

The Housing Authority of the City of Augusta, Georgia

**Administrative Plan
BOC 05/18/2023**



Overview of the Program & Plan
Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity
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Applications, Waiting List, & Tenant Selection
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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM AND PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Augusta Housing Authority (AHA) receives its funding for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Augusta Housing Authority is not a federal department or agency. A public housing agency (PHA) is a governmental or public body, created and authorized by state law to develop and operate housing and housing programs for low-income families. The PHA enters into an Annual Contributions Contract with HUD to administer the program requirements on behalf of HUD. The PHA must ensure compliance with federal laws, regulations and notices and must establish policy and procedures to clarify federal requirements and to ensure consistency in program operation.

This chapter contains information about the Augusta Housing Authority and its programs with emphasis on the HCV program. It also contains information about the purpose, intent and use of the plan and guide.

There are three parts to this chapter:

Part I: The Public Housing Agency (PHA). This part includes a description of the Augusta Housing Authority, its jurisdiction, its programs, and its mission and intent.

Part II: The HCV Program. This part contains information about the Housing Choice Voucher program operation, roles and responsibilities, and partnerships.

Part III: The HCV Administrative Plan. This part discusses the purpose and organization of the plan and its revision requirements.

PART I: The Augusta Housing Authority

1-I.A. OVERVIEW

This part explains the origin of the Augusta Housing Authority's creation and authorization, the general structure of the organization, and the relationship between the Augusta Housing Authority Board and staff.

1-I.B. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE AHA

The Section 8 tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance program is funded by the federal government and administered by the Housing Authority of the City of Augusta, Georgia (also known as the Augusta Housing Authority (AHA)) for the jurisdiction of Augusta, Georgia and Richmond County, Georgia.

The Augusta Housing Authority is governed by a board of officials that are generally called “commissioners.” Although some public housing authorities may use a different title for their officials, this document will hitherto refer to the “board of commissioners” or the “board” when discussing the board of governing officials.

Commissioners are appointed in accordance with state housing law and generally serve in the same capacity as the directors of a corporation. The board of commissioners establishes policies under which the Augusta Housing Authority conducts business and ensures that those policies are followed by Augusta Housing Authority staff. The board is responsible for preserving and expanding the agency’s resources and assuring the agency’s continued viability and success.

Formal actions of the Augusta Housing Authority are taken through written resolutions, adopted by the board and entered into the official records of the Augusta Housing Authority.

The principal staff member of the Augusta Housing Authority is the executive director (ED), who is selected and hired by the board. The ED oversees the day-to-day operations of the Augusta Housing Authority and is directly responsible for carrying out the policies established by the commissioners. The ED’s duties include hiring, training, and supervising the Augusta Housing Authority’s staff, as well as budgeting and financial planning for the agency. Additionally, the ED is charged with ensuring compliance with federal and state laws, and program mandates. In some public housing authorities, the ED is known by another title, such as chief executive officer or president.

1-I.C. AHA MISSION

The purpose of a mission statement is to communicate the purpose of the agency to people inside and outside of the agency. It provides the basis for strategy development, identification of critical success factors, resource allocation decisions, as well as ensuring client and stakeholder satisfaction.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority’s mission is to provide safe, decent and sanitary housing conditions for very low-income families and to manage resources efficiently. The Augusta Housing Authority is to promote personal, economic and social upward mobility to provide families the opportunity to make the transition from subsidized to nonsubsidized housing.

1-I.D. THE AHA'S PROGRAMS

The following programs are included under this administrative plan:

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA's administrative plan is applicable to the operation of the Housing Choice Voucher program.

1-I.E. THE AHA'S COMMITMENT TO ETHICS AND SERVICE

As a public service agency, the Augusta Housing Authority is committed to providing excellent service to HCV program participants, owners, and to the community. The Augusta Housing Authority's standards include:

- Administer applicable federal and state laws and regulations to achieve high ratings in performance measurement indicators while maintaining efficiency in program operation to ensure fair and consistent treatment of clients served.
- Provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing – in compliance with program housing quality standards – for very low income families while ensuring that family rents are fair, reasonable, and affordable.
- Encourage self sufficiency of participant families and assist in the expansion of family opportunities which address educational, socio-economic, recreational and other human services needs.
- Promote fair housing and the equal opportunity for very low-income families of all ethnic backgrounds to experience freedom of housing choice.
- Promote a housing program which maintains quality service and integrity while providing an incentive to private property owners to rent to very low-income families.
- Promote a market-driven housing program that will help qualified low-income families be successful in obtaining affordable housing and increase the supply of housing choices for such families.
- Create positive public awareness and expand the level of family, owner, and community support in accomplishing the AHA's mission.
- Attain and maintain a high level of standards and professionalism in day-to-day management of all program components.
- Administer an efficient, high-performing agency through continuous improvement of the AHA's support systems and a high level of commitment to our employees and their development.

The AHA will make every effort to keep program participants informed of HCV program rules and regulations, and to advise participants of how the program rules affect them.

PART II: THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

1-II.A. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The intent of this section is to provide the public and staff with information related to the overall operation of the program. There have been many changes to the program since its inception in 1974 and a brief history of the program will assist the reader to better understand the program.

The United States Housing Act of 1937 (the “Act”) is responsible for the birth of federal housing program initiatives. The Act was intended to provide financial assistance to states and cities for public works projects, slum clearance and the development of affordable housing developments for low-income residents.

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Act of 1974 created a new federally assisted housing program – the Section 8 Existing program (also known as the Section 8 Certificate program). The HCD Act represented a significant shift in federal housing strategy from locally owned public housing to privately owned rental housing.

Under the Certificate program, federal housing assistance payments were made directly to private owners of rental housing, where this housing was made available to lower-income families. Eligible families were able to select housing in the private rental market. Assuming that the housing met certain basic physical standards of quality (“housing quality standards”) and was within certain HUD-established rent limitations (“fair market rents”), the family would be able to receive rental assistance in the housing unit. Family contribution to rent was generally set at 30 percent of the family’s adjusted income, with the remainder of the rent paid by the program.

Another unique feature of the Certificate program was that the rental assistance remained with the eligible family, if the family chose to move to another privately-owned rental unit that met program requirements (in contrast to the public housing program where the rental assistance remains with the unit, should the family decide to move). Consequently, the Certificate program was characterized as tenant-based assistance, rather than unit-based assistance.

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Act of 1987 authorized a new version of tenant-based assistance – the Section 8 Voucher program. The Voucher program was very similar to the Certificate program in that eligible families were able to select housing in the private rental market and receive assistance in that housing unit.

However, the Voucher program permitted families more options in housing selection. Rental housing still had to meet the basic housing quality standards, but there was no fair market rent limitation on rent. In addition, family contribution to rent was not set at a limit of 30 percent of adjusted income. Consequently, depending on the actual rental cost of the unit selected, a family might pay more or less than 30 percent of their adjusted income for rent.

