BOARD POLICY CONSIDERATION – HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER SUBSIDY STANDARD

LHA is currently experiencing a shortage of Housing Choice Voucher funding. At the same time, rental market conditions in Longmont have changed, including declining rents in portions of the local rental market.

The current LHA subsidy standard provides additional bedrooms based upon household characteristics such as age, sex, and generational relationships. While this approach provides a more individualized determination of bedroom need, it can result in a larger voucher size and consequently higher Housing Assistance Payments.

The Board of Commissioners has an opportunity to determine the policy direction of the Housing Choice Voucher program.

Policy Question for the Board

The fundamental policy question for the Board is:

What should be the primary objective of LHA's Housing Choice Voucher subsidy standard—providing an individualized bedroom allocation based upon household composition, or establishing a consistent and financially sustainable standard that allows LHA to maximize the number of eligible households served with available HUD funding?

If the Board determines that maximizing the use of limited voucher resources and serving the greatest feasible number of eligible households is the preferred policy objective, LHA recommends adoption of Option 2, the Two People Per Bedroom Subsidy Standard.

CURRENT POLICY – HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION BEDROOM SUBSIDY STANDARD

Purpose

The Longmont Housing Authority (LHA) will determine the appropriate Housing Choice Voucher bedroom size based upon the size and composition of the assisted household. The purpose of the subsidy standard is to provide an appropriate level of housing assistance while considering household composition, privacy, and applicable program requirements.

Bedroom Assignment

The LHA will generally assign one bedroom for each two people within the household, except under the following circumstances:

1. Adults with a significant other will be allocated a separate bedroom.
2. Children of separate genders over the age of five will be allocated separate bedrooms. Children under the age of five may share a bedroom regardless of gender.

3. People of different generations will be allocated separate bedrooms.
4. A live-in aide will be allocated a separate bedroom.
5. A single pregnant person will be allocated one bedroom until the child reaches one year of age.
6. Foster children or foster adults may be permitted to reside in the assisted unit if their presence would not result in overcrowding of the existing unit. If the authorized placement agency requires the foster child or foster adult to have a separate bedroom, LHA may provide the subsidy standard for one additional bedroom.

Voucher Size Chart

The LHA will reference the following chart when determining the appropriate voucher size for a household:

Voucher Size	People in Household
0 Bedroom	1
1 Bedroom	1–2
2 Bedrooms	2–4
3 Bedrooms	3–6
4 Bedrooms	4–8
5 Bedrooms	6–10

LHA may make exceptions to the subsidy standard when required as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability or when otherwise required by applicable federal law or HUD regulation.

Current Policy – Advantages/Disadvantages

Continue LHA's existing policy of considering household composition when determining voucher size.

Advantages:

- Provides a more individualized assessment of bedroom needs.
- Recognizes circumstances involving children, generations, live-in aides, and other household relationships.
- Provides larger vouchers to some households based upon household composition.

Disadvantages:

- More complicated to administer.
- Results in some households receiving larger vouchers and higher HAP expenditures.
- May result in extended family members being added to the household.

OPTION 2 – TWO PERSONS PER BEDROOM SUBSIDY STANDARD

Purpose

The Longmont Housing Authority (LHA) will determine the Housing Choice Voucher subsidy standard based primarily upon the number of people in the assisted household. The standard is intended to provide a reasonable level of housing assistance while allowing LHA to maximize the number of eligible households it can serve with available Housing Choice Voucher funding.

LHA recognizes that the Housing Choice Voucher program is a limited public resource and that the cost of housing assistance directly affects the number of households the Authority can assist. LHA therefore establishes the following subsidy standard to promote efficient use of available Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) funding.

Bedroom Assignment

LHA will provide a subsidy standard of one bedroom for every two persons in the assisted household, without regard to the age or sex of household members.

Under this standard:

- Two people will generally qualify for a one-bedroom voucher.
- Three or four people will generally qualify for a two-bedroom voucher.
- Five or six people will generally qualify for a three-bedroom voucher.
- Seven or eight people will generally qualify for a four-bedroom voucher.
- Nine or ten people will generally qualify for a five-bedroom voucher.

The subsidy standard will not provide an additional bedroom based solely upon:

- The sex of household members;
- The age of children;
- Different generations within the household;
- A child's age;
- The presence of a significant other; or
- Other household-composition characteristics that do not independently require an additional bedroom under applicable federal law or as a reasonable accommodation.

Voucher Size Chart

Voucher Size	People in Household
0 Bedroom	1
1 Bedroom	2
2 Bedrooms	3–4
3 Bedrooms	5–6
4 Bedrooms	7–8

5 Bedrooms	9–10

A household consisting of one person will generally receive a one-bedroom voucher, unless an exception applies under this policy.

Option 2 – Two Persons Per Bedroom

Adopt a uniform subsidy standard of two persons per bedroom, generally without regard to age or sex.

Advantages:

- Simple and consistent to administer.
- Provides a clear and easily understood subsidy standard.
- Reduces the number of larger vouchers issued.
- May reduce average HAP expenditure.
- Allows LHA to potentially serve additional eligible households with available funding.
- Takes advantage of current rental market conditions in which lower rents may allow households to lease appropriate housing with smaller subsidy standards.

Disadvantages:

- Some households that currently qualify for a larger voucher would receive a smaller voucher.
- Some families may have fewer housing choices within their payment standard.
- The policy would place greater emphasis on maximizing the number of households served rather than providing an individualized bedroom allocation based upon age, sex, and family relationships.