-day notice. If the Program Administrator was unable to process the recertification on a timely basis due to the family's failure to provide recertification documents, then the rent increase will be effective retroactive to the appropriate anniversary date.

If the family causes a delay in the reexamination processing, there will be a retroactive increase in rent to the anniversary date. In this particular case, the owner will receive a retroactive HAP payment and every effort will be made to recover lost rent from the tenant.

Tenant rent decreases

If the tenant rent decreases, it will be effective on the anniversary date.

If the family causes a delay so the processing of the reexamination is not completed by the anniversary date, the rent change will be effective on the first day of the month following the completion of the reexamination processing.

D. INTERIM RECERTIFICATION

No TTP adjustments will be affected between dates of periodic reexamination or pre-scheduled recertifications except as noted below:

Tenants are required to submit information affecting eligibility income at all recertifications. Additionally, tenants are required to report the following changes in family circumstances:

a. Changes in family composition, including loss or addition of one or more family members through death, divorce, birth, or adoption.

b. Changes in family income including increases and decreases for income received by the family.

A family is required to report these changes to the Program Administrator by the first rent payment period after the change has occurred. Once notified, the changes that affect the eligibility income will be verified.

The U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status of additional family members must be declared and verified as required at the first interim or regular recertification after moving into the unit.

Increases in income

If the information provided results in an increase in tenant rent, the Program Administrator will flag the file and make adjustments at the annual reexamination. The tenant will be notified in writing at least 30 days in advance of the increase.

However, if the participant failed to provide the necessary information when the change(s) occurred, the increase will be effective retroactive to the date it would have been effective had the participant supplied the required information in a timely manner.

Decreases in income

If the information provided results in a decrease in tenant rent, a modification to the HAP Contract is executed to be effective the first of the month following the month in which the required documentation is supplied by the participant.

E. SPECIAL ADJUSTMENTS

If, at the time of recertification, a family is clearly of low-income, and it is not possible to make an estimate of the family's income for the next 12 month period; A special recertification will be scheduled to accommodate the family's circumstances. This includes cases where:

1. A tenant is unemployed and there are no anticipated prospects of employment, or

2. The conditions of employment and/or receipt of income are too unstable to validate usual and normal standards for determination. An interim reexamination will be scheduled for families with zero or unstable income every three (3) months.

Families whose past employment has been sporadic or who are on welfare, become employed, then are unemployed, or are self-employed, will not be given special recertification. If such an income pattern has been established and is expected to continue, then a reasonable twelve month estimate of the income may be based upon past income and present rate of income.

Furthermore, special recertifications must be clearly set for a definite time to assure compliance.

F. CHANGES IN FAMILY COMPOSITION

The family must report all changes in family composition to the Program Administrator within **30** days of the occurrence.

Increases in Family Size

Increases other than by birth, adoption or court awarded custody must have prior approval of the owner and the Program Administrator.

If an addition would result in overcrowding in the unit according to HQS maximum occupancy standards the Program Administrator will issue a larger voucher (if needed under the subsidy standards) for additions to the family in the following cases:

1. Addition of marriage/or marital type relation,
2. Addition of a minor who is member of the nuclear family who had been living elsewhere,
3. Addition of the Program Administrator-approved live-in attendant,
4. Addition due to birth, adoption or court awarded custody.

If an approved change requires a larger size unit due to overcrowding, the change in voucher size will be made effective immediately. The Program Administrator will determine the assistance, based on funding availability.

Decreases in family size

If a change in family composition results in a decrease of the voucher size, the Program Administrator may exercise the option to downsize the family's voucher size and require the family to move.

Generally, families will be asked to move if the unit is two bedrooms or larger than the family is eligible to rent. When this is necessary, the family will be granted 120 days to locate another suitable unit. Extensions will be granted in accordance with the policy outlined in Chapter 8.

However, if the families Total Tenant Payment unit does not exceed more than 50% of the family's monthly adjusted income, the family will be allowed to remain in the unit.

G. CONTINUATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED"FAMILIES

Under the non-citizen rule, "mixed" families are families that include at least one citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible members.

"Mixed" families that were participants on or before June 19,1995, shall continue full assistance if they meet the following criteria:

1. The head of household or spouse is a U.S. citizen or has eligible immigrant status, AND

2. All members of the family other than head, spouse, parents of head, parents of spouse, children of head or spouse are citizens or eligible immigrants. The family may change the head of household designation to another adult member of the family to qualify under this provision.

If they do not qualify for continued assistance, the member(s) that cause the family to be ineligible for continued assistance may move, the family may choose prorated assistance, or the Program Administrator may offer temporary deferral of termination.

Chapter 13
ALLOWABLE MOVES/PORTABILITY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the procedures for moves, both within and out of the Program Administrator's jurisdiction, for both applicants and participants, and restriction and limitations on those moves.

A. NEW APPLICANTS

A family who lives and/or works in the City of Paramount at the time they are admitted to the housing choice voucher rental assistance may choose:

- To remain in there current unit and lease in place.
- A unit anywhere in jurisdiction of the HA of the City of Paramount.
- A unit outside of the City of Paramount. This option is called portability. Under portability a family may request to move anywhere in the United States in the jurisdiction of a HA administering a housing choice voucher rental assistance Program. However, since the family has not received assistance in the Paramount jurisdiction, they must meet the income limit for the area where the family will be initially assisted in order to be eligible for assistance.

Approval of any unit is subject to rent reasonableness and a passed inspection.

A family who does not live or work in the City of Paramount at the time they are admitted to the housing choice voucher rental assistance must initially locate a unit within the Paramount jurisdiction in order to receive assistance. Generally, the family may not exercise their right to portability until the family has resided in the HA's jurisdiction for at least 12 months.

Under limited conditions, the Program Administrator may waive this requirement. Examples of situations that may warrant an exception to this rule include reasonable accommodation issues and life threatening situations. However, in all cases both the Program Administrator and the receiving jurisdiction must mutually agree to allow the move. If the receiving HA does not agree, the Program Administrator will not approve the transfer.

B. MOVES WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE

Once a family has already been assisted, all future requests to move to another unit are considered moves with continued assistance.

Where a family can move.

A continuously assisted family, in good standing, may request to move:

- To another unit within the Paramount jurisdiction. This type of a move is considered a reserve vacate. This means that the family is moving from a unit, which will result in a temporary vacancy in the program but the slot remains reserved for the family until the time the family leases another unit.

- To a unit outside of the Paramount jurisdiction. As indicated above, this option is known as portability. Under portability a family may request to move anywhere in the United States in the jurisdiction of a HA administering a housing choice voucher rental assistance program.

A family is considered to be in good standing if they have not violated the terms of the lease, any program regulations and do not owe any money to the Housing Authority.

When a Family may move

Families in good standing may move to a new unit if:

a) The assisted lease for the old unit has ended because the Program Administrator has terminated the HAP contract for owner breach.

b) The lease was terminated by mutual agreement of the owner and the family.

c) The owner has given the family a notice to vacate for reasons other than a lease violation.

d) The family has given proper notice of lease termination after the initial lease term and in accordance with State Law. Generally, this requires a 30-day notice. However, recommends that families provide a 60-day notice in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new unit.

C. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVES

Generally, families will not be permitted to move more than once in a 12-month period except as noted below:

1. Life Threatening Situations (Witness to a Crime, Victim of a Crime Etc.).
2. Reasonable Accommodation. As a reasonable accommodation, the family may request to move within the initial term of the lease. However, the owner of the property must agree to release the tenant from the lease and the family must locate a unit that accommodates the special need as the family will be required to remain in the second unit for a minimum of 12 months.
3. Mutual Termination. The family and the owner agree to mutually terminate the contract. If a family requests to terminate a HAP contract based on a mutual termination more than once in a twelve month period, the Program Administrator may review the reason for the mutual termination. If the owner is requesting a mutual termination in lieu of enforcing the lease, and there is evidence that the family has violated the lease term, the Program Administrator may decide to terminate the family for non-compliance.

Additional Restrictions on moves

The Program Administrator may also deny families permission to move if there is insufficient funding for continued assistance or if:

The family has violated a Family Obligation.
The family owes the HA money.

Under the Section 8 Certificate Program (which is being phased out), some owners had the option to file a damage claim against the HA for damages caused by the tenant and/or unpaid rent. In event that a family, previously assisted under the Section 8 Certificate program, moves to a new unit and leaves owing monies for unpaid rent and/or damages to the owner of the previous unit, or owes the HA for the debt, the family may not receive another voucher from the Program Administrator until the amount has been repaid. The Program Administrator may allow the tenant to repay such debt in monthly installments during tenancy; however, the family may not transfer to a new unit until the debt is fully satisfied. Proposed termination of the family from the program may result if the family does not adhere to the repayment agreement.