From 1987 through 1999, public housing agencies managed both the Certificate and Voucher tenant-based assistance programs, with separate rules and requirements for each. From 1994 through 1998, HUD published a series of new rules, known as “conforming” rules, to more closely combine and align the two similar housing programs, to the extent permitted by the law.

In 1998, the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) – also known as the Public Housing Reform Act – was signed into law. QHWRA eliminated all statutory differences between the Certificate and Voucher tenant-based programs and required that the two programs be merged into a single tenant-based assistance program, now known as the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

The HCV program was modeled closely on the pre-merger Voucher program. However, unlike the pre-merger Voucher program, the HCV program requires an assisted family to pay at least 30 percent of adjusted income for rent.

The transition of assistance from the Certificate and Voucher programs to the new HCV program began in October 1999. By October 2001, all families receiving tenant-based assistance were converted to the HCV program.

1-II.B. HCV PROGRAM BASICS

The purpose of the HCV program is to provide rental assistance to eligible families. The rules and regulations of the HCV program are determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The PHA is afforded choices in the operation of the program which are included in the PHA’s administrative plan, a document approved by the board of commissioners of the PHA.

The HCV program offers mobility to eligible families because they may search for suitable housing anywhere in the PHA’s jurisdiction and may also be eligible to move under portability to other PHAs’ jurisdictions.

When a family is determined to be eligible for the program and funding is available, the PHA issues the family a housing voucher. When the family finds a suitable housing unit and funding is available, the PHA will enter into a contract with the owner and the family will enter into a lease with the owner. Each party makes their respective payment to the owner so that the owner receives full rent.

Even though the family is determined to be eligible for the program, the owner has the responsibility of approving the family as a suitable renter. The PHA continues to make payments to the owner as long as the family is eligible and the housing unit continues to qualify under the program.

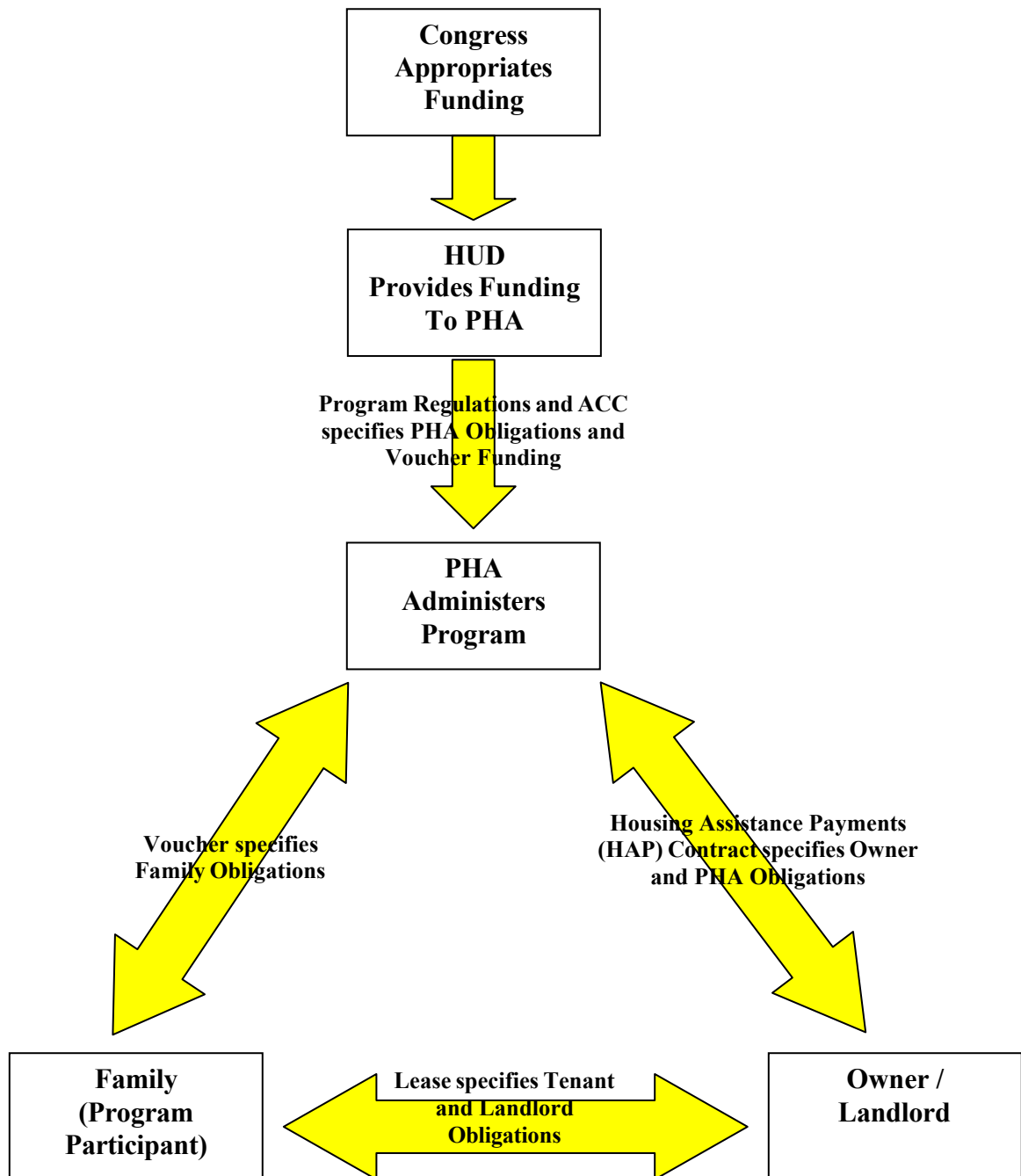
1-II.C. THE HCV PARTNERSHIPS

To administer the HCV program, the PHA enters into a contractual relationship with HUD (Consolidated Annual Contributions Contract). The PHA also enters into contractual relationships with the assisted family and the owner or landlord of the housing unit.

For the HCV program to work and be successful, all parties involved – HUD, the PHA, the owner, and the family – have important roles to play. The roles and responsibilities of all parties are defined in federal regulations and in legal documents that parties execute to participate in the program.

The chart on the following page illustrates key aspects of these relationships.

The HCV Relationships:



What Does HUD Do?

HUD has the following major responsibilities:

- Develop regulations, requirements, handbooks, notices and other guidance to implement HCV housing program legislation passed by Congress;
- Allocate HCV program funds to PHAs;
- Provide technical assistance to PHAs on interpreting and applying HCV program requirements;
- Monitor PHA compliance with HCV program requirements and PHA performance in program administration.

What Does the PHA Do?

The PHA administers the HCV program under contract with HUD and has the following major responsibilities:

- Establish local policies to administer the program;
- Review applications from interested applicants to determine whether they are eligible for the program;
- Maintain a waiting list and select families for admission;
- Issue vouchers to eligible families and provide information on how to lease a unit;
- Conduct outreach to owners, with special attention to owners outside areas of poverty or minority concentration;
- Approve the rental unit (including assuring compliance with housing quality standards and rent reasonableness), the owner, and the tenancy;
- Make housing assistance payments to the owner in a timely manner;
- Recertify families for continued eligibility under the program;
- Ensure that owners and families comply with their contractual obligations;
- Provide families and owners with prompt, professional service;
- Comply with all fair housing and equal opportunity requirements, HUD regulations and requirements, the Annual Contributions Contract, HUD-approved applications for funding, the PHA's administrative plan, and other applicable federal, state and local laws.

