Chapter 4

APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

When a family wishes to receive assistance under the HCV program, the family must submit an application that provides the PHA with the information needed to determine the family's eligibility. HUD requires the PHA to place all families that apply for assistance on a waiting list. When HCV assistance becomes available, the PHA must select families from the waiting list in accordance with HUD requirements and PHA policies as stated in the administrative plan and the annual plan.

The PHA is required to adopt clear policies and procedures for accepting applications, placing families on the waiting list, and selecting families from the waiting list, and must follow these policies and procedures consistently. The actual order in which families are selected from the waiting list can be affected if a family has certain characteristics designated by HUD or the PHA that justify their selection. Examples of this are the selection of families for income targeting and the selection of families that qualify for targeted funding.

HUD regulations require that all families have an equal opportunity to apply for and receive housing assistance, and that the PHA affirmatively further fair housing goals in the administration of the program [24 CFR 982.53, HCV GB p. 4-1]. Adherence to the selection policies described in this chapter ensures that the PHA will be in compliance with all relevant fair housing requirements, as described in Chapter 2.

This chapter describes HUD and PHA policies for taking applications, managing the waiting list and selecting families for HCV assistance. The policies outlined in this chapter are organized into three sections, as follows:

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

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

Part III: Selection for HCV Assistance. This part describes the policies that guide the PHA in selecting families for HCV assistance as such assistance becomes available. It also specifies how in-person interviews will be used to ensure that the PHA has the information needed to make a final eligibility determination.

PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

4-I.A. OVERVIEW

This part describes the PHA policies for making applications available, accepting applications making preliminary determinations of eligibility, and the placement of applicants on the waiting list. This part also describes the PHA's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process to elderly persons and, people with disabilities.

4-I.B. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE [HCV GB, pp. 4-11 – 4-16, Notice PIH 2009-36]

Any family that wishes to receive HCV assistance must apply for admission to the program. HUD permits the PHA to determine the format and content of HCV applications, as well how such applications will be made available to interested families and how applications will be accepted by the PHA. The PHA must include Form HUD-92006, Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing, as part of the PHA's application.

LHA Policy

Depending upon the length of time that applicants may need to wait to receive assistance, the LHA may use a one- or two-step application process.

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

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

Families may obtain application forms from the LHA's office during normal business hours. Families may also request – by telephone, mail, or email – that an application be mailed to them via first class mail.

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

LHA will not maintain a separate waiting list for the Suites units. Instead, referrals for these supportive housing units will be made through the Boulder County Local Case Conferencing system, which coordinates placement for people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

Applicants will be referred directly to LHA by Boulder County Local Case Conferencing based on local prioritization and eligibility criteria established through the regional Coordinated Entry process.

Once an applicant is referred, LHA will:

1. Verify eligibility for the Project-Based Voucher program in accordance with HUD regulations and LHA policies;

2. Process the applicant's admission and determine assistance eligibility; and

3. Coordinate with the supportive services provider to complete move-in and service enrollment.

4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Elderly and Disabled Populations [24 CFR 8 and HCV GB, pp. 4-11 – 4-13]

The PHA must take steps to ensure that the application process is accessible to those people who might have difficulty complying with the normal, standard PHA application process. This could include people with disabilities and, certain elderly individuals. The PHA must provide reasonable accommodation to the needs of individuals with disabilities. The application-taking facility and the application process must be fully accessible, or the PHA must provide an alternate approach that provides full access to the application process. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of the PHA's policies related to providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST

The PHA may review each complete application received and make a preliminary assessment of the family's eligibility. The PHA must accept applications from families for whom the list is open unless there is good cause for not accepting the application (such as denial of assistance) for the grounds stated in the regulations [24 CFR 982.206(b)(2)]. Where the family is determined to be ineligible, the PHA must notify the family in writing [24 CFR 982.201(f)]. Where the family is not determined to be ineligible, the family will be placed on a waiting list of applicants.

