

Chapter 3

APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

[24 CFR 982.204]

INTRODUCTION

The policy of the PHA is to ensure that all families who express an interest in housing assistance are given an equal opportunity to apply, and are treated in a fair and consistent manner. This Chapter describes the policies and procedures for completing an initial application for assistance, placement and denial of placement on the waiting list, and limitations on who may apply. The primary purpose of the intake function is to gather information about the family, but the PHA will also utilize this process to provide information to the family so that an accurate and timely decision of eligibility can be made. Applicants will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with this Plan **and Section II of Policy/Procedure Manual.**

A. OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION TAKING PROCESS

The purpose of application taking is to permit the PHA to gather information and determine placement on the waiting list. The application will contain questions designed to obtain pertinent program information.

Families who wish to apply for any one of the PHA's programs must **complete a written application form when application-taking is open.** Applications will be made available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.

When the waiting list is open, any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance will be given the opportunity to complete an application.

Applications will be mailed to interested families upon request.

The application process will involve two phases. The first is the "initial" application for assistance. This first phase results in the family's placement on the waiting list.

The Application will be dated, time-stamped, and referred to the PHA's eligibility office where it will be maintained until such time as it is needed for processing.

The second phase is the "final determination of eligibility" and takes place when the family reaches the top of the waiting list. At this time the PHA ensures that verification of all HUD and PHA eligibility factors is current in order to determine the family's eligibility for the issuance of a voucher.

B. OPENING/CLOSING OF APPLICATION TAKING [24 CFR 982.206, 982.54(d)(1)]

The PHA will utilize the following procedures for opening the waiting list:

When the PHA opens the waiting list, the PHA will advertise through public notice in the following newspapers, minority publications and media entities, location(s), and program(s) for which applications are being accepted:

- 1) **The County Department of Mental Health**
- 2) **The County Family Independence Agency**
- 3) **The County Office or Commission on Aging**
- 4) **The County Department of Public Health**
- 5) **Agencies dealing with Elderly and Disabled Populations**

The notice will contain:

The dates, times, and the locations where families may apply.

The programs for which applications will be taken.

A brief description of the program.

A statement that public housing residents must submit a separate application if they want to apply for section 8.

Limitations, if any, on who may apply.

The notices will be made in an accessible format if requested. They will provide potential applicants with information that includes the PHA 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 PHA 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 the "Denial or Termination of Assistance" chapter of this Administrative Plan. [24 CFR 982.206(b)(2)]

Closing the Waiting List

The PHA may stop applications if there are enough applicants to fill anticipated openings for the next **12** months. The waiting list may not be closed if it would have a discriminatory effect inconsistent with applicable civil rights laws.

The PHA will announce the closing of the waiting list by public notice.

The open period shall be long enough to achieve a waiting list adequate to cover projected turnover and new allocations over the next **12** months. The PHA will give at least **14 calendar days** notice prior to closing the list. When the period for accepting applications is over, the PHA will add the new applicants to the list by:

Date and time of application or lottery (see below) and local preferences.

Limits on Who May Apply

When the waiting list is open:

Any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance will be given the opportunity to complete an application.

When the application is submitted to the PHA:

It establishes the family's date and time of application for placement order on the waiting list for lists open more than one week.

It is entered into the lottery to determine placement order on the waiting list for lists open one week or less.

C. "INITIAL" APPLICATION PROCEDURES [24 CFR 982.204(b)]

The PHA will utilize an **Application form (MSHDA 322)**. The information is to be filled out by the applicant whenever possible. To provide specific accommodation for persons with disabilities, the information may be completed by a staff person over the telephone. It may also be mailed to the applicant and, if requested, it will be mailed in an accessible format.

Translations will be provided for non-English speaking applicants by staff in Spanish.

The purpose of the pre-application is to permit the PHA to preliminarily assess family eligibility or ineligibility and to determine placement on the waiting list. The pre-application will contain at least the following information:

Applicant name

Family Unit Size (number of bedrooms the family qualifies for under PHA subsidy standards)

Date and time of application

Qualification for any local preference

Racial or ethnic designation of the head of household

Annual (gross) family income

Ineligible families **will not** be placed on the waiting list.

