

Chapter 5

SUBSIDY STANDARDS

[24 CFR 982.54(d)(9)]

INTRODUCTION

HUD guidelines require that PHA's establish subsidy standards for the determination of family unit size, and that such standards provide for a minimum commitment of subsidy while avoiding overcrowding. The standards used for the unit size selected by the family must be within the minimum unit size requirements of HUD's Housing Quality Standards. This Chapter and **Section III of Policy/Procedure Manual** explains the subsidy standards which will be used to determine the voucher size (family unit size) for various sized families when they are selected from the waiting list, as well as the PHA's procedures when a family's size changes, or a family selects a unit size that is different from the Voucher.

A. DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT (VOUCHER) SIZE [24 CFR 982.402]

The PHA does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room, but there must be at least one person per bedroom on the Voucher. The PHA's subsidy standards for determining voucher size shall be applied in a manner consistent with Fair Housing guidelines.

For subsidy standards, an adult is a person 18 years old or older.

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, regardless of the actual unit size rented.

Generally, the PHA assigns one bedroom to two people within the following guidelines:

Persons of different generations, persons of the opposite sex (other than spouses), and unrelated adults should be allocated a separate bedroom.

Separate bedrooms should be allocated for persons of the opposite sex (other than adults who have a spousal relationship).

Foster children will be included in determining unit size only if they are anticipated to occupy the unit within a reasonable period of time.

Live-in attendants will generally be provided a separate bedroom. No additional bedrooms are provided for the attendant's family.

Space may be provided for a child who is away at school but who lives with the family during school recesses (meets the definition of an IRS dependant)

Space will not be provided for a family member, other than a spouse, who will be absent most of the time, such as a member who is away in the military.

A single pregnant woman with no other family members must be treated as a two-person family.

Single person families shall be allocated one bedroom.

VOUCHER ISSUANCE/PREFERRED UNIT SIZE

Bedroom Size	Family Composition
1 Bedroom	1 adult, or couple with no children
2 Bedrooms	Adult/couple who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require separate bedrooms, or ● Has live-in aide In the above medical needs instances a MSHDA 16 is required. Adult/couple plus 1 child. Adult/couple plus 2 children of same sex. Woman living alone who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Claims pregnancy with no other children
3 Bedrooms	Adult/couple: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plus 2 children of opposite sex, or ● Plus 3 children, or ● Plus 4 children (2 boys and 2 girls), or ● With medical needs plus 1 child, or ● With medical needs plus 2 children of same sex. In the above medical needs instances a MSHDA 16 is required.
4 Bedrooms	Adult/Couple: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plus 4 or 5 children (3 of same sex), or ● With medical needs plus 2 children of opposite sex, or ● With medical needs plus 3 children In the above medical needs instances a MSHDA 16 is required.

B. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.403(a) & (b)]

The PHA shall grant exceptions from the subsidy standards if the family requests and the PHA determines the exceptions are justified by the relationship, age, sex, health or disability of family members, or other individual circumstances.

The PHA will grant an exception upon request as an accommodation for persons with disabilities. Circumstances may dictate a larger size than the subsidy standards permit when persons cannot share a bedroom because of a need, such as a:

Verified medical or health reason; or

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

Request for Exceptions to Subsidy Standards (MSHDA 147)

The family may request a larger sized voucher than indicated by the PHA's subsidy standards. Such request must be made in writing within 14 calendar days of the PHA's determination of bedroom size. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger bedroom. Documentation verifying the need or justification will be required as appropriate.

Requests based on health related reasons must be verified by a **licensed health care professional**.

PHA Error

If the PHA errs in the bedroom size designation, the family will be issued a Voucher of the appropriate size.

Changes for Applicants

The voucher size is determined prior to the briefing by comparing the family composition to the PHA subsidy standards. If an applicant requires a change in the voucher size, based on the requirements of the PHA subsidy standards, the above-referenced guidelines will apply.

Changes for Participants

The members of the family residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must obtain approval of any additional family member before the new member occupies the unit except for additions by birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, in which case the family must inform the PHA within **14 calendar** days. The above referenced guidelines will apply.

Underhoused Families

If a unit does not meet HQS space standards due to an increase in family size, (unit too small), the PHA will issue a new voucher of the appropriate size and assist the family in locating a suitable unit.

The PHA will also notify the family of the circumstances under which an exception will be granted, such as:

Chronic Illness:	An individual with an ongoing health problem who requires at least part-time assistance.
Joint/Shared or Pending Custody Decisions:	Child physically occupies the unit less than 50% of the time or a final custody decision has not yet been determined.
Child Returning Home:	One or more children have been taken into temporary custody by the state and are being returned to the home.
Foster Home:	Family is certified for foster care and is waiting for placement of a child or children.
Individual Circumstances:	Determined on a case-by-case basis by a MSHDA Area Manager.

Transfer Waiting List

When a change in family composition requires a larger Voucher size and no funds are available, the family will be placed on a Transfer List.

Families will be selected from the Transfer List before families are selected from the applicant waiting list. This assures that families who are already on the program are in the appropriate sized units.

Families will be selected from this list when there is available funding, in the following sequence:

A participant family (whose family composition has been approved by the PHA) who requires a change in Voucher size because they are living in a unit which is overcrowded according to Housing Quality Standards.

A participant family (whose family composition has been approved by the PHA) who requires a change in Voucher size under the Subsidy Standards, but not under Housing Quality Standards.

All others who require a transfer as determined by the PHA as outlined in the PHA Policy on Transfers contained in Policy Procedure Manual.

C. UNIT SIZE SELECTED [24 CFR 982.402(c)]

The family may select a different size dwelling unit than that listed on the Voucher. There are three criteria to consider:

Subsidy Limitation: The family unit size as determined for a family under the PHA subsidy standard for a family assisted in the voucher program is based on the PHA's adopted payment standards. The payment standard for a family shall be the *lower of*:

The payment standard amount for the family unit size; or

The payment standard amount for the unit size rented by the family.

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.

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) as shown in the table below. The levels may be exceeded if a room in addition to bedrooms and living room is used for sleeping.

HQS GUIDELINES FOR UNIT SIZE SELECTED	
Unit Size	Maximum Number in Household
0 Bedroom	1
1 Bedroom	4
2 Bedroom	6
3 Bedroom	8
4 Bedroom	10
5 Bedroom	12
6 Bedroom	14