



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Public and Indian Housing

Special Attention of:
Office Directors of Public Housing;
Regional Directors; Public Housing
Agencies; Administrators of Office
of Native American Programs.

Notice PIH 2003-25 (HA)

Issued: October 3, 2003

Expires: October 31, 2004

Cross References:

Subject: Homeless Initiative in Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Programs

1. **PURPOSE.** This Notice provides suggestions on how public housing agencies (PHA) that administer Public Housing and/or Housing Choice Voucher programs can help support the President's initiative to end chronic homelessness.
2. **BACKGROUND.** In July 2002, as part of an overall approach to achieve the goal of President Bush and Secretary Martinez to end chronic homelessness, Secretary Martinez strongly emphasized the need for Federal agencies to develop strategies that will make mainstream housing assistance accessible to the homeless population. HUD is asking PHAs to take proactive measures to ease the availability of their housing programs, including Public Housing and the Housing Choice Voucher program, for this population.
3. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Notice is effective upon publication.
4. **PROACTIVE MEASURES.**
 - a. **PREFERENCES.** As a way to make housing more accessible to homeless families (which includes families where the sole member is homeless), a PHA may establish a local preference for homeless families on its waiting list for public housing units and/or for housing choice vouchers. A PHA may limit this preference to homeless families that include a person with disabilities. A PHA may also limit the number of families in a given year that may receive this preference (e.g., the PHA may specify the maximum number of families that will receive this preference or establish a percent of new admissions that will be given the homeless preference).
 - b. **HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE.** PHAs are encouraged to offer specialized housing search assistance to homeless families under the Housing Choice Voucher program. Such families may need resources beyond the standard oral briefing and information packet materials to help them find a suitable unit. Trained PHA staff or a

local supportive service organization can provide this service. A hard-to-house fee of \$75 per family can be charged against the annual budget authority to assist large families or families that include a person with disabilities locate suitable housing that is accessible. This hard-to-house fee may be charged each time such families move to a new unit. The PHA's administrative fee reserves, as well as earned hard-to-house fees, may be used to provide a pool of funds for expenses related to the housing search and leasing process.

- c. **COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES.** In conjunction with the PHA Plan processes, PHAs should work with other local governmental and non-governmental agencies, including grass roots faith-based and other community-based organizations, serving the homeless in setting policies and sharing resources. Governmental and non-governmental agencies may provide available resources for such assistance as housing search counseling, moving expenses, security deposits and utility deposits.
5. **INFORMATION CONTACT.** Inquiries about this notice should be directed to the staff in the Housing Voucher Management and Operations Division, Office of Public Housing and Voucher Programs, at (202) 708-0477.

_____/s/_____
Michael Liu, Assistant Secretary
for Public and Indian Housing