What Does the Owner Do?

The owner has the following major responsibilities:

- Screen families who apply for tenancy, to determine suitability as renters.
 - The PHA can provide some information to the owner, but the primary responsibility for tenant screening rests with the owner.
 - The owner should consider family background factors such as rent and bill-paying history, history of caring for property, respecting the rights of others to peaceful enjoyment of the property, compliance with essential conditions of tenancy, whether the family is engaging in drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity that might threaten others.
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments contract executed with the PHA;
- Comply with all applicable fair housing laws and do not discriminate against anyone;
- Maintain the housing unit in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and make necessary repairs in a timely manner;
- Collect rent due from the assisted family and otherwise comply with and enforce provisions of the dwelling lease.

What Does the Family Do?

The family has the following responsibilities:

- Provide the PHA with complete and accurate information as determined by the PHA to be necessary for administration of the program;
- Make their best and most timely efforts to locate qualified and suitable housing;
- Attend all appointments scheduled by the PHA;
- Allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice;
- Take responsibility for care of the housing unit, including any violations of housing quality standards caused by the family;
- Comply with the terms of the lease with the owner;
- Comply with the family obligations of the voucher;
- Not commit serious or repeated violations of the lease;
- Not engage in drug-related or violent criminal activity;
- Notify the PHA and the owner before moving or terminating the lease;
- Use the assisted unit only for residence and as the sole residence of the family. Not sublet the unit, assign the lease, or have any interest in the unit;
- Promptly notify the PHA of any changes in family composition;
- Not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any housing programs.

1-II.D. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Applicable regulations include:

- 24 CFR Part 5: General Program Requirements
- 24 CFR Part 8: Nondiscrimination
- 24 CFR Part 35: Lead-Based Paint
- 24 CFR Part 982: Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance: Housing Choice Voucher Program
- 24 CFR Part 983: Project-Based Vouchers
- 24 CFR Part 985: The Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP)

PART III: THE HCV ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

1-III.A. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The administrative plan is required by HUD. The purpose of the administrative plan is to establish policies for carrying out the programs in a manner consistent with HUD requirements and local goals and objectives contained in the Augusta Housing Authority's agency plan. This administrative plan is a supporting document to the PHA agency plan, and is available for public review as required by CFR 24 Part 903.

This administrative plan is set forth to define the Augusta Housing Authority's local policies for operation of the housing programs in accordance with federal laws and regulations. All issues related to the HCV program not addressed in this document are governed by such federal regulations, HUD handbooks and guidebooks, notices, and other applicable law. The policies in this administrative plan have been designed to ensure compliance with the consolidated ACC and all HUD-approved applications for program funding.

The Augusta Housing Authority is responsible for complying with all changes in HUD regulations pertaining to the HCV program. If such changes conflict with this plan, HUD regulations will have precedence.

Administration of the HCV program and the functions and responsibilities of Augusta Housing Authority staff shall be in compliance with the Augusta Housing Authority's personnel policy and HUD regulations as well as all federal, state and local fair housing laws and regulations.

1-III.B. CONTENTS OF THE PLAN [24 CFR 982.54]

The HUD regulations at 24 CFR 982.54 define the policies that must be included in the administrative plan. They are as follow:

- Selection and admission of applicants from the PHA waiting list, including any PHA admission preferences, procedures for removing applicant names from the waiting list, and procedures for closing and reopening the PHA waiting list (Chapter 4);
- Issuing or denying vouchers, including PHA policy governing the voucher term and any extensions of the voucher term. If the PHA decides to allow extensions of the voucher term, the PHA administrative plan must describe how the PHA determines whether to grant extensions, and how the PHA determines the length of any extension (Chapter 5);
- Any special rules for use of available funds when HUD provides funding to the PHA for a special purpose (e.g., desegregation), including funding for specified families or a specified category of families (Chapter 4);

- Occupancy policies, including definition of what group of persons may qualify as a 'family', definition of when a family is considered to be 'continuously assisted'; standards for denying admission or terminating assistance based on criminal activity or alcohol abuse in accordance with 982.553 (Chapters 3 and 12);
- Encouraging participation by owners of suitable units located outside areas of low income or minority concentration (Chapter 13);
- Assisting a family that claims that illegal discrimination has prevented the family from leasing a suitable unit (Chapter 2);
- Providing information about a family to prospective owners (Chapters 3 and 9);
- Disapproval of owners (Chapter 13);
- Subsidy standards (Chapter 5);
- Family absence from the dwelling unit (Chapter 12);
- How to determine who remains in the program if a family breaks up (Chapter 3);
- Informal review procedures for applicants (Chapter 16);
- Informal hearing procedures for participants (Chapter 16);
- The process for establishing and revising voucher payment standards, including policies on administering decreases in the payment standard during the HAP contract term (Chapter 16);
- The method of determining that rent to owner is a reasonable rent (initially and during the term of a HAP contract) (Chapter 8);
- Special policies concerning special housing types in the program (e.g., use of shared housing) (Chapter 15);
- Policies concerning payment by a family to the PHA of amounts the family owes the PHA (Chapter 16);
- Interim redeterminations of family income and composition (Chapter 11);
- Restrictions, if any, on the number of moves by a participant family (Chapter 10);
- Approval by the board of commissioners or other authorized officials to charge the administrative fee reserve (Chapter 16);
- Procedural guidelines and performance standards for conducting required housing quality standards inspections (Chapter 8); and
- PHA screening of applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy (Chapter 3).

Mandatory vs. Discretionary Policy

HUD makes a distinction between:

- Mandatory policies: those driven by legislation, regulations, current handbooks, notices, and legal opinions, and
- Optional, non-binding guidance, including guidebooks, notices that have expired and recommendations from individual HUD staff.

HUD expects PHAs to develop policies and procedures that are consistent with mandatory policies and to make clear the optional policies the Augusta Housing Authority has adopted. The Augusta Housing Authority's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy is the document that contains and clarifies Augusta Housing Authority policy. HUD's new direction adds additional emphasis to the need for a clearly written and comprehensive ACOP to guide staff in the clear and consistent application of policy.

HUD has already determined that the recommendations and suggestions it makes are consistent with mandatory policies. Therefore, following HUD guidance in the preparation of Augusta Housing Authority policy, even though it is not mandatory, provides the Augusta Housing Authority with a "safe harbor." If the Augusta Housing Authority adopts its own optional policy, it must make its own determination that such policy is consistent with legislation, regulations, and other mandatory requirements. There may be very good reasons for adopting a policy or procedure that is different than that suggested by HUD, but PHAs should carefully think through those decisions and be able to articulate how their policy is consistent with federal laws, regulations and mandatory policy.