No applicant has a right or entitlement to be listed on the waiting list, or to any particular position on the waiting list [24 CFR 982.202(c)].

Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List

LHA Policy

If the LHA can determine from the information provided that a family is ineligible, the family will not be placed on the waiting list. Where a family is determined to be ineligible, the LHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 10 business days of receiving a complete application. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility and will inform the family of its right to request an informal review and explain the process for doing so (see Chapter 16).

Eligible for Placement on the Waiting List

LHA Policy

Placement on the waiting list does not indicate that the family is, in fact, eligible for assistance. A final determination of eligibility will be made when the family is selected from the waiting list.

Applicants will be placed on the waiting list according to any preference(s) for which they qualify, and the date and time their complete application is received by the LHA.

Applicants will be selected for the waiting list using a computer generated lottery system. LHA will estimate the number of applicants that may be housed within 12 months and that number will be the number of applicants placed on the waiting list. It is not

guaranteed that all applicants will be included in the selection. Each time the LHA selects someone off the waiting list the computer systems will mix up the list again at that time. LHA cannot inform applicants of their number placement on the list because of the lottery system that is used.

All applicants will be issued a unique number at the time the application is received. Once the generated lottery is known the unique numbers selected will be posted on the LHA web-site.

PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

4-II.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA must have policies regarding various aspects of organizing and managing the waiting list of applicant families. This includes opening the list to new applicants, closing the list to new applicants, notifying the public of waiting list openings and closings, updating waiting list information, purging the list of families that are no longer interested in or eligible for assistance, as well as conducting outreach to ensure a sufficient number of applicants.

In addition, HUD imposes requirements on how a PHA may structure its waiting list and how families must be treated if they apply for assistance from a PHA that administers more than one assisted housing program.

4-II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204 and 205]

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

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

- Applicant name;
- Family unit size;
- Date and time of application;
- Qualification for any local preference;
- Racial or ethnic designation of the head of household.

HUD requires the PHA to maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program unless it serves more than one county or municipality. Such PHAs are permitted, but not required, to maintain a separate waiting list for each county or municipality served.

LHA Policy

The LHA will maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program.

HUD directs that a family that applies for assistance from the HCV program must be offered the opportunity to be placed on the waiting list for any public housing, project-based voucher or moderate rehabilitation program the PHA operates if 1) the other programs' waiting lists are open, and 2) the family is qualified for the other programs.

HUD permits, but does not require, that PHAs maintain a single merged waiting list for their public housing, Section 8, and other subsidized housing programs.

A family's decision to apply for, receive, or refuse other housing assistance must not affect the family's placement on the HCV waiting list, or any preferences for which the family may qualify.

LHA Policy

The LHA will not merge the HCV waiting list with the waiting list for any other program the LHA operates.

4-II.C. OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.206]

Closing the Waiting List

A PHA is permitted to close the waiting list if it has an adequate pool of families to use its available HCV assistance. Alternatively, the PHA may elect to continue to accept applications only from certain categories of families that meet particular preferences or funding criteria.

LHA Policy

The LHA waiting list will be closed once the application period expires as stated in the Public Notice of Waiting list Opening.

Reopening the Waiting List

If the waiting list has been closed, it cannot be reopened until the PHA publishes a notice in local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable media outlets. The notice must comply with HUD fair housing requirements and must specify who may apply, and where and when applications will be received.

LHA Policy

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

The PHA will give public notice by publishing the relevant information in suitable media outlets to be determined at the time of waiting list opening. The selected outlets will include local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable media outlets. The notice will comply with fair housing ~~requirements.The~~requirements. The LHA will give public notice by publishing the relevant information in suitable media outlets and Human Services Agencies including, but not limited to:

- Longmont Daily Times Call,
- Boulder Daily Camera,
- El Comite,
- Boulder County Housing and Human Services,
- The OUR Center,
- Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley,
- City of Longmont Neighborhood Resources,
- City of Longmont Senior Services,
- St. Vrain Valley School District,
- The Inn Between,
- Boulder County Mental Health Partners
- Center for People with Disabilities.