In life threatening situations or cases where there are serious health and safety issues, the Program Administrator may waive this requirement by allowing the family to keep making payments on the existing repayment agreement and issuing a voucher. Such an arrangement will require the approval of either the Assistant Director or the Director of the housing choice voucher rental assistance program. The family will still be required to remain current on the repayment agreement or face possible termination from the program.

How to Initiate a Request to Move

Reserve vacates – A family who will be moving within the HA's jurisdiction must provide the Program Administrator and the property owner with a proper notice. Once the Program Administrator has received the notice, the family will be required to provide current income information. This information is needed in order for the family to be issued a new voucher. If the family has gone through the annual recertification process within the last 60 days, the Program Administrator will use the income provide at that time to issue the new voucher.

At the same time the Voucher is issued, the family will receive a Request for Tenancy Approval. The family should begin looking for housing immediately in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new unit.

If the family has not been able to locate a new unit by the time they are supposed to vacate the old unit, it is the families responsibility to contact the owner and negotiate to stay in the current unit longer. If both parties agree, the family must notify the HA, in writing, that the notice to move has been extended and the new effective date of the notice. Once the notice has been received, the Program Administrator will release payments to the existing owner.

If the owner does not agree to extend the notice, the family may be required to seek alternative housing, at their own expense, in the interim.

Portability

Families seeking to move to another jurisdiction must follow the procedures outlined above. In addition, they must identify the new jurisdiction where they will be moving. Once the Program Administrator has received this information, the Program Administrator will:

1. Notify the receiving HA that the family wishes to relocate into its jurisdiction;

2. Advise the family how to contact and request assistance from the receiving HA and

3. Provide the following documents and information to the receiving HA:
   a) A copy of the family's Voucher, with issue and expiration dates, formally acknowledging the family's ability to move under portability.

   b) The most recent HUD 50058 form and verifications.

   c) The Family Portability Form.

For families assisted under the Paramount HA and choose to transfer to the jurisdiction of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA).

Since HACoLA is the Program Administrator for the Paramount program, transfers between the two jurisdictions flow very easily. Once the family notifies the Program Administrator of the intent to move to Los Angeles County, all paperwork is quickly processed internally. HACoLA absorbs all incoming ports from the Paramount program.

Request for Tenancy approval

For families, wishing to port to another jurisdiction, the Program Administrator generally recommends that the family locate a unit in the other jurisdiction and submit a Request for Tenancy Approval for request to have their paperwork transferred to the receiving HA. This practice helps to ensure that the family's paperwork does not get shifted back and forth if the family changes their mind or is unable to locate suitable housing in the desired jurisdiction. However, this is not a requirement.

For families porting into the City of Paramount jurisdiction, if the family is unable to locate a unit within the allotted time, the Program Administrator will notify the issuing HA that the Voucher did not result in a HAP contract.

Briefing for families wishing to port out

Since families wishing to move to another jurisdiction must understand that the policies and procedures of the receiving HA will prevail, the Program Administrator will provide pre-portability counseling for those families who express an interest in portability. This will include a discussion of difference in payment standards, subsidy standards, and income limits, if applicable.

The option of portability does not apply to families assisted under the housing choice voucher Moderate Rehabilitation program.

Payment to the Receiving HA

If the receiving HA chooses to administer and bill assistance on the Program Administrator's behalf, the Program Administrator will reimburse the receiving HA for costs associated with administering the Voucher, as required in HUD regulations.

Absorption or Administration

For incoming ports, generally, if funding permits, the Program Administrator will accept a family with a valid Voucher from another jurisdiction and absorb the Voucher.

Incoming portable families who have not yet been absorbed will be absorbed before the Program Administrator selects new applicants from the Waiting List.

When the Program Administrator does not absorb the incoming Voucher, it will administer the initial HA's Voucher and the Program Administrator's policies will prevail.

Application of Subsidy Standards

As noted above, the policies of the receiving HA prevail under portability. Therefore, it may be necessary to change the size of the Voucher issued by the initial HA in order to comply with the Program Administrator subsidy standards. If this occurs, the family will be notified in writing of the change.

Income and TTP review for Incoming Portables

The Program Administrator will conduct a recertification interview in order to confirm all eligibility documents. If documents are missing or there has been a change in the family's circumstances, the Program Administrator may re-determine the family's TTP. If a re-determination is necessary, the Program Administrator will not delay issuing the family a voucher or otherwise delay approval of a unit unless the re-determination reveals that the family is not eligible for assistance in the Program Administrator's jurisdiction. In such cases, the family will be referred to the initial Housing Authority for further assistance.

In general, all families porting into the Program Administrator's jurisdiction will be issued a Program Administrator Voucher. The term of the Voucher may not expire before the expiration date noted on the voucher issued by the initial HA. The Program Administrator will determine whether to extend the Voucher term, if necessary, based on the Program Administrator's policy for extension. The Program Administrator will notify the initial HA if such an extension is granted.

Terminations

In cases where the Program Administrator is administering a contract on behalf of another HA, the Program Administrator will notify the initial HA in writing of any termination of assistance within 30 days of the termination.

Chapter 2 Informal hearings

If an Informal Hearing is required and requested by the family, the hearing will be conducted by the Program Administrator only if the participant has been assisted within the Program Administrator's jurisdiction. Such hearings will be conducted using the regular hearing procedures included in this Plan.

The initial HA will be responsible for collecting amounts owed to that HA by the family for claims paid and for monitoring repayment. If the initial HA notifies the Program Administrator that the Family is in arrears or the family has refused to sign a Repayment Agreement, the Program Administrator will terminate assistance to the family.

D. LATERAL TRANSFERS

Lateral transfers are moves in which the tenant will remain in the same complex or development and the only change to the lease and HAP contract will be a unit/apartment number or letter. Cases in which the tenant will be moving to a larger unit within the same complex may also be processed as a lateral transfer, as long as the rent for the unit and all other rental conditions remain the same. If any other change is involved, the move must be processed as a new contract.

In order to initiate a lateral transfer, the owner and participant must write a letter requesting the move and stating that the only change involved is a change in the apartment number or letter. Once this request has been received, a RTA will be mailed to the owner for completion.

Before the lateral transfer can be finalized, the new unit must pass inspection. Payments will not be held during the transition process.

All lateral changes must be documented on a Modification of Lease and Contract form.

Chapter 14
CONTRACT TERMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The chapter identifies the key documents/contracts that set forth the responsibilities of each party involved in the rental assistance relationship and outlines the policies and procedures under which these contracts can be terminated.

A. DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENTS

There are three parties involved in the rental relationship: the housing choice voucher family, the owner and the HA.

The rights and responsibilities of the assisted family are defined in the housing choice voucher or Certificate and the Certified Statement of Family Obligations. A copy of the Voucher or Certificate is provided to the family at admission and each time a new Voucher is issued. The family signs the Certified Statement of Family Obligations annually.

The relationship between the family and the owner is outlined in the rental lease. Generally, the term of the lease is for one year and then turns into a month to month tenancy. Although the Housing Authority is not a part of the lease, HUD regulations allow the Housing Authority to act against the family for serious or repeated violations of the lease.

The terms of the relationship between the owner and the Housing Authority are outlined in the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contract. The term of the HAP contract is the same as the term of the lease.

B. TERMINATION OF THE LEASE BY THE FAMILY: MOVES

For continued tenant assistance, the family cannot terminate the lease until after the initial term of the lease except for material breach of the lease by the owner. The lease determines the notice period for termination to the owner. Most leases require, at minimum, a 30-day notification. However, the Program Administrator recommends that families provide a minimum of a 60-day notice in order to allow enough time for a smooth transition of assistance from the old unit to the new unit. To initiate the lease termination, the family must send a written notice to the owner and the Program Administrator no less than 30 days before the vacate date.

C. TERMINATION OF THE LEASE BY THE OWNER

Terminating the lease during the initial term of the lease.

During the term of the lease, the owner may not terminate the tenancy except for good cause which includes serious or repeated violations of the lease and/or violations of federal, state or local law that imposes obligations on the family in connection with the use of the unit.

Under such conditions, the owner must provide both the family and the HA with a copy of any notice to move or eviction action. An eviction action is defined as a notice to vacate, or a

complaint, or other initial pleading used under State or local law to commence an eviction action. Any eviction notice served to a family must specify the grounds for the termination of the tenancy.