1-III.C. ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The plan is organized to provide information to users in particular areas of operation.

1-III.D. UPDATING AND REVISING THE PLAN

The Augusta Housing Authority will revise this administrative plan as needed to comply with changes in HUD regulations. The original plan and any changes must be approved by the board of commissioners of the agency, the pertinent sections included in the Agency Plan, and a copy provided to HUD.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will review and update the plan at least once a year, and more often if needed, to reflect changes in regulations, Augusta Housing Authority operations, or when needed to ensure staff consistency in operation.

Chapter 2

FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the laws and HUD regulations requiring PHAs to affirmatively further civil rights and fair housing in all federally-assisted housing programs. The letter and spirit of these laws are implemented through consistent policy and processes. The responsibility to further nondiscrimination pertains to all areas of the Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) operations.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and Augusta Housing Authority policies related to these topics in three parts:

Part I: Nondiscrimination. This part presents the body of laws and regulations governing the responsibilities of the Augusta Housing Authority regarding nondiscrimination.

Part II: Policies Related to Persons with Disabilities. This part discusses the rules and policies of the Housing Choice Voucher Program related to reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. These rules and policies are based on the Fair Housing Act (42.U.S.C.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and incorporate guidance from the Joint Statement of The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice (DOJ), issued May 17, 2004.

Part III: Prohibition of Discrimination Against Limited English Proficiency Persons. This part details the obligations of the Augusta Housing Authority to ensure meaningful access to the HCV program and its activities by persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). This part incorporates the Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons published January 22, 2007, in the *Federal Register*.

PART I: NONDISCRIMINATION

2-I.A. OVERVIEW

Federal laws require the Augusta Housing Authority to treat all applicants and participants equally, providing the same opportunity to access services, regardless of family characteristics and background. Federal law prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, and disability. In addition, HUD regulations provide for additional protections regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status. The Augusta Housing Authority will comply fully with all federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws, and with rules and regulations governing fair housing and equal opportunity in housing and employment, including:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (as amended by the Community Development Act of 1974 and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988)
- Executive Order 11063
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (to the extent that it applies, otherwise Section 504 and the Fair Housing Amendments govern)
- The Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Final Rule, published in the *Federal Register* February 3, 2012 and further clarified in Notice PIH 2014-20
- Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA)

When more than one civil rights law applies to a situation, the laws will be read and applied together.

Any applicable state laws or local ordinances and any legislation protecting individual rights of tenants, applicants, or staff that may subsequently be enacted will also apply.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

No state or local nondiscrimination laws or ordinances apply.

2-I.B. NONDISCRIMINATION

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination against certain protected classes and other groups of people. State and local requirements, as well as Augusta Housing Authority policies, can prohibit discrimination based on other factors.

The Augusta Housing Authority shall not discriminate because of race, color, sex, religion, familial status, age, disability or national origin (called “protected classes”)

Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18.

The Augusta Housing Authority will not discriminate on the basis of marital status, gender identity, or sexual orientation [FR Notice 02/03/12].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority does not identify any additional protected classes.

The Augusta Housing Authority will not use any of these factors to:

- Deny to any family the opportunity to apply for housing, nor deny to any qualified applicant the opportunity to participate in the housing choice voucher program.
- Provide housing that is different from that provided to others.
- Subject anyone to segregation or disparate treatment
- Restrict anyone's access to any benefit enjoyed by others in connection with the housing program.
- Treat a person differently in determining eligibility or other requirements for admission.
- Steer an applicant or participant toward or away from a particular area based any of these factors.
- Deny anyone access to the same level of services.
- Deny anyone the opportunity to participate in a planning or advisory group that is an integral part of the housing program.
- Discriminate in the provision of residential real estate transactions.
- Discriminate against someone because they are related to or associated with a member of a protected class.
- Publish or cause to be published an advertisement or notice indicating the availability of housing that prefers or excludes persons who are members of a protected class.

Providing Information to Families and Owners

The Augusta Housing Authority must take steps to ensure that families and owners are fully aware of all applicable civil rights laws. As part of the briefing process, the Augusta Housing Authority must provide information to HCV applicant families about civil rights requirements and the opportunity to rent in a broad range of neighborhoods [24 CFR 982.301]. The Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract informs owners of the requirement not to discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, or disability in connection with the contract.

Discrimination Complaints

If an applicant or participant believes that any family member has been discriminated against by the Augusta Housing Authority or an owner, the family should advise the Augusta Housing Authority. HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to make every reasonable attempt to determine whether the applicant's or participant's assertions have merit and take any warranted corrective action. In addition, the Augusta Housing Authority is required to provide the applicant or participant with information about how to file a discrimination complaint [24 CFR 982.304].

- Upon receipt of a housing discrimination complaint, the Augusta Housing Authority is required to:
 - Provide written notice of the complaint to those alleged and inform the complainant that such notice was made
 - Investigate the allegations and provide the complainant and those alleged with findings and either a proposed corrective action or an explanation of why corrective action is not warranted
 - Keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions [Notice PIH 2014-20]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Applicants or participants who believe that they have been subject to unlawful discrimination may notify the PHA either orally or in writing.

The Augusta Housing Authority will attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against the Augusta Housing Authority.

The Augusta Housing Authority will provide a copy of a discrimination complaint form to the complainant and provide them with information on how to complete and submit the form to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO).

PART II: POLICIES RELATED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

2-II.A. OVERVIEW

One type of disability discrimination prohibited by the Fair Housing Act is the refusal to make reasonable accommodation in rules, policies, practices, or services when such accommodation may be necessary to afford a person with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy a program or dwelling under the program.

The Augusta Housing Authority must ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to the Augusta Housing Authority's programs and services. This responsibility begins with the first contact by an interested family and continues through every aspect of the program.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will ask all applicants and participants if they require any type of accommodations, in writing, on the intake application, reexamination documents, and notices of adverse action by the Augusta Housing Authority, by including the following language:

“If you or anyone in your family is a person with disabilities, and you require a specific accommodation in order to fully utilize our programs and services, please contact the housing authority.”

A specific name and phone number of designated staff will be provided to process requests for accommodation.

2-II.B. DEFINITION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment made to a rule, policy, practice, or service that allows a person with a disability to have equal access to the HCV program. For example, reasonable accommodations may include making home visits, extending the voucher term, or approving an exception payment standard in order for a participant to lease an accessible dwelling unit.

Federal regulations stipulate that requests for accommodations will be considered reasonable if they do not create an “undue financial and administrative burden” for the Augusta Housing Authority, or result in a “fundamental alteration” in the nature of the program or service offered. A fundamental alteration is a modification that alters the essential nature of a provider's operations.