Notice will be placed on the LHA website
The notices will be made in an accessible format, if requested. LHA will provide potential applicants with information that includes the LHA address and telephone number, how to submit an application, information on eligibility requirements and the availability of local preferences.

Upon request from a person with a disability, additional time will be given as an accommodation for submission of an application after the closing deadline. This accommodation is to allow persons with disabilities the opportunity to submit an application in cases when a social service organization provides inaccurate or untimely information about the closing date.

If the waiting list is open, the LHA will accept applications from eligible families unless there is good cause for not accepting the application, such as denial of assistance because of action or inaction by members of the family for the grounds stated in "Denial or Termination of Assistance" chapter of the Administrative Plan.

4-II.D. FAMILY OUTREACH [HCV GB, pp. 4-2 to 4-4]

The PHA must conduct outreach as necessary to ensure that the PHA has a sufficient number of applicants on the waiting list to use the HCV resources it has been allotted.

Because HUD requires the PHA to admit a specified percentage of extremely low-income families to the program (see Chapter 4, Part III), the PHA may need to conduct special outreach to ensure that an adequate number of such families apply for assistance [HCV GB, p. 4-20 to 4-21].

PHA outreach efforts must comply with fair housing requirements. This includes:

- Analyzing the housing market area and the populations currently being served to identify underserved populations
- Ensuring that outreach efforts are targeted to media outlets that reach eligible populations that are underrepresented in the program
- Avoiding outreach efforts that prefer or exclude people who are members of a protected class

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

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

LHA Policy

The LHA will monitor the characteristics of the population being served and the characteristics of the population as a whole in the LHA's jurisdiction. Targeted outreach efforts will be undertaken if a comparison suggests that certain populations are being underserved.

4-II.E. REPORTING CHANGES IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

LHA Policy

While the family is on the waiting list, the family must immediately update their application in the LHA RentCafe Site. If the household did not apply through the RentCafe Site the household must inform the LHA of changes in contact information, including current residence, mailing address, and phone number. The changes must be submitted in writing.

4-II.F. UPDATING THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204]

HUD requires the PHA to establish policies to use when removing applicant names from the waiting list.

Purging the Waiting List

The decision to withdraw an applicant family that includes a person with disabilities from the waiting list is subject to reasonable accommodation. If the applicant did not respond to a PHA request for information or updates, and the PHA determines that the family did not respond because of the family member's disability, the PHA must reinstate the applicant family to their former position on the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(c)(2)].

LHA Policy

All applicants remaining on the waiting list, and not provided with housing, will be removed at least every 12 to 24 months. The waiting list will be reopened for a new lottery selection process. Applicants that are remaining on the list can reapply for the current lottery.

The application will inform the applicant that the waiting list will be purged within 12 to 24 months. It will notify the applicant that all households remaining on the waiting list at that time will be removed and a new lottery group will be selected. Households not housed and removed from the waiting list can reapply for the new lottery draw.

Removal from the Waiting List

LHA Policy

If at any time an applicant family is on the waiting list, the LHA determines that the family is not eligible for assistance (see Chapter 3), the family will be removed from the waiting list.

If a family is removed from the waiting list because the LHA has determined the family is not eligible for assistance, a notice will be sent to the family's address of record as well as to any alternate address provided on the initial application. The notice will state the reasons the family was removed from the waiting list and will inform the family how to request an informal review regarding the LHA's decision (see Chapter 16) [24 CFR 982.201(f)].

PART III: SELECTION FOR HCV ASSISTANCE

4-III.A. OVERVIEW

As vouchers become available, families on the waiting list must be selected for assistance in accordance with the policies described in this part.

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

The PHA must maintain a clear record of all information required to verify that the family is selected from the waiting list according to the PHA's selection policies [24 CFR 982.204(b) and 982.207(e)].