Applications **will not** require an interview. The information on the application **will not** be verified until the applicant has been selected for final eligibility determination. Final eligibility will be determined when the full application process is completed and all information is verified.

D. APPLICANT STATUS WHILE ON WAITING LIST [CFR 982.204]

Applicants are required to inform the PHA in writing of changes in address. Applicants are also required to respond to requests from the PHA to update information on their application and to determine their interest in assistance.

If after a review of the preapplication the family is determined to be preliminarily eligible, they will be notified in writing or in an accessible format upon request, as a reasonable accommodation.

This written notification of preliminary eligibility will be:

mailed to the applicant by first class mail

If the family is determined to be ineligible based on the information provided in the preapplication, the PHA will notify the family in writing (in an accessible format upon request as a reasonable accommodation), state the reason(s), and inform them of their right to an informal review. Persons with disabilities may request to have an advocate attend the informal review as an accommodation. See "Complaints and Appeals" chapter.

E. TIME OF SELECTION [24 CFR 982.204]

When funding is available, families will be selected from the waiting list in their determined sequence, regardless of family size, subject to income targeting requirements.

When there is insufficient funding available for the family at the top of the list, the PHA will not admit any other applicant until funding is available for the first applicant.

F. COMPLETION OF A FULL APPLICATION

All preferences claimed on the Application or while the family is on the waiting list will be verified:

Upon receipt of the preliminary application for residency preference.

The qualification for preference must exist at the time the preference is claimed and at the time of verification, because claim of a preference determines placement on the waiting list.

After the preference is verified, when the PHA is ready to select applicants, applicants will be required to:

Complete documents and participate in a briefing interview with a PHA representative during which the applicant will be required to furnish complete and accurate information verbally as requested by the interviewer. The applicant will sign and certify that all information is complete and accurate.

The full application (**Initial Request Verification/MSHDA 1791**) will be **mailed to the applicant in advance to complete when the applicant attends the interview.**

Requirement to Attend Interview

The PHA utilizes the full application interview to discuss the family's circumstances in greater detail, to clarify information which has been provided by the family, and to ensure that the information is complete. The interview is also used as a vehicle to meet the informational needs of the family by providing information about the application and verification process, as well as to advise the family of other PHA services or programs which may be available.

The head of household is required to attend the interview.

If an applicant fails to appear for their interview without prior approval of the PHA, their application will be denied unless they request to be rescheduled prior to the end of the 10 day informal review period.

Reasonable accommodation will be made for persons with a disability who require an advocate or accessible offices. A designee will be allowed to participate in the interview process, but only with permission of the person with a disability.

If an application is denied due to failure to attend the full application interview, the applicant will be notified in writing and offered an opportunity to request an informal review. (See "Complaints and Appeals" chapter.)

All adult members must sign the HUD Form 9886, Release of Information, **and all supplemental forms required by the PHA**, the declarations and consents related to citizenship/immigration status and any other documents required by the PHA. Applicants will be required to sign specific verification forms for information which is not covered by the HUD form 9886. Failure to do so will be cause for denial of the application for failure to provide necessary certifications and release as required by the PHA.

If the PHA determines at or after the interview that additional information or document(s) are needed, the PHA will request the document(s) or information **in writing**. The family will be given **14 calendar** days to supply the information.

If the information is not supplied in this time period, the PHA will provide the family a notification of denial for assistance. (See "Complaints and Appeals" chapter)

G. VERIFICATION [24 CFR 982.201(e)]

Information provided by the applicant will be verified, using the verification procedures in the "Verification Procedures" chapter. Family composition, income, allowances and deductions, assets, full-time student status, eligibility and rent calculation factors, and other pertinent information will be verified. Verifications may not be more than 60 days old at the time of issuance of the Voucher.

H. FINAL DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

[24 CFR 982.201]

After the verification process is completed, the PHA will make a final determination of eligibility. This decision is based upon information provided by the family, the verification completed by the PHA, and the current eligibility criteria in effect. If the family is determined to be eligible, the PHA will mail a notification of eligibility. A briefing will be scheduled for the issuance of a voucher and the family's orientation to the housing program.