Types of Reasonable Accommodations

When needed, the Augusta Housing Authority will modify normal procedures to accommodate the needs of a person with disabilities. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Permitting applications and reexaminations to be completed by mail
- Conducting home visits
- Using higher payment standards (either within the acceptable range or with HUD approval of a payment standard outside the Augusta Housing Authority range) if the Augusta Housing

- Authority determines this is necessary to enable a person with disabilities to obtain a suitable housing unit
- Providing time extensions for locating a unit when necessary because of lack of availability of accessible units or special challenges of the family in seeking a unit
- Permitting an authorized designee or advocate to participate in the application or certification process and any other meetings with Augusta Housing Authority staff
- Displaying posters and other housing information in locations throughout the Augusta Housing Authority's office in such a manner as to be easily readable from a wheelchair

2-II.C. REQUEST FOR AN ACCOMMODATION

If an applicant or participant indicates that an exception, change, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service is needed because of a disability, HUD requires that the Augusta Housing Authority treat the information as a request for a reasonable accommodation, even if no formal request is made [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act].

The family must explain what type of accommodation is needed to provide the person with the disability full access to the Augusta Housing Authority's programs and services.

If the need for the accommodation is not readily apparent or known to the Augusta Housing Authority, the family must explain the relationship between the requested accommodation and the disability. There must be an identifiable connection, or nexus, between the requested accommodation and the individual's disability.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will encourage the family to make its request in writing using a reasonable accommodation request form. However, the Augusta Housing Authority will consider the accommodation any time the family indicates that an accommodation is needed whether or not a formal written request is submitted.

2-II.D. VERIFICATION OF DISABILITY

The regulatory civil rights definition for persons with disabilities is provided in Exhibit 2-1 at the end of this chapter. The definition of a person with a disability for the purpose of obtaining a reasonable accommodation is much broader than the HUD definition of disability which is used for waiting list preferences and income allowances.

Before providing an accommodation, the Augusta Housing Authority must determine that the person meets the definition of a person with a disability, and that the accommodation will enhance the family's access to the Augusta Housing Authority's programs and services.

If a person's disability is obvious or otherwise known to the Augusta Housing Authority, and if the need for the requested accommodation is also readily apparent or known, no further verification will be required [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act].

If a family indicates that an accommodation is required for a disability that is not obvious or otherwise known to the Augusta Housing Authority, the Augusta Housing Authority must verify that the person meets the definition of a person with a disability, and that the limitations imposed by the disability require the requested accommodation.

When verifying a disability, the Augusta Housing Authority will follow the verification policies provided in Chapter 7. All information related to a person's disability will be treated in accordance with the confidentiality policies provided in Chapter 16. In addition to the general requirements that govern all verification efforts, the following requirements apply when verifying a disability:

- Third-party verification must be obtained from an individual identified by the family who is competent to make the determination. A doctor or other medical professional, a peer support group, a non-medical service agency, or a reliable third party who is in a position to know about the individual's disability may provide verification of a disability [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act]
- The Augusta Housing Authority must request only information that is necessary to evaluate the disability-related need for the accommodation. The Augusta Housing Authority will not inquire about the nature or extent of any disability.
- Medical records will not be accepted or retained in the participant file.
- In the event that the Augusta Housing Authority does receive confidential information about a person's specific diagnosis, treatment, or the nature or severity of the disability, the Augusta Housing Authority will not maintain it in the file. In place of the information, the Augusta Housing Authority will note in the file that the disability and other requested information have been verified, the date the verification was received, and the name and address of the knowledgeable professional who sent the information [Notice PIH 2010-26].

2-II.E. APPROVAL/DENIAL OF A REQUESTED ACCOMMODATION [Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act, Notice PIH 2010-26].

The Augusta Housing Authority must approve a request for an accommodation if the following three conditions are met:

- The request was made by or on behalf of a person with a disability.
- There is a disability-related need for the accommodation.
- The requested accommodation is reasonable, meaning it would not impose an undue financial and administrative burden on the Augusta Housing Authority, or fundamentally alter the nature of the Augusta Housing Authority's HCV operations (including the obligation to comply with HUD requirements and regulations).

Requests for accommodations must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account factors such as the overall size of the Augusta Housing Authority's program with respect to the number of employees, type of facilities and size of budget, type of operation including composition and structure of workforce, the nature and cost of the requested accommodation, and the availability of alternative accommodations that would effectively meet the family's disability-related needs.

Before making a determination whether to approve the request, the Augusta Housing Authority may enter into discussion and negotiation with the family, request more information from the family, or may require the family to sign a consent form so that the Augusta Housing Authority may verify the need for the requested accommodation.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

After a request for an accommodation is presented, the Augusta Housing Authority will respond, in writing, within 10 business days.

If the Augusta Housing Authority denies a request for an accommodation because there is no relationship, or nexus, found between the disability and the requested accommodation, the notice will inform the family of the right to appeal the Augusta Housing Authority's decision through an informal hearing (if applicable) or the grievance process (see Chapter 14).

If the Augusta Housing Authority denies a request for an accommodation because it is not reasonable (it would impose an undue financial and administrative burden or fundamentally alter the nature of the Augusta Housing Authority's operations), the Augusta Housing Authority will discuss with the family whether an alternative accommodation could effectively address the family's disability-related needs without a fundamental alteration to the public housing program and without imposing an undue financial and administrative burden.

If the Augusta Housing Authority believes that the family has failed to identify a reasonable alternative accommodation after interactive discussion and negotiation, the Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family, in writing, of its determination within 10 business days from the date of the most recent discussion or communication with the family. The notice will inform the

family of the right to appeal the Augusta Housing Authority's decision through an informal hearing (if applicable) or the grievance process (see Chapter 14).

2-IL.F. PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH HEARING OR VISION IMPAIRMENTS

HUD regulations require the Augusta Housing Authority to ensure that persons with disabilities related to hearing and vision have reasonable access to the Augusta Housing Authority's programs and services [24 CFR 8.6].

At the initial point of contact with each applicant, the Augusta Housing Authority shall inform all applicants of alternative forms of communication that can be used other than plain language paperwork.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

To meet the needs of persons with hearing impairments, TTD/TTY (text telephone display/teletype) communication will be available.

To meet the needs of persons with vision impairments, large-print and audio versions of key program documents will be made available upon request. When visual aids are used in public meetings or presentations, or in meetings with Augusta Housing Authority staff, one-on-one assistance will be provided upon request.

Additional examples of alternative forms of communication are sign language interpretation; having material explained orally by staff; or having a third party representative (a friend, relative or advocate, named by the applicant) to receive, interpret and explain housing materials and be present at all meetings.

2-II.G. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

The Augusta Housing Authority must comply with a variety of regulations pertaining to physical accessibility, including the following:

- Notice PIH 2010-26
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
- The Fair Housing Act of 1988

The Augusta Housing Authority's policies concerning physical accessibility must be readily available to applicants and participants. They can be found in three key documents:

- This plan describes the key policies that govern the Augusta Housing Authority's responsibilities with regard to physical accessibility.
- Notice PIH 2010-26 summarizes information about pertinent laws and implementing regulations related to nondiscrimination and accessibility in federally-funded housing programs.
- The Augusta Housing Authority Plan provides information about self-evaluation, needs assessment, and transition plans.