4-III.B. SELECTION AND HCV FUNDING SOURCES

Special Admissions [24 CFR 982.203]

HUD may award funding for ~~specifically named~~specifically named families living in specified types of units (e.g., a family that is displaced by demolition of public housing; a non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or 2 projects). In these cases, the PHA may admit such families whether or not they are on the waiting list, and, if they are on the waiting list, without considering the family's position on the waiting list. These families are considered non-waiting list selections. The PHA must maintain records showing that such families were admitted with special program funding.

Targeted Funding [24 CFR 982.204(e)]

HUD may award a PHA funding for a specified category of families on the waiting list. The PHA must use this funding only to assist the families within the specified category. In order to assist families within a targeted funding category, the PHA may skip families that do not qualify within the targeted funding category. Within this category of families, the order in which such families are assisted is determined according to the policies provided in Section 4-III.C.

LHA Policy

The LHA does not currently administer any type of targeted funding.

Regular HCV Funding

Regular HCV funding may be used to assist any eligible family on the waiting list. Families are selected from the waiting list according to the policies provided in Section 4-III.C.

4-III.C. SELECTION METHOD

PHAs must describe the method for selecting applicant families from the waiting list, including the system of admission preferences that the PHA will use [24 CFR 982.202(d)].

Local Preferences [24 CFR 982.207; HCV p. 4-16]

PHAs are permitted to establish local preferences, and to give priority to serving families that meet those criteria. HUD specifically authorizes and places restrictions on certain types of local preferences. HUD also permits the PHA to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the PHA plan and the consolidated plan, and must be based on local housing needs and priorities that can be documented by generally accepted data sources.

LHA Policy

The LHA will use the following local preferences:

1. The LHA will offer a preference to any family that has been terminated from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding.

2. Families who have been involuntarily displaced due to government actions.

3. Families that resides in the City of Longmont or includes a family member who works or has been notified that they are hired to work, in Longmont.

The LHA will first assist families that have been terminated from the HCV program by the LHA due to insufficient funding, then families being involuntarily displaced due to government actions, and then families that resides and/or work in Longmont.

Income Targeting Requirement [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)]

HUD requires that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 75 percent of the families admitted to the HCV program during the PHA's fiscal year. ELI families are those with annual incomes at or below the federal poverty level or 30 percent of the area median income, whichever number is higher. To ensure this requirement is met, a PHA may skip non-ELI families on the waiting list in order to select an ELI family.

Low-income families admitted to the program that are "continuously assisted" under the 1937 Housing Act [24 CFR 982.4(b)], as well as low-income or moderate-income families admitted to the program that are displaced as a result of the prepayment of the mortgage or voluntary termination of an insurance contract on eligible low-income housing, are not counted for income targeting purposes [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)(v)].

LHA Policy

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

Order of Selection

The PHA system of preferences may select families based on local preferences according to the date and time of application or by a random selection process (lottery) [24 CFR 982.207(c)]. If a PHA does not have enough funding to assist the family at the top of the waiting list, it is not permitted to skip down the waiting list to a family that it can afford to subsidize when there are not sufficient funds to subsidize the family at the top of the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(d) and (e)].

LHA Policy

Families will be selected from a lottery based waiting list. The list will be a random selection each time applicants are selected from the waiting list.

Families that qualify for a specified category of program funding (targeted funding) may be selected from the waiting list ahead of higher placed families that do not qualify for the targeted funding. However, within any targeted funding category, applicants will be selected in numerical order based on the numbers that were assigned to each application, by lottery, at the time the applications were placed on the waiting list.

(a) The section 8 Voucher lottery pool will contain the following information for each applicant placed in the lottery pool.

- Applicant name
- Social Security Number
- Date of birth
- Home/mailing address
- Date of Application
- Racial or ethnic designation of head of household
- Qualification for any local preference

(b) The order of selection from the lottery pool will be based on a random drawing technique (lottery).