An owner may commence termination of a tenancy for good cause by serving a legal notice of termination on the family for the following reasons:

1. Serious or repeated violation of the terms and conditions of the lease,

2. Violation of Federal, State or local law that imposes obligations on the tenant in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises.

3. Other good cause, including:

   Criminal activity by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or another person under the tenant's control that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by the other residents, or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

   Any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises,

   Tenant disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or behavior resulting in damage to the premises.

Terminating the lease after the initial term of the lease.

After the initial term of the lease, the owner may terminate the lease for other good cause. Examples of other good cause include:

Business or economic reason for regaining possession of the unit;

Owner's desire to repossess the unit for personal or family use or for a purpose other than residential property;

When terminating the lease for business or economic reasons, the owner is required to provide a 90-day notice to both the family and the Program Administrator.

Requests for Criminal Records by Project-based Section 8 Owners

Project-based Section 8 Owners (excludes housing choice voucher owners), that have contracts with the Program Administrator, may request that the Program Administrator obtain criminal records, on their behalf, for the purpose of eviction or lease enforcement. the Program Administrator will, however, charge a fee in order to cover costs associated with the review of criminal records.

Project-based owners must submit the following items in order for the Program Administrator to process criminal records. Owner requests must include:

1. A copy of a signed consent form from each adult household members, age 18 years and older. Included in the consent form must be a legible name, the date of birth, a California

Identification Number, and a Social Security number. This information will be used for the sole purpose of distinguishing persons with similar names or birth dates.

2. An owner's criteria or standards for evicting drug criminals in accordance with HUD regulations (§ 5.857 of 24 CFR Parts 5 et al.); or criteria for evicting other criminals (§ 5.858 of 24 CFR Parts 5 et al.); or a criteria for lease enforcement.

Once criminal records are obtained by the Program Administrator, a determination will be made as to whether a criminal act, as shown by a criminal record, can be used as a basis for eviction or lease enforcement. the Program Administrator will base its determination in accordance with HUD regulations and the owner criteria.

It is important to note that the Program Administrator will not disclose the participant's criminal conviction record nor the content of that record to the owner unless the owner is proceeding with a judicial eviction process. In the case of a judicial eviction, the owner must provide the Program Administrator with a certification that the criminal records are necessary to proceed with the eviction.

D. MUTUAL TERMINATION OF THE LEASE

In cases where the owner and the family agree to terminate the lease, both parties have an obligation to notify the Program Administrator in writing at least 30 days in advance of the vacate date in order that the Program Administrator may avoid overpayment to the owner. If the family has properly notified the Program Administrator and is in good standing, they will be scheduled for an issuance session where they will receive a Voucher and all the necessary documents to search for a new unit.

E. TERMINATION OF THE HAP CONTRACT BY THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

The HAP contract terminates when the Program Administrator terminates program assistance for the family. The Program Administrator may also terminate the HAP contract when the owner has breached the HAP contract.

Any of the following actions will be considered a breach of the HAP contract by the owner:

1. The owner has violated any obligation under the HAP contract for the dwelling unit, including the owner's obligation to maintain the unit to according to HQS standards, including any standards the Program Administrator has adopted in this policy.

2. The owner has violated any obligation under any other HAP contract under housing choice voucher of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f).

3. The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

4. The owner has failed to comply with regulations, the mortgage or note, or the regulatory agreement for projects with mortgages insured by HUD or loans made by HUD.

5. The owner has engaged in drug trafficking.

The Program Administrator may also terminate the HAP contract if:

6. The family is required to move from a unit which is overcrowded based on the Program Administrator's current subsidy standards.

7. Funding is no longer available under the ACC.

8. The family has achieved self-sufficiency. The HAP contract will terminate automatically in cases where no HAP has been made on the family's behalf for 180 days, for post-October 2, 1995 contracts, or twelve months, for pre-October 2, 1995 contracts. Generally, these situations occur when the family has achieved self-sufficiency by increasing their income to the level where 30% of the family's adjusted monthly income is enough to cover the entire cost of the rental unit.

9. Termination due to ineligible Immigration Status

There are no eligible family members and the family either has exhausted their deferral of termination period or is not eligible to receive additional extensions because:

a) granting another deferral will result in an aggregate deferral period of longer than three years or (18 months after November 29, 1996).

b) a determination has been made that other affordable housing is available.

HAP PAYMENTS AND CONTRACT TERMINATIONS

When a HAP contract terminates, the Program Administrator will make payments in accordance with the HAP contract and depending on the reason for the contract termination.

In cases involving a tenant notice to move or a mutual termination, not involving an eviction action, the Program Administrator will pay the owner for the entire last month that the family was in the unit regardless of the actual day of the month that the family moved out. The Program Administrator may also pay a HAP on behalf of the family for the new unit in the same month. However, while the Program Administrator can pay a subsidy for two units in a given month under these conditions, the family may only have physical possession of one unit at a time. A family will be considered to have physical possession of a unit if they still have belongings in the unit and the key to the unit. Under such cases, the family will be required to pay the full rent for one of the units in its possession and the family's portion for the other unit .

In cases involving evictions, the Program Administrator will continue to pay the HAP until the day the family moves out or is evicted.

In cases involving termination of assistance, the Program Administrator will provide the owner and the family of the proposed termination date. If the family does not request a hearing or the hearing is decided in the Program Administrator's favor, the HAP payments will terminate in

accordance with the notification. If a family continues to occupy the unit after assistance is terminated, the family is responsible for the total amount of rent due to the owner.

If HAP payments are released to the owner for periods of time beyond the dates set forth above, the owner will be required to return all monies to the Program Administrator within 30 days or within the time specified in any approved repayment agreement. The Program Administrator also reserves the right to deduct any monies from other HAP payments being made to the owner by the Program Administrator. If the owner fails to repay the HAP, the account will be forwarded for further action.

Chapter 15
FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The HA may deny or terminate assistance for a family because of the family's action or failure to act. The Program Administrator will provide families with a written description of the Family Obligations under the program, the grounds under which the Program Administrator can deny or terminate assistance, and the Program Administrator's informal hearing procedures. This Chapter describes when the HA is required to deny or terminate assistance, and the Program Administrator's policies for the denial or termination of assistance.

A. GROUNDS FOR DENIAL/TERMINATION

If denial or termination is based upon behavior resulting from a disability, the Program Administrator will delay the denial or termination in order to determine if there is a reasonable accommodation pursuant to law, that would cure the grounds for the denial or termination.

Form of Denial/Termination

Denial of assistance for an applicant may include any or all of the following:

1. Denial or withdrawal of a voucher
2. Refusal to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
3. Refusal to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

1. Refusal to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
2. Termination HAP under an outstanding HAP contract
3. Refusal to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Mandatory Denial and Termination

The Program Administrator must deny assistance to applicants, and terminate assistance for participants under the following conditions:

1. If any member of the family fails to sign and submit to HUD or the Program Administrator required consent forms for obtaining information.

2. If no member of the family is an U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant.

3. If the family is under a post-October 2, 1995 contract and 180 days have elapsed, or under a pre-October 2, 1995 contract and twelve months have elapsed since The Program Administrator's last housing assistance payment was made.

Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance

The Program Administrator may at any time deny program assistance to an applicant, or terminate program assistance to a participant, for any of the following reasons:

1. The family violates any family obligation under the program as listed in 24 CFR 982.551.

2. Any member of the family has ever engaged in serious lease violations while a resident of federally assisted housing or within the past five years has been evicted from a federally assisted housing program.

3. The family currently owes rent or other amounts to the Program Administrator or to another HA in connection with housing choice voucher or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

4. The family has not reimbursed an HA for amounts paid under a Housing Contract to an owner for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease.

5. The family breaches an agreement with any HA to pay amounts owed to any HA, or amounts paid to an owner by any HA.

6. The family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward the Program Administrator personnel.

   "Abusive or violent behavior towards the Program Administrator or the City HA personnel" includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of expletives that are generally considered insulting, racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to insult or intimidate, may be cause for termination or denial.

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

Actual physical abuse or violence will always be cause for denial or termination.

7. The family supplies false, inaccurate or incomplete information on any application for federal housing programs, including public housing and housing choice voucher. The family may be denied for a period not to exceed two years from the date of such a determination by the Program Administrator that information which was provided was false, inaccurate or incomplete, provided that no further cause for denial exists.