The design, construction, or alteration of Augusta Housing Authority facilities must conform to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). Newly-constructed facilities must be designed to be readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. Alterations to existing facilities must be accessible to the maximum extent feasible, defined as not imposing an undue financial and administrative burden on the operations of the HCV program.

When issuing a voucher to a family that includes an individual with disabilities, the Augusta Housing Authority will include a current list of available accessible units known to the Augusta Housing Authority and will assist the family in locating an available accessible unit, if necessary.

In general, owners should permit the family to make reasonable modifications to the unit. However, the owner is not required to pay for the modification and may require that the unit be restored to its original state at the family's expense when the family moves.

2-II.H. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

The Augusta Housing Authority's decision to deny or terminate the assistance of a family that includes a person with disabilities is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation [24 CFR 982.552 (2)(iv)].

When applicants with disabilities are denied assistance, the notice of denial must inform them of the Augusta Housing Authority's informal review process and their right to request an informal review. In addition, the notice must inform applicants with disabilities of their right to request reasonable accommodations to participate in the informal review process.

When a participant family's assistance is terminated, the notice of termination must inform them of the Augusta Housing Authority's informal hearing process and their right to request a hearing and reasonable accommodation.

When reviewing reasonable accommodation requests, the Augusta Housing Authority must consider whether any mitigating circumstances can be verified to explain and overcome the problem that led to the Augusta Housing Authority's decision to deny or terminate assistance. If a reasonable accommodation will allow the family to meet the requirements, the Augusta Housing Authority must make the accommodation.

PART III: IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

2-III.A. OVERVIEW

Language for Limited English Proficiency Persons (LEP) can be a barrier to accessing important benefits or services, understanding and exercising important rights, complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding other information provided by the HCV program. In certain circumstances, failure to ensure that LEP persons can effectively participate in or benefit from federally-assisted programs and activities may violate the prohibition under Title VI against discrimination on the basis of national origin. This part incorporates the Final Guidance to Federal Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, published January 22, 2007, in the *Federal Register*.

The Augusta Housing Authority will take affirmative steps to communicate with people who need services or information in a language other than English. These persons will be referred to as Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

LEP is defined as persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. For the purposes of this Administrative Plan, LEP persons are HCV applicants and participants, and parents and family members of applicants and participants.

In order to determine the level of access needed by LEP persons, the Augusta Housing Authority will balance the following four factors: (1) the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the Housing Choice Voucher program; (2) the frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the program; (3) the nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives; and (4) the resources available to the Augusta Housing Authority and costs. Balancing these four factors will ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on the Augusta Housing Authority.

2-III.B. ORAL INTERPRETATION

The Augusta Housing Authority will offer competent interpretation services free of charge, upon request, to the LEP person.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will analyze the various kinds of contacts it has with the public, to assess language needs and decide what reasonable steps should be taken.

“Reasonable steps” may not be reasonable where the costs imposed substantially exceed the benefits.

Where feasible, the Augusta Housing Authority will train and hire bilingual staff to be available to act as interpreters and translators, will pool resources with other public housing agencies, and will standardize documents. Where feasible and possible, the Augusta Housing Authority will encourage the use of qualified community volunteers.

Where LEP persons desire, they will be permitted to use, at their own expense, an interpreter of their own choosing, in place of or as a supplement to the free language services offered by the Augusta Housing Authority. The interpreter may be a family member or friend.

2-III.C. WRITTEN TRANSLATION

Translation is the replacement of a written text from one language into an equivalent written text in another language.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In order to comply with written-translation obligations, the Augusta Housing Authority will take the following steps:

The Augusta Housing Authority will provide written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5 percent or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally; or

If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the 5 percent trigger, the Augusta Housing Authority does not translate vital written materials, but provides written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost.

2-III.D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

After completing the four-factor analysis and deciding what language assistance services are appropriate, the Augusta Housing Authority shall determine whether it is necessary to develop a written implementation plan to address the identified needs of the LEP populations it serves.

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines that it is not necessary to develop a written implementation plan, the absence of a written plan does not obviate the underlying obligation to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to the Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program and services.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If it is determined that the Augusta Housing Authority serves very few LEP persons, and the Augusta Housing Authority has very limited resources, the Augusta Housing Authority will not develop a written LEP plan, but will consider alternative ways to articulate in a reasonable manner a plan for providing meaningful access. Entities having significant contact with LEP persons, such as schools, grassroots and faith-based organizations, community groups, and groups working with new immigrants will be contacted for input into the process.

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines it is appropriate to develop a written LEP plan, the following five steps will be taken: (1) Identifying LEP individuals who need language assistance; (2) identifying language assistance measures; (3) training staff; (4) providing notice to LEP persons; and (5) monitoring and updating the LEP plan.

EXHIBIT 2-1: DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY UNDER FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS [24 CFR Parts 8.3 and 100.201]

A person with a disability, as defined under federal civil rights laws, is any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, or
- Has a record of such impairment, or
- Is regarded as having such impairment

The phrase “physical or mental impairment” includes:

- Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic or disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or
- Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term “physical or mental impairment” includes, but is not limited to: such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction and alcoholism.

“Major life activities” includes, but is not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, and/or working.

“Has a record of such impairment” means has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

“Is regarded as having an impairment” is defined as having a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit one or more major life activities but is treated by a public entity (such as the PHA) as constituting such a limitation; has none of the impairments defined in this section but is treated by a public entity as having such an impairment; or has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, only as a result of the attitudes of others toward that impairment.

The definition of a person with disabilities does not include:

- Current illegal drug users
- People whose alcohol use interferes with the rights of others
- Persons who objectively pose a direct threat or substantial risk of harm to others that cannot be controlled with a reasonable accommodation under the HCV program

The above definition of disability determines whether an applicant or participant is entitled to any of the protections of federal disability civil rights laws. Thus, a person who does not meet this disability is not entitled to a reasonable accommodation under federal civil rights and fair housing laws and regulations.

The HUD definition of a person with a disability is much narrower than the civil rights definition of disability. The HUD definition of a person with a disability is used for purposes of receiving the disabled family preference, the \$400 elderly/disabled household deduction, the \$480 dependent deduction, the allowance for medical expenses, or the allowance for disability assistance expenses.

The definition of a person with a disability for purposes of granting a reasonable accommodation request is much broader than the HUD definition of disability. Many people will not qualify as a disabled person under the HCV program, yet an accommodation is needed to provide equal opportunity.

Chapter 3

ELIGIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

The Augusta Housing Authority is responsible for ensuring that every individual and family admitted to the HCV program meets all program eligibility requirements. This includes any individual approved to join the family after the family has been admitted to the program. The family must provide any information needed by the Augusta Housing Authority to confirm eligibility and determine the level of the family's assistance.