(c) The lottery pool will be opened annually, depending on funding availability. When the LHA opens the lottery process, LHA will issue public notice that families may apply for the Housing Choice voucher (HCV) Program. The notice will comply with Equal Opportunity plan and with HUD Fair Housing Requirements.

(d) Applicants are placed in the lottery pool and LHA will determine the number of applicants drawn for the waiting list based on the need. At the end of 12 to 24 months the lottery pool is deleted and a new lottery will be opened for applications.

Within each preference category, families will be selected in random order by a computerized system. Documentation will be maintained by the LHA as to whether families on the list qualify for and are interested in the Section 8 Voucher program. If a higher placed family on the waiting list is found to not qualify for the preference

listed on the application, there will be a notation maintained so that the LHA does not have to ask higher placed families each time preference selections are made.

LHA will offer public notice when changing its preference system and the notice will be publicized using the same guidelines as those for opening and closing the waiting list.

4-III.D. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

When a family has been selected from the waiting list, the PHA must notify the family [24 CFR 982.554(a)].

LHA Policy

The LHA will notify the family by first class mail when it is selected from the waiting list. The notice will inform the family of the following:

- Date, time, and location of the scheduled application interview, including any procedures for rescheduling the interview
- Who is required to attend the interview
- All documents that must be provided at the interview, including information about what constitutes acceptable documentation

If a notification letter is returned to the LHA with no forwarding address, the family will be removed from the waiting list. A notice of denial (see Chapter 3) will be sent to the family's address of record, as well as to any known alternate address.

4-III.E. THE ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION PROCESS

HUD recommends that the PHA obtain the information and documentation needed to make an eligibility determination though a face-to-face interview with a PHA representative [HCV GB, pg. 4-16]. Being invited to attend an interview does not constitute admission to the program.

Assistance cannot be provided to the family until all SSN documentation requirements are met. However, if the PHA determines that an applicant family is otherwise eligible to participate in the program, the family may retain its place on the waiting list for a period of time determined by the PHA [Notice PIH 2018-24].

Reasonable accommodation must be made for persons with disabilities who are unable to attend an interview due to their disability.

LHA Policy

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

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

The head of household or spouse/cohead must provide acceptable documentation of legal identity. (Chapter 7 provides a discussion of proper documentation of legal identity.) If the family representative does not provide the required documentation at the time of the interview, they will be required to provide it within 10 business days.

The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility and determine the appropriate level of assistance, and must complete required forms, provide required signatures, and submit required documentation. If any materials are missing, the LHA will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at the interview must be provided within 10 business days of the interview (Chapter 7 provides details about longer submission deadlines for particular items, including documentation of eligible noncitizen status). If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension. If the required documents and information are not provided within the required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of denial (See Chapter 3).

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

Interviews will be conducted in English. For applicants who may require language assistance, the PHA will encourage families to bring an advocate, family member, friend, or other adult representative to assist in communications. The PHA will also utilize available resources such as bilingual staff, community volunteer resources, responsible use of artificial intelligence technology, and/or machine translation to assist families with communication.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the LHA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, the LHA will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews without LHA approval will be denied assistance based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. A notice of denial will be issued in accordance with policies contained in Chapter 3

4-III.F. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The PHA must verify all information provided by the family (see Chapter 7). Based on verified information, the PHA must make a final determination of eligibility (see Chapter 3) and must

confirm that the family qualified for any special admission, targeted funding admission, or selection preference that affected the order in which the family was selected from the waiting list.

LHA Policy

If the LHA determines that the family is ineligible, the LHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 10 business days of the determination. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal review (Chapter 16).

If a family fails to qualify for any criteria that affected the order in which it was selected from the waiting list (e.g. claimed preference, extremely low-income), the family will be returned to the correct position on the waiting list. The LHA will notify the family in writing that it has been returned to the waiting list and will specify the reasons for it.

If the LHA determines that the family is eligible to receive assistance, the LHA will invite the family to attend a briefing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 5.