8. Any family member engages in drug-related or violent criminal activity.

Welfare to Work Program

Failure to fulfill the obligations and conditions of the Welfare to Work program is grounds for termination of assistance.

Specifically, the Program Administrator will terminate assistance for Welfare to Work families if the family fails to comply with GAIN requirements, the FSS Contract of Participation and/or other required Self Sufficiency requirements without good cause.

B. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

1. The family must supply any information that the Program Administrator or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program, including income, assets, and accurate family composition. Submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status (as provided by 24 CFR part 812) is required. "Information" includes any requested certification, release or other documentation.

2. The family must report all changes in family income and composition in writing immediately as they occur. The owner of the unit and the Program Administrator must approve changes in composition of the assisted family. The family must:

   - Report the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child;
   - Request the Program Administrator approval to add any other family member;
   - Notify the Program Administrator when a family member no longer lives in the unit.

   If the Program Administrator gives approval, a live-in attendant or a foster child may live in the unit. Failure to report changes, making false reports and/or allowing unauthorized people in the unit is cause for termination from the program.

3. Supply any information that the Program Administrator or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program. Information supplied by the family must be true and complete. Information includes any requested certification,

release or other documentation in accordance with 24 CFR part 760 and 24 CFR part 813, including:

a) information requested by the Program Administrator or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled or interim determination of family income and composition;
b) required evidence of citizenship or eligible status;
c) disclosure and verification of social security numbers (as provided by 24 CFR part 750)

4. All information supplied by the family must be true and complete.

5. Maintain the rental unit. The family is responsible for any violation of Housing Quality Standards resulting from:

a) failure to pay for tenant-paid utilities;
b) failure to furnish required stove and or refrigerator if to be provided by family; or
c) damage to the unit or grounds by the family or its guests beyond normal wear and tear.

6. The family must allow the Program Administrator to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.

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

8. The family must notify the owner and, at the same time, notify the Program Administrator before the family moves out of the unit or terminates the lease on notice to the owner. The family must promptly give the Program Administrator a copy of any owner eviction notice.

9. The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence. The family must not assign the lease, sublease or transfer the unit.

10. Members of the household may engage in legal profit making activities in the unit, but only if such activities are incidental to primary use of the unit as a residence by members of the family.

11. The family must supply any information or certification requested by the Program Administrator to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any HA-requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with the Program Administrator for this purpose. The family must promptly notify the Program Administrator of absence from the unit.

12. The family must not own or have any interest in the unit.

13. The members of the family must not commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the programs.

14. The members of the family may not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity.

15. An assisted family, or members of the family, may not receive housing choice voucher tenant-based assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or for a different unit, under any duplicative (as determined by HUD or in accordance with HUD requirements) federal, State or local housing assistance program.

16. Pay only the amount authorized by the Program Administrator on the approved lease. Any amount paid by the Family other than the authorized amount is considered an illegal side payment and is cause for termination of the Housing Assistance subsidy. The Program Administrator may authorize additional payments for other amenities.

17. The family must not sublease or let the unit.

18. The family must not assign the lease or transfer the unit. In cases where there is a change in the Head of Household, the lease may be transferred to the new Head but only with the consent of the owner of the property and the Program Administrator.

Housing Authority Discretion

In deciding whether to deny or terminate assistance because of action or failure to act by members of the family, the Program Administrator has discretion to consider all of the circumstances in each case, including:

- the seriousness of the case,
- the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members,
- the length of time since the violation occurred and more recent record of compliance, and the effects of denial or termination of assistance on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure to act.

The Program Administrator may impose, as a condition of continued assistance for other family members, a requirement that family members who participated in or were culpable for the action or failure will not reside and/or visit in the unit. The Program Administrator may permit the other members of a family to continue in the program.

Enforcing Family Obligations

Explanations and Terms

HQS Breach: The inspector will determine if an HQS breach as identified in 24 CFR 982.404 (b) is the responsibility of the family. Families may be given extensions to correct HQS breaches by the housing choice voucher Unit Supervisor.

Lease Violations: The following criteria will be used to decide if a serious or repeated violation of the lease will cause a termination of assistance:

If the owner terminates tenancy through court action for serious or repeated violation of the lease.

If the owner notifies the family of intention to terminate tenancy for serious or repeated lease violations, and the family moves from the unit prior to the completion of court action, and the Program Administrator determines that the cause is a serious or repeated violation of the lease based on available evidence.

If there are police reports, neighborhood complaints or other third party information, and the Program Administrator has verified the information. Lack of receipts or other proof of rent payments by the family may also be considered verification of lease violations.

Denial of Additional Family Members: Proposed additions to the family (including live-in attendants) may be denied based upon the same criteria applied to applicants and participants as described elsewhere in this Administrative Plan. Additionally, proposed additions may be denied to persons who do not meet the Program Administrator's definition of family.

Family Member moves out: Families are required to notify the Program Administrator within ten working days if any family member leaves the assisted household. When the family notifies the Program Administrator, they must furnish the following information:

The date the family member moved out.

The new address, if known, of the family member.

A statement as to whether the family member is temporarily or permanently absent.

Related income, asset or deduction changes resulting from the member moving.

Limitation on Profit-making Activity in Unit: If the business activity area results in the inability of the family to use any of the critical living areas, such as a bedroom utilized for a business which is not available for sleeping, it will be considered a violation.

If the Program Administrator determines that the use of the unit as a business is not incidental to its use as a dwelling unit, it will be considered a violation of family obligations.

Interest in Unit: The owner may not reside in the assisted unit, under any circumstances, including as a live-in aide, regardless of whether (s)he is a member of the assisted family, unless assistance is being provided for a mobile home and the family owns the mobile home and rents the pad under the Certificate or Voucher program.

Fraud: In each case, the Program Administrator will consider which family members were involved, the circumstances, and any hardship that might be caused to innocent members.

Drug Related and Violent Criminal Activity

Drug-related criminal activity refers to the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, use or possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use a controlled substance.

Drug-related criminal activity does not include the prior use or possession of a controlled substance if:

1) the family member had an addiction to the substance and has recovered or
2) is recovering from the addiction and does not currently use or possess the substance and has demonstrated successful current participation or completion of a rehabilitation program.

The Program Administrator may take action against the family for drug-related criminal activity *on or off the* premises, *not just on or near the* premises. An arrest or conviction is not required to deny or terminate assistance.

Violent criminal activity includes any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against a person or property, and the activity is being engaged in by any family member. Violent criminal activity also includes activity which occurs within the family, such as during domestic disputes.

The Program Administrator may consider arrests, convictions, no contest pleas, fines, city ordinance violations or other credible preponderance of evidence in determining if a violation has occurred.

Ineligibility if Evicted for Drug-Related Activity

Persons evicted from public housing, Indian housing, Section 23, or any housing choice voucher program because of drug-related criminal activity will be denied assistance for a three-year period beginning on the date of such eviction.

The Program Administrator may waive this requirement if:

> The person demonstrates successful completion of a rehabilitation program approved by the Program Administrator, or
>
> The circumstances leading to the eviction no longer exist. For example, the individual involved in drugs is no longer in the household because the person is incarcerated.

Applicants will be denied assistance if they have been:

Convicted of drug-related or violent criminal activity until a period of three years has passed following the end of a conviction/incarceration/ (whichever is later) with no further arrests or convictions (other than minor traffic violations).

Participants may be terminated if they have been:

> Arrested, convicted or whose tenancy is being terminated due to drug-related or violent criminal activity or whose activities have created a disturbance in the building or neighborhood.

If the family violates the lease for drug-related or violent criminal activity, the Program Administrator will terminate assistance.

In appropriate cases, the Program Administrator may permit the family to continue receiving assistance provided that family members determined to have engaged in the prescribed activities will not reside and/or visit in the unit. If the violating member is a minor, the Program Administrator may consider individual circumstances with the advice of Juvenile Court officials.

Screening Out Illegal Drug Users and Alcohol Abusers

The Program Administrator will prohibit admission to any person in cases where the Program Administrator determines that there is reasonable cause to believe that the person is illegally using a controlled substance, or abuses alcohol in a way that may interfere with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. This includes cases where a determination has been that there is a *pattern* of illegal use of a controlled substance, or *pattern* of alcohol abuse. The Program Administrator will utilize criminal background records as a tool to determine whether a pattern exists or whether an applicant is abusing alcohol or has committed drug-related crimes. Specific information on Program Administrator's applicant screening standards and criminal background checks can be found on page 11 of this plan.