To be eligible for the HCV program:

- The applicant family must:
 - Qualify as a family as defined by HUD and the Augusta Housing Authority.
 - Have income at or below HUD-specified income limits.
 - Qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigrant status of family members.
 - Provide social security number information for household members as required.
 - Consent to the Augusta Housing Authority's collection and use of family information as provided for in Augusta Housing Authority-provided consent forms.
- The Augusta Housing Authority must determine that the current or past behavior of household members does not include activities that are prohibited by HUD or the Augusta Housing Authority.

This chapter contains three parts:

Part I: Definitions of Family and Household Members. This part contains HUD and Augusta Housing Authority definitions of family and household members and explains initial and ongoing eligibility issues related to these members.

Part II: Basic Eligibility Criteria. This part discusses income eligibility, and rules regarding citizenship, social security numbers, and family consent.

Part III: Denial of Assistance. This part covers factors related to an applicant's past or current conduct (e.g. criminal activity) that can cause the Augusta Housing Authority to deny assistance.

PART I: DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

3-I.A. OVERVIEW

Some eligibility criteria and program rules vary depending upon the composition of the family requesting assistance. In addition, some requirements apply to the family as a whole and others apply to individual persons who will live in the assisted unit. This part provides information that is needed to correctly identify family and household members, and to apply HUD's eligibility rules.

3-I.B. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 982.201(c); FR Notice 02/03/12; Notice PIH 2014-20]

The terms *family* and *household* have different meanings in the HCV program.

Family

To be eligible for assistance, an applicant must qualify as a family. *Family* as defined by HUD includes, but is not limited to the following, regardless actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, a single person, who may be an elderly person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person; or a group of persons residing together. Such group includes, but is not limited to a family with or without children (a child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family), an elderly family, a near-elderly family, a disabled family, a displaced family, or the remaining member of a tenant family. The PHA has the discretion to determine if any other group of persons qualifies as a family.

Gender Identity means actual or perceived gender characteristics.

Sexual orientation means homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A family also includes two or more individuals who are not related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other operation of law but who either can demonstrate that they have lived together previously or certify that each individual's income and other resources will be available to meet the needs of the family.

Each family must identify the individuals to be included in the family at the time of application, and must update this information if the family's composition changes.

The Augusta Housing Authority will verify the status of applicants at the time other eligibility factors are determined.

Household

Household is a broader term that includes additional people who, with the PHA's permission, live in an assisted unit, such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults.

3-I.C. FAMILY BREAKUP AND REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY

Family Breakup [24 CFR 982.315]

Except under the following conditions, the Augusta Housing Authority has discretion to determine which members of an assisted family continue to receive assistance if the family breaks up:

- If the family breakup results from an occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the Augusta Housing Authority must ensure that the victim retains assistance. (For documentation requirements and policies related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, see section 16-IX.D of this plan.)
- If a court determines the disposition of property between members of the assisted family, the Augusta Housing Authority is bound by the court's determination of which family members continue to receive assistance.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When a family on the waiting list breaks up into two otherwise eligible families, only one of the new families may retain the original application date. Other former family members may make a new application with a new application date if the waiting list is open.

If a family breaks up into two otherwise eligible families while receiving assistance, only one of the new families will continue to be assisted.

In the absence of a judicial decision or an agreement among the original family members, the Augusta Housing Authority will determine which family will retain their placement on the waiting list or continue to receive assistance. In making its determination, the Augusta Housing Authority will take into consideration the following factors: (1) the interest of any minor children, including custody arrangements; (2) the interest of any ill, elderly, or disabled family members; (3) the interest of any family member who is the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including a family member who was forced to leave an assisted unit as a result of such actual or threatened abuse; (4) any possible risks to family members as a result of criminal activity; and (5) the recommendations of social service professionals

Remaining Member of a Tenant Family [24 CFR 5.403]

The HUD definition of family includes the *remaining member of a tenant family*, which is a member of an assisted family who remains in the unit when other members of the family have left the unit. Household members such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults do not qualify as remaining members of a family.

If dependents are the only “remaining members of a tenant family” and there is no family member able to assume the responsibilities of the head of household, see Chapter 6, Section 6-I.B, for the policy on “Caretakers for a Child.”

3-I.D. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 5.504(b)]

Head of household means the adult member of the family who is considered the head for purposes of determining income eligibility and rent. The head of household is responsible for ensuring that the family fulfills all of its responsibilities under the program, alone or in conjunction with a cohead or spouse.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family may designate any qualified family member as the head of household.

The head of household must have the legal capacity to enter into a lease under state and local law. A minor who is emancipated under state law may be designated as head of household.

3-I.E. SPOUSE, COHEAD, AND OTHER ADULT

A family may have a spouse or cohead, but not both [HUD-50058 IB, p. 13].

Spouse means the marriage partner of the head of household.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A *marriage partner* includes the partner in a "common law" marriage as defined in state law; however, **Georgia** does not have a common law marriage. The term "spouse" does not apply to friends, roommates, or significant others who are not marriage partners. A minor who is emancipated under state law may be designated as a spouse.

A *cohead* is an individual in the household who is equally responsible with the head of household for ensuring that the family fulfills all of its responsibilities under the program, but who is not a spouse. A family can have only one cohead.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Minors who are emancipated under state law may be designated as a cohead.

Other adult means a family member, other than the head, spouse, or cohead, who is 18 years of age or older. Foster adults and live-in aides are not considered other adults.

3-I.F. DEPENDENT [24 CFR 5.603]

A *dependent* is a family member who is under 18 years of age or a person of any age who is a person with a disability or a full-time student, except that the following persons can never be dependents: the head of household, spouse, cohead, foster children/adults and live-in aides. Identifying each dependent in the family is important because each dependent qualifies the family for a dependent allowance as described in Chapter 6.

Joint Custody of Dependents

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Dependents that are subject to a joint custody arrangement will be considered a member of the family, if they live with the applicant or participant family 50 percent or more of the time.

When more than one applicant or participant family is claiming the same dependents as family members, the family with primary custody at the time of the initial examination or reexamination will be able to claim the dependents. If there is a dispute about which family should claim them, the AHA will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, school enrollment documentation, or an IRS return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes.

3-I.G. FULL-TIME STUDENT [24 CFR 5.603; HCV GB, p. 5-29]

A *full-time student* (FTS) is a person who is attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis. The time commitment or subject load that is needed to be full-time is defined by the educational institution.

Identifying each FTS is important because: (1) each family member that is an FTS, other than the head, spouse, or cohead, qualifies the family for a dependent allowance, and (2) the earned income of such an FTS is treated differently from the income of other family members.

3-I.H. ELDERLY AND NEAR-ELDERLY PERSONS, AND ELDERLY FAMILY [24 CFR 5.100 and 5.403, FR Notice 02/03/12]

Elderly Persons

An *elderly person* is a person who is at least 62 years of age.

Near-Elderly Persons

A *near-elderly person* is a person who is 50-61 years of age.

Elderly Family

An *elderly family* is one in which the head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is an elderly person. Identifying elderly families is important because elderly families qualify for the elderly family allowance as described in Chapter 6.