Confidentiality of Criminal Records

Criminal records received by the Program Administrator shall be maintained confidential, not misused, nor improperly disseminated and kept locked during non-business hours. Also, all criminal records will be destroyed no later than 30 days after a final determination is made.

Disclosure of Criminal Records to Family

The applicant or household member requesting to be added to the lease will be provided with a copy of the criminal record upon request and an opportunity to dispute the record. Applicants will be provided with the opportunity to dispute the record at an informal review. Participants may contest such records at an informal hearing.

Required Evidence

In determining whether to deny or terminate assistance based on drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity, the Program Administrator may deny or terminate assistance if the preponderance of evidence indicates that a family member has engaged in such activity, regardless of whether the family member has been arrested or convicted.

Notice of Termination of Assistance

In any instance where the Program Administrator decides to terminate assistance to the family, the Program Administrator must give the family a written notice that includes:

1. The reason(s) for the proposed termination,

2. The effective date of the proposed termination,

3. Information regarding the family's right to request an Informal Hearing to be held before termination of assistance.

4. The date by which a request for an informal hearing must be received by the Program Administrator.

A final notice of determination and date of termination will then be sent to the participant if no hearing is requested within the allowable time or if the Informal Hearing confirms the termination.

The Program Administrator will simultaneously provide written notice of the contract termination to the owner so that it will coincide with the termination of assistance. The notice to the owner will not include any details regarding the reason for termination of assistance.

C. PROCEDURES FOR NON-CITIZENS

Termination due to Ineligible Immigrant Status

Assistance may not be terminated while verification of the participant family's eligible immigration status is pending.

Participant families in which all members are neither U.S. citizens nor eligible immigrants must have their assistance terminated. They must be given an opportunity for a hearing upon notification of the proposed termination.

Temporary Deferral of Termination of Assistance

Ineligible families, who were participants as of June 19, 1995, may request a temporary deferral of termination of assistance in order to allow time to locate affordable housing and thereby preserve the family.

Temporary deferral of termination of assistance is also available to mixed families who were participants on June 19, 1995, who elected not to accept prorated assistance, and are not eligible for continued assistance. The Program Administrator must allow the mixed family time to find housing for ineligible members or for the entire family by deferring the termination.

Mixed families who choose temporary deferral of termination of assistance may change to prorated assistance at the end of any deferral period, if they have made a good-faith effort to locate housing.

Criteria for Approving Temporary Deferral of Termination of Assistance

The Program Administrator will grant temporary deferral so long as the family makes reasonable efforts to find affordable housing**.** Affordable housing is defined as housing that is standard, of appropriate size, and for which the rent plus utilities is no more than 25% greater than the family's current Total Tenant Payment, as calculated by the

Program Administrator. To determine whether a family is eligible for temporary deferral of termination of assistance, or for a renewal of temporary deferral of termination of assistance, the Program Administrator will:

> Calculate Total Tenant Payment plus 25% for the family, and compare this amount to the data in its rent reasonableness survey for the unit size. If the data indicates that units are not available at the affordable rent, the deferral will be renewed.
>
> Require a search record to document the family's efforts to locate housing before granting or extending temporary deferral of termination of assistance. This information is to be provided on a "Proof of Effort" form.

Length of Deferral

The initial temporary deferral is granted for an interval not to exceed six months. Additional deferrals can be made, up to a maximum of three years or for 18 months if the family chooses deferral after November 29, 1996. A notice is sent to the family at the beginning of each deferral period reminding them of their ineligibility for full assistance and their responsibility to seek other housing.

The family will be notified in writing sixty days before the end of the three year maximum deferral period (or the 18 month deferral period, whichever is applicable) that there cannot be another deferral, and will be offered the option of prorated assistance if they are a mixed family and have made a good-faith effort to locate affordable housing.

False or Incomplete Information

When the Program Administrator has substantive documentation (such as a permanent resident card or information from another agency) that contradicts the declaration of citizenship made by an applicant or participant, an investigation will be conducted and the individual given an opportunity to present relevant information.

If the individual is unable to verify their citizenship, the Program Administrator may give him/her an opportunity to provide a new declaration as an eligible immigrant or to elect not to contend their status. The Program Administrator will then verify eligible status, deny, terminate, or prorate as applicable.

The Program Administrator will deny or terminate assistance based on the submission of false information or misrepresentations.

Procedure for Denial or Termination

If the family (or any member) claimed eligible immigrant status and the INS primary and secondary verifications failed to document the status, the family may make an appeal to the INS and request a hearing with the Program Administrator either after the INS appeal or in lieu of the INS appeal.

After the Program Administrator has made a determination of ineligibility, the family will be notified of the determination and the reasons and informed of the option for prorated

assistance (if applicable) or, for participants who qualify, for Temporary Deferral of Termination of Assistance.

D. $0 ASSISTANCE TENANTS

Old Contracts

For contracts that were effective before October 2, 1995, the participant is notified of the right to remain on the program when 30% of the family's monthly adjusted income is enough to cover all cost of the rent and, as a consequence, no HAP is paid on the families behalf. If the HAP remains at $0 and the family is still in the unit after 12 months, assistance is terminated. If within the 12-month period, an owner rent increase or a decrease in the TTP causes the family to be eligible for a housing assistance payment, the Program Administrator will resume assistance payments for the family.

New Contracts

For contracts effective after October 2, 1995, the family may remain in the unit at $0 assistance for up to 180 days after the last HAP payment. If the family is still in the unit after 180 days, assistance is terminated. If within the 180-day period, an owner rent increase or a decrease in the TTP causes the family to be eligible for a housing assistance payment, the Program Administrator will resume assistance payments for the family.

In order for a family to move to another unit during the 180 days, the rent for the new unit would have to be high enough to necessitate a housing assistance payment.

E. OPTION NOT TO TERMINATE FOR MISREPRESENTATION OF INCOME

If the family has misrepresented any facts that caused the Program Administrator to overpay assistance, the Program Administrator may choose not to terminate and may offer to continue assistance provided that the family agrees to pay the Program Administrator the amount owed and either pays the Program Administrator in full or executes a Repayment Agreement and makes payments in accordance with the agreement.

F. MISREPRESENTATION IN COLLUSION WITH OWNER

If the family willingly and knowingly commits fraud or is involved in any other illegal scheme with the owner, the Program Administrator will deny or terminate assistance.

G. MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND DEADLINES

It is a Family Obligation to supply information, documentation, and certifications as needed for the Program Administrator to complete required HA processes. The Program Administrator schedules appointments and sets deadlines in order to obtain the required information. Failure to supply requested information can result in denial or termination of assistance. Examples of failing to supply requested information can include: failing to sign necessary documents, failing to return documents or returning incomplete or altered documents, failing to complete all information requested on documents, etc.

The obligations also require that the family keep all appointments and allow the Program Administrator to inspect the assisted unit. All scheduled inspections are considered "appointments".

The family will receive information about the requirement to keep appointments, and the number of times that appointments are rescheduled as specified below. Appointments are scheduled and time requirements imposed for the following events and circumstances:

1. Eligibility for Admissions
2. Verification Procedures
3. Voucher Issuance and Briefings
4. HQS Inspections
5. Recertifications
6. Appeals (Informal Hearing /Reviews)

Examples of good cause for missing appointments or failing to provide information by deadlines are medical and/or family emergencies. In such cases, the family may be requested to provide verification of such circumstances.

An applicant or participant who fails to keep appointments, or to supply information required by a deadline without notifying the Program Administrator may be sent a Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance for failure to comply with program regulations.

The family is granted two opportunities before they receive a notice of denial or termination for breach of a family obligation. After issuance of the denial or termination notice, if the family offers to correct the breach within the time allowed to request a review or hearing, the notice may be rescinded after the family corrects the breach, if the family does not have a history of non-compliance. For families with a history of non-compliance, the Program Administrator may elect to hold the Review or Hearing.

CHAPTER 16
INFORMAL HEARINGS AND COMPLAINTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will cover the HA's policy and procedures for informal reviews and informal hearings. This chapter defines the Program Administrator's responsibilities to applicants and participants.

A. APPLICANTS - PREFERENCE DENIALS

If the Program Administrator determines that an applicant is not eligible for a preference, the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing. Although such a determination does not render the applicant ineligible to receive assistance, the applicant's file is considered low priority.

If the applicant disagrees with the decision, the applicant must in writing request to review the decision to the Supervisor of the Application and Eligibility Unit within ten days of the date of the notification. The request should also provide all information and documents supporting the applicant's request. The supervisor will review the file and determine if the decision was proper or if new information provided by the family warrants a change in the original determination. The supervisor will notify the applicant of their decision.

If the determination was properly made, the applicant's file will remain low priority until the family notifies the Program Administrator of a change in circumstance that qualifies the family for a preference.

B. INFORMAL REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR APPLICANTS

Reviews are provided for applicants. Applicants are defined as families who are on the housing choice voucher waiting list and are awaiting the issuance of a housing choice voucher or families who have been issued a Voucher but have not yet been assisted under a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract.

When the Program Administrator denies assistance to an applicant, the family must be notified in writing. The notice must contain:

The reason(s) for the decision,

The procedure for requesting an informal review if the applicant does not agree with the decision and

The time limit for requesting a review.

The Program Administrator must provide applicants with the opportunity for an Informal Review of decisions denying issuance of a Certificate or Voucher or participation in the program.

Informal Reviews are not required for established policies, procedures, and the Program Administrator determinations such as:

1. Discretionary administrative determinations by the Program Administrator

2. General policy issues or class grievances

3. A determination of the family unit size under the Program Administrator subsidy standards

4. Refusal to extend or suspend a Certificate or Voucher

5. Disapproval of lease

6. Determination that unit is not in compliance with HQS

7. Determination that unit is not in accordance with HQS due to family size or composition

Applicants who are denied assistance based on ineligible immigration status are entitled to an informal hearing (rather than an informal review).

Procedure for Review

A request for an Informal Review must be received in writing by the close of the business day, no later than ten days from the date of the Program Administrator's notification of denial of assistance. The informal review will be scheduled within 30 days from the date the request is received.

The Informal Review may not be conducted by the person who made or approved the decision under review, nor a subordinate of such person. The Review may be conducted by:

- A staff person who is not the person who made the decision or his/her subordinate
- An individual from outside the HA

If the applicant fails to appear for the Informal Review and has not contacted the Program Administrator in advance to reschedule, the Program Administrator's proposed disposition of the grievance will become final. The Program Administrator may reschedule the review but only if the family can show good cause for the failure to appear.

At the Informal Review, the applicant may present oral or written objections to the decision. Both the Program Administrator and the family may present evidence and witnesses. The family may use an attorney or other representative to assist them at their own expense.

A Notice of the Review decision will be provided in writing to the applicant within thirty days after the review. It shall include the decision of the review officer, and an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

All requests for a review, supporting documentation, and a copy of the final decision will be retained in the applicant's file.

C. INFORMAL HEARING FOR PARTICIPANTS

When an Informal Hearing may be requested

A participant family must be given an opportunity for an informal hearing to consider whether certain the Program Administrator decisions are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations and the Program Administrator policies.

In the following cases, the Program Administrator must give the participant an opportunity for an informal hearing before the Program Administrator terminates HAP for the family under an existing HAP contract.

1. A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of the income to compute the housing assistance payment.

2. A determination of the appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from the Program Administrator utility allowance schedule.

3. A determination of the family unit size under the Program Administrator subsidy standards.

4. A determination that a certificate program family is residing in a unit with a larger number of bedrooms than appropriate for the family unit size under the Program Administrator subsidy standards, or the Program Administrator determination to deny the family request for a waiver from the standards.

5. A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's action or failure to act.

6. A determination to terminate assistance because the participant family has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under the Program Administrator policy and HUD rules.

7. A decision to deny a Voucher reissuance, to refuse to agree to a new Contract with the participant, or to terminate assistance on behalf of the participant. **Exception:** No further hearing is required prior to denial of assistance if:

   a) The ground for denial of reissuance is the tenant's failure to pay an owner's claim for damages, vacancy loss or unpaid rent, <u>and</u>
   b) A prior informal hearing on the validity and amount of that claim has been held (or was not requested by the participant).

c) However, the participant must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to supply proof of payment of such owner's claim.

Notification

When the matter in question is:

1. the determination of the family's annual or adjusted income or computation of the housing assistance payment; or
2. appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities; or
3. family unit size,

The Program Administrator must notify the family that they may ask for an explanation of the basis of the Program Administrator determination. The family must also be notified that if the family does not agree with the explanation, the family may request in writing an informal hearing on the decision.

When the matter in question is:

1. Certificate family residing in too large a unit, or the Program Administrator's refusal to issue a waiver to subsidy standards; or
2. Termination due to the family's action or failure to act; or
3. Absence from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted;

The Program Administrator must give the family prompt written notice that the family may request in writing an informal hearing on the decision.

When the Program Administrator has made a decision to:

1. Terminate Housing Assistance Payments on behalf of a participant under an active Contract; or
2. Refuse to reissue a Voucher; or
3. Refuse to execute a new contract with a program participant,

The family must be given written notice of the opportunity for an informal hearing before the termination of Housing Assistance Payments.

The notice must:

- Contain a brief statement of reasons for the decision,
- Inform the participant regarding his/her right to an informal hearing,
- Advise the participant that a request for an informal hearing must be in writing,
- Advise the participant that the Program Administrator must receive the request within 10 calendar days of the date of the letter.

- Explain the basic elements of the informal hearing, i.e., right of the participant to present evidence, question witnesses, to have representation, the Program Administrator designated impartial hearing officer a written decision.

Prior to Hearing

Before the informal hearing, the family may request an appointment to examine any documents in the family's portion of the file that are directly relevant to the hearing. The family must be allowed to copy any such document at the family's expense. If the Program Administrator does not make the document available for examination on request of the family, the Program Administrator may not use the document at the hearing.

The Program Administrator requires that the family submit any documents that are directly relevant to the hearing either before or at the time of the hearing. The Program Administrator must be allowed to copy any such documents at the Program Administrator's expense. If the family does not make the document available for examination on request of the Program Administrator, the family may not rely on the document at the hearing.

During the course of the hearing, if the family offers to submit evidence, the Hearing Officer is not required to, but may exercise the discretion to allow the family to submit a document within a specified period.

Hearing Process

When a participant family has timely requested a hearing, the Program Administrator will proceed within 15 days of receipt of the request to notify the participant of the date, time and location of the hearing. There may be one postponement of the hearing date by the participant. A request to reschedule must be requested before the scheduled date and may not extend beyond the proposed termination date. Any additional postponements may only be for good cause such as, but not limited to hospitalization, illness or injury. Second postponement requests must be supported by verification of the cause.

Hearing Officer

The Hearing Officer may be either a Program Administrator employee or an outside third party contracted by the Program Administrator. The Hearing Officer must not have made or approved the decision under review nor be a subordinate of the person who made the decision. The Hearing Officer will audio record the hearing and follow the format set forth below.

Opening

The Hearing Officer will convene the informal hearing with both parties and their representatives present. (If the participant is represented, the participant will have provided the Program Administrator written authorization for the representative to do so.)

The Hearing Officer will explain the informal hearing procedures, state the purpose of the hearing, and inform the participant that the hearing will be

recorded. The Hearing Officer may request clarification or ask questions of either side or witnesses at anytime during the Informal Hearing. Each person present will introduce himself or herself.

Presentations

Each side will have an opportunity to present its case and be allowed to present witnesses and submit relevant evidence as determined by the Informal Hearing Officer. (Witnesses may be cross-examined at this time.) The Program Administrator begins the hearing by presenting the Notice of Hearing. The Program Administrator will then present a copy of the original notification to the participant regarding the matter, followed by the evidence, including testimony of witnesses, which supports the allegations in the notification.

Rebuttals

Each side will have an opportunity to present rebuttal to the evidence presented.

Final Summary

Each side is then allowed to summarize its arguments.

Conclusion of Hearing

The Hearing Officer may continue a hearing if additional information from either party is requested. Otherwise, the Hearing Officer will advise each side that the testimony and evidence will be reviewed, a final decision made and a determination letter issued stating the decision and the reasons for the decision within twenty working days. The decision of the Hearing Officer is final.

The Hearing Officer will use the following principles for the Informal Hearings and decisions:

a) Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

b) Determinations on the matter being reviewed shall be based on the evidence presented at the hearing.

c) If the issues and differences can properly be resolved at the hearing, the Hearing Officer should attempt to resolve them through mutual consent as long as the resolution is not contrary to applicable law, HUD regulations and/or the Program Administrator's policies.

d) The purpose of the hearing is to determine if the original decision made in the case is in accordance with the law, HUD regulations and the Program Administrator’s policies.

e) The Hearing Officer may not make a finding contrary to HUD regulations or requirements, contrary to federal, state or local law or exceeding the authority of the Hearing Officer.

When an Informal Hearing is not required

The Program Administrator is not required to provide a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing for the following:

1. To review discretionary administrative determinations by the Program Administrator, or to consider general policy issues or class grievances;

2. To review the Program Administrator's determination that a unit does not comply with HQS, EXCEPT when the breach of HQS was determined to be tenant-caused;

3. To review decision by the Program Administrator to exercise or not exercise any remedy against the owner under an outstanding Contract, including the termination of HAP to the owner;

4. To review the Program Administrator's decision not to approve a Family's request for an extension or suspension of the term of the voucher;

5. Determination that the unit is not accordance with HQS due to family size;

6. Establishment of the Program Administrator's schedule of utility allowances for families in the program; or

7. The Program Administrator determination not to approve a unit or lease.

Chapter 17
OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes the HA's policies and guidelines for the recovery of debts and the use of repayment agreements. Before a debt is assessed against a family or owner, the file must contain documentation to support the Program Administrator's claim that the debt is owed. The file must further contain written documentation of the method of calculation, in a clear format for review by the owner or the family, as appropriate.

When families or owners owe money to the HA, every effort will be made to collect the debt. A variety of collection tools to recover debts may be used including, but not limited to:

- Requests for lump sum payments
- Repayment agreements
- Abatements
- Deductions
- Collection agencies
- Credit bureaus
- Civil suits

A. REPAYMENT AGREEMENT FOR FAMILIES

A Repayment Agreement as used in this Plan is a document entered into between the Program Administrator, on behalf of the City of Paramount HA, and the person who owes a debt to the Program Administrator. The Repayment Agreement contains an acknowledgment by the person of the debt in a specific amount, the terms of repayment, any special provisions of the agreement, and the remedies available to the Program Administrator upon default of the agreement.

If a repayment agreement is to be entered into, the Program Administrator will usually require that the family pay an initial lump sum (in an amount determined by the Program Administrator) with the remaining balance to be paid in equal payments over a period of time not to exceed 12 months for amounts under $2,400 or 24 months for any amount in excess of $2,400.

In determining the initial lump sum, the Program Administrator will consider the total amount owed, the ability of the person to make the remaining payments and the percentage of the total sum owed. In most cases, the Program Administrator will require a significant initial lump sum as part of entering into a Repayment Agreement to help ensure full payment to the Program Administrator and to reduce the monthly payment.

Late Payments

A payment will be considered to be in arrears if:

The payment has not been received by the close of the business day on which the payment was due. If the due date is on a weekend or holiday, the due date will be at the close of the next business day.

If the family's repayment agreement is in arrears, the Program Administrator more do one or more of the following:

- Require the family to pay the entire arrearage plus current month's payment in order avoid loss of assistance, or
- Require the family to pay the balance in full in order to avoid losing assistance, or
- Pursue civil collection of the balance due, or
- Terminate the housing assistance.

Requests To Move

If the family requests a move to another unit and has a repayment agreement in place and the repayment agreement is not in arrears, the family will be required to pay the balance in full prior to the issuance of a voucher.

If the family requests a move to another unit and is in arrears on a repayment agreement unless they pay the balance in full, the request will be denied.

Under special circumstances, the Program Administrator may make an exception and allow a family to move without paying the entire balance of the debt if the family is current with its payments. The Program Administrator may also allow a family who is in arrears to become current in order to process a move if the move is for one of the following reasons:

HAP contract is terminated due to owner non-compliance

A natural disaster

The unit is uninhabitable or has major HQS deficiencies that are not the result of a family action or inaction.

A life-threatening situation such as the family is a witness to or a victim of a crime and must move for safety reasons. The family will be required to provide proof in such cases.

The Program Administrator may not agree to a repayment agreement if the family already has a Repayment Agreement in place, or if the family has breached previous Repayment Agreements.

Guidelines for Repayment Agreements

The Program Administrator, at its sole discretion, will determine on a case-by-case basis whether or not to offer a family a repayment agreement for monies owed to the Program Administrator.

Repayment Agreements will be executed between the Program Administrator and the head of household or other adult family member.

Monthly payments may be decreased in cases of hardship with the prior notice of the family, verification of hardship, and the approval of a housing choice voucher Housing Supervisor.

Additional Debt Incurred: If the family has a Repayment Agreement in place and incurs an additional debt to the Program Administrator:

> The Program Administrator may choose, at its discretion, to agree to more than one Repayment Agreement at a time with the same family.
>
> If a Repayment Agreement is in arrears more than 30 days, any new debts must be paid in full.

B. FAMILY DEBTS OWED FOR CLAIMS

If a family owes money to the Program Administrator for claims paid to an owner:

> The Program Administrator may require the family to repay the amount in full.
>
> The Program Administrator may agree to a Repayment Agreement.

C. FAMILY DEBTS DUE TO FRAUD/NON-REPORTING OF INFORMATION

HUD's definition of program fraud and abuse is a single act or pattern of actions that:

> Constitutes false statement, omission, or concealment of a substantive fact, made with intent to deceive or mislead, and that results in payment of housing choice voucher program funds in violation of housing choice voucher program requirements.

Family Error/Late Reporting

Families who owe money to the Program Administrator due to the family's failure to report increases in income or change in allowances or deductions will be required to repay in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Repayment Section of this Chapter.

Program Fraud

Families who owe money to the Program Administrator due to program fraud will be required to repay in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Repayment Section of this Chapter.

In addition, the case may be referred to the Inspector General and/or the Program Administrator may refer the case for criminal prosecution.

D. FAMILY DEBTS PAID IN FULL

If the Program Administrator determines not to enter into a repayment agreement, or if the repayment agreement is breached and the Program Administrator demands payment of the balance in full, the family must pay the full amount due and owing in one lump sum. If the family fails to pay, the Program Administrator may pursue collection through a collection agency or a civil action and may notify credit agencies of the debt. Whether or not the amount is paid, the Program Administrator does not waive its right to take other action including termination of assistance or referral for criminal prosecution in appropriate cases.

E. OWNER DEBTS TO THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

If the Program Administrator determines that the owner has retained Housing Assistance or Claim Payments the owner is not entitled to, the Program Administrator may deduct the amounts owed from future Housing Assistance or Claim Payments owed the owner for any units under contract.

If future Housing Assistance or Claim Payments are insufficient to reclaim the amounts owed, the Program Administrator may do one or more of the following:

Require the owner to pay the amount in full within thirty days

Agree to a repayment agreement with the owner for the amount owed. Repayment period may not exceed 12 months

Pursue collections through the local court system

Pursue collections through a collection agency

Restrict the owner from future participation

F. WRITING OFF DEBTS

Debts may be written off if:

The debtor's whereabouts are unknown and the debt is more than three years old.

A determination is made that the debtor is judgment proof.

The debtor is deceased and has an insufficient estate.

The debtor is confined to an institution indefinitely or for more than three years.

The amount is less than $100 and the debtor cannot be located.

Chapter 18
CLAIMS, MOVE-OUT AND CLOSE-OUT INSPECTIONS
(For Contracts Effective Before October 2, 1995)

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes the HA's policies, procedures and standards for servicing Contracts that were effective before October 2, 1995. Certificate and Voucher contracts in this category have provisions for the HA's liability to owners when families move out. Vouchers and Certificates have a provision for damages, and Certificates, in addition, have a provision for vacancy loss.

A. OWNER CLAIMS

Under HAP Contracts effective prior to October 2, 1995, owners may make a special claim for damages, unpaid rent, and vacancy loss (vacancy loss cannot be claimed in the Voucher Program) after the tenant has vacated the unit.

Owner claims for payment for unpaid rent, damages, or vacancy loss will be reviewed for accuracy and completeness and compared with records in the file. The HA establishes standards by which to evaluate claims, but the burden of proof rests with the owner.

If vacancy loss is claimed, the Program Administrator will ascertain whether the family gave proper notice of its intent to move. The file will also be reviewed to verify owner compliance at the time the contract was terminated.

The Program Administrator will pay properly filed claims to the owner as a function of the contract, but the tenant is ultimately responsible to reimburse the HA for claims paid to the owner.

B. UNPAID RENT

Unpaid rent only applies to the tenant's portion of rent while the tenant is in residence under the assisted lease and only until the termination date of the HAP Contract.

Separate agreements are not considered a tenant obligation under the lease and the HA will not reimburse the owner for any claims under these agreements.

C. VACANCY LOSS IN THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Vacancy Loss is applicable to the Certificate Program only. Vacancy loss is paid if the move was in violation of the notice requirements in the lease, or the result of an eviction.

In order to claim vacancy loss, the unit must be available for lease and the landlord must:

1. Notify the Program Administrator within 72 hours upon learning of the vacancy, or prospective vacancy, and

2. Pursue all possible activities to fill the vacancy, including, but not limited to:

    a. Contacting applicants on the owner's waiting list, if any;

    b. Seeking eligible applicants by listing the unit with the HA,

    c. Advertising the availability of the unit, and

    d. Not rejecting potentially eligible applicants except for good cause.

In the event that a unit becomes vacant because of death, the HA will permit the owner to keep the HAP for the month in which the tenant died, but may pay no further HAP.

If the tenant moves *after* the date given on their notice of intent to vacate, the landlord may claim vacancy loss by providing acceptable documentation that there was a bona fide prospective tenant to whom the unit could have been rented.

D. DAMAGE CLAIMS

To ensure valid claim processing, the HA should conduct a thorough move-in inspection noting conditions as well as HQS deficiencies, take pictures of questionable items, and send a report of all items to the owner and tenant.

The owner must be present during the move-out inspection and only damages claimed by the owner are reimbursable.

All claims for damages must be supported by the actual bills for materials and labor and a copy of the canceled checks or other receipts documenting payment. Estimates are accepted at the discretion of the HA depending upon the nature of the work to be done.

Bills from individuals providing labor must include their name, Social Security Number, address and phone number. The owner may not bill himself/herself for labor since that is not considered by the Program Administrator to be an "actual cost". However, the actual cost of the owner's employees' labor, such as the resident manager, to make repairs may be included.

Persons making repairs or replacements must be licensed to do business in Los Angeles County.

Reasonableness of costs will be based on the Means Cost Estimating Guide. Reimbursement for replacement of items such as carpets, drapes, or appliances, are based on depreciation schedules in general use by the Program Administrator.

The Program Administrator may require verification of purchase date, quality, and price of replaced items in order to calculate depreciation.

Claims for unpaid utility bills cannot be approved as part of a claim.

Claims for normal wear and tear, previously existing conditions, routine turnover preparation, and cyclical interior painting are not paid.

The Program Administrator will inspect the unit to verify that repairs were made.

E. MOVE-OUT AND CLOSE-OUT INSPECTIONS

Move-out inspections are performed after the tenant has vacated the unit. These inspections are performed to assess the condition of the unit, not to evaluate the HQS. Vacate inspections will be conducted by housing choice voucher program Specialists/ Inspectors.

There will be no move-out inspections of units with contracts effective on or after October 2, 1995.

The owner must notify the Program Administrator of the move-out and request an inspection within five business days of learning of the move-out, or contract termination, whichever is first, in order to submit a claim for damages.

If the contract was terminated due to owner breach, or the owner was in violation of the contract at the time that it was terminated, there will be no entitlement to claims and therefore no inspection.

The owner and tenant will be notified of the date and time of the inspection. If the owner is not present, the move-out inspection will not be rescheduled.

The Program Administrator will conduct a move-out inspection on the tenant's request.

In the event that the Program Administrator is unable to inspect within 10 business days, the owner will be permitted to use date-stamped photographs to substantiate the claim.

F. PROCESSING CLAIMS

Any amount owed by the tenant to the owner for unpaid rent or damages will first be deducted from the maximum security deposit that the owner could have collected under the program rules. If the maximum allowable security deposit is insufficient to reimburse the owner for the unpaid tenant rent or other amounts which the family owes under the lease, the owner may request reimbursement from the Program Administrator up to the limits for each program.

If the owner claims vacancy loss, the security deposit that s/he collected or could have collected will be deducted from the vacancy loss claim.

The Program Administrator reviews claims for unpaid rent, damages, or vacancy loss and makes a preliminary determination of amount payable. The family is informed that a claim is pending (notice sent to last known address). The notification will state the preliminarily determined amount, the type of claim, and describe the procedure for contesting the claim.

1. The Program Administrator will offer the family 10 calendar days to contest the claim. If the family disputes the claim, the Program Administrator will schedule an informal meeting/claim review with the owner and tenant in order to resolve the differences.

If the tenant fails to attend the meeting, the HA will proceed with its original determination; the meeting will not be rescheduled unless there are extenuating circumstances.

At the Claim Review, the amount and type of claim will be discussed with the family. If the family agrees with the amount and type of claim, the family may be offered a Repayment Agreement. If the family does not agree to sign a Repayment Agreement, the HA will process the account for collection.

If the family demonstrates that the claim, or parts of it, is invalid, the Program Administrator will adjust the amount. The Program Administrator may offer the tenant an opportunity for an Informal Hearing regarding the claim if disputes cannot be resolved.

After a determination has been made, the Program Administrator will notify the family in writing of the decision. If it has been determined that the family owes money, the Program Administrator will pursue collection to repay either in a lump sum or through a payment agreement. The notice will warn the family that their assistance may be terminated and they may be denied future participation in the program if they do not reimburse the HA as required.

Other Requirements for Claims Processing

The Program Administrator will require proof that the owner has complied with State and local laws applicable to security deposits before making payment on any claim.

All notices to tenants during the processing of a claim must include proof of mailing or of personal delivery.

Costs of filing eviction to remove the tenant or any other legal fees, shall not be reimbursed.

No claims will be paid for a unit that is vacant as the result of the landlord voluntarily moving a family to another unit owned by the same landlord or as a result of a mutual recission between the landlord and tenant family.

All unpaid rent, damage, and vacancy loss claim forms must be fully complete when they are submitted, and they must be submitted within thirty (30) days of the date the owner learned of the move-out.

Chapter 19
OWNER DISAPPROVAL AND RESTRICTION

INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure the viability of the housing choice voucher rental assistance program, the HA of the City of Paramount and the Program Administrator continuously strive to adopt policies that will encourage new and existing owners to participate in the program and to provide owners with prompt and professional service in order to maintain an adequate supply of available housing throughout the entire jurisdiction. However, in cases of owner non-compliance, the HA of the City of Paramount and the Program Administrator must act accordingly in order to protect families and the program. The regulations herein contained define when the Program Administrator must disallow an owner participation in the program, and when the Program Administrator will exercise its discretion to disapprove or otherwise restrict the participation of owners in certain categories.

A. DISAPPROVAL OF OWNER

The owner does not have a right to participate in the program. For purposes of this section, “owner” includes a principal or other interested party.

The Program Administrator shall disapprove the owner for the following reasons:

HUD or other agency directly related has informed the Program Administrator that the owner has been disbarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under 24 CFR part 24.

HUD has informed the HA that the federal government has instituted an administrative or judicial action against the owner for violation of the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements and such action are pending.

HUD has informed the HA that a court or administrative agency has determined that the owner has violated the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements.

The HA may disapprove an owner for the following reasons:

The owner has violated obligations under a housing assistance payments contract under Section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f).

The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt act in connection with any federal housing program.

The owner has engaged in any drug-related criminal activity or any violent criminal activity.

The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with the HQS for units leased under the tenant-based programs or with applicable housing standards for units leased with project-based housing choice voucher assistance or leased under any other federal housing program.

The owner has a history or practice of renting units that fail to meet State or local housing codes.

The owner has not paid State or local real estate taxes, fines or assessments.

B. OTHER REMEDIES FOR OWNER VIOLATIONS

Abatement

For non-compliance with Housing Quality Standards, the Program Administrator may abate rental payments if the assisted unit remains out of compliance for more than 30 days.

In cases involving serious health and/or safety violations, the Program Administrator may begin abating rental payments if the violation is not cured within 24 hours.

Overpayments

If the landlord has been overpaid because of fraud, misrepresentation or violation of the Contract, the Program Administrator may terminate the Contract and arrange for restitution to the Program Administrator and/or family as appropriate.

The Program Administrator will make every effort to recover any overpayments made as a result of landlord fraud or abuse. Possible remedies available to the Program Administrator include: recovering monies owed from payments otherwise due to the owner, setting up a repayment agreement, referring the debt to a collection agency, or pursuing the matter in a civil court. A determination on the course of action to be taken will be based on the nature of the violation and the amount of the money owed. Generally, if the owner is cooperative, is willing to pay back all monies owed, and all monies will be repaid within twelve months, the Program Administrator will offer the owner a chance to enter into a repayment agreement. However, in cases where the owner knowingly and willfully violated program rules, the Program Administrator may seek full repayment in one lump sum.