3-I.I. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND DISABLED FAMILY [24 CFR 5.403, FR Notice 02/03/12]

Persons with Disabilities

Under the HCV program, special rules apply to persons with disabilities and to any family whose head, spouse, or cohead is a person with disabilities. The technical definitions of individual with handicaps and persons with disabilities are provided in Exhibit 3-1 at the end of this chapter. These definitions are used for a number of purposes including ensuring that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against based upon disability.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Augusta Housing Authority must make all aspects of the HCV program accessible to persons with disabilities and consider reasonable accommodations requested based upon a person's disability.

Disabled Family

A *disabled family* is one in which the head, spouse, or cohead is a person with disabilities. Identifying disabled families is important because these families qualify for the disabled family allowance as described in Chapter 6.

Even though persons with drug or alcohol dependencies are considered persons with disabilities, this does not prevent the Augusta Housing Authority from denying assistance for reasons related to alcohol and drug abuse in accordance with the policies found in Part III of this chapter, or from terminating assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

3-I.J. GUESTS [24 CFR 5.100]

A *guest* is a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a member of the household who has expressed or implied authority to so consent.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A guest can remain in the assisted unit no longer than 14 consecutive days or a total of 30 cumulative calendar days during any 12-month period.

A family may request an exception to this policy for valid reasons (e.g., care of a relative recovering from a medical procedure is expected to last 20 consecutive days). An exception will not be made unless the family can identify and provide documentation of the residence to which the guest will return.

Children who are subject to a joint custody arrangement or for whom a family has visitation privileges, that are not included as a family member because they live outside of the assisted household more than 50 percent of the time, are not subject to the time limitations of guests as described above.

Former participants who were terminated are not permitted as overnight guests.

Guests who represent the unit address as their residence address for receipt of benefits or other purposes will be considered unauthorized occupants. In addition, guests who remain in the unit beyond the allowable time limit will be considered unauthorized occupants, and their presence constitutes violation of the HCV Program.

3-I.K. FOSTER CHILDREN AND FOSTER ADULTS

Foster adults are usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone [24 CFR 5.609].

The term *foster child* is not specifically defined by the regulations.

Foster children and foster adults who are living with an applicant or who have been approved by the Augusta Housing Authority to live with a participant family are considered household members but not family members. The income of foster children/adults is not counted in family annual income, and foster children/adults do not qualify for a dependent deduction [24 CFR 5.603; HUD-50058 IB, p. 13].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A *foster child* is a child that is in the legal guardianship or custody of a state, county, or private adoption or foster care agency, yet is cared for by foster parents in their own homes, under some kind of short-term or long-term foster care arrangement with the custodial agency.

A foster child or foster adult may be allowed to reside in the unit if their presence would not result in a violation of HQS space standards according to 24 CFR 982.401.

Children that are temporarily absent from the home as a result of placement in foster care are discussed in Section 3-I.L.

3-I.L. ABSENT FAMILY MEMBERS

Individuals may be absent from the family, either temporarily or permanently, for a variety of reasons including educational activities, placement in foster care, employment, illness, incarceration, and court order.

Definitions of Temporarily and Permanently Absent

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Generally, an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for 60 consecutive days or less is considered temporarily absent and continues to be considered a family member. Generally, an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for more than 60 consecutive days is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

Absent Students

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When someone who has been considered a family member attends school away from home, the person will continue to be considered a family member unless information becomes available to the Augusta Housing Authority indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household.

Absences Due to Placement in Foster Care [24 CFR 5.403]

Children temporarily absent from the home as a result of placement in foster care are considered members of the family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a child has been placed in foster care, the Augusta Housing Authority will verify with the appropriate agency whether and when the child is expected to be returned to the home. Unless the agency confirms that the child has been permanently removed from the home, the child will be counted as a family member.

If the time period is to be greater than two (2) months from the date of removal of the child/ren, the Voucher size will be reduced. If all children are removed from the home permanently, the Voucher size will be reduced in accordance with the Augusta Housing Authority subsidy standards.

Absences Due to Incarceration

If the sole member is incarcerated for more than 30 consecutive days, s/he will be considered permanently absent. Any member of the household, other than the sole member, will be considered permanently absent if s/he is incarcerated for one (1) month. The Augusta Housing Authority will determine if the reason for incarceration is for drug-related or violent criminal activity.

Absence of Entire Family

These policy guidelines address situations when the family is absent from the unit, but has not moved out of the unit. In cases where the family has moved out of the unit, the Augusta Housing Authority will terminate assistance in accordance with appropriate termination procedures contained in this Plan.

Families are required both to notify the Augusta Housing Authority before they move out of a unit and to give the Augusta Housing Authority information about any family member absence from the unit.

Families must notify the Augusta Housing Authority at least 10 days before leaving the unit if they are going to be absent from the unit for more than 30 consecutive days.

If the entire family is absent from the assisted unit for more than 30 consecutive days, the unit will be considered to be vacated and the assistance will be terminated. If it is determined that the family is absent from the unit, the Augusta Housing Authority will not continue assistance payments.

"Absence of entire family" means that no family member is residing in the unit.

In order to determine if the family is absent from the unit, the Augusta Housing Authority may:

- Write letters to the family at the unit
- Telephone the family at the unit
- Interview neighbors
- Verify if utilities are in service
- Check with the post office

A person with a disability may request an extension of time as an accommodation. If the absence which resulted in termination of assistance was due to a person's disability, and the Augusta Housing Authority can verify that the person was unable to notify the Augusta Housing Authority in accordance with the family's responsibilities, and if funding is available, the Augusta Housing Authority may reinstate the family as an accommodation if requested by the family.

Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons [HCV GB, p. 5-22]

If a family member is confined to a nursing home or hospital on a permanent basis, that person is no longer considered a family member and the income of that person is not counted [HCV GB, p. 5-22].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will request verification of the family member's permanent absence from a responsible medical professional. If the responsible medical professional cannot provide a determination, the person will be considered temporarily absent. If the family certifies that the family member is confined on a permanent basis, they may present, and the Augusta Housing Authority will consider, any additional documentation or evidence.

Return of Permanently Absent Family Members

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must request Augusta Housing Authority approval for the return of any adult family members that the Augusta Housing Authority previously determined to be permanently absent. Augusta Housing Authority will only consider absent family members who were removed due to them being out of the household to attend school, college, training, military reserves, national guard, hospitalization and rehabilitation facilities. The individual is subject to the eligibility and screening requirements discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

The returning adult family member may be allowed to reside in the unit if their presence would not result in a violation of HQS space standards according to 24 CFR 982.401.

3-I.M. LIVE-IN AIDE

A *live-in aide* is a person who resides with one or more elderly persons, or near-elderly persons, or persons with disabilities, and who: (1) is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the persons, (2) is not obligated for the support of the persons, and (3) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services [24 CFR 5.403].

The Augusta Housing Authority must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR 8, to make the program accessible to and usable by the family member with disabilities.

The income of a live-in aide is not counted in the calculation of annual income for the family [24 CFR 5.609(b)]. Relatives may be approved as live-in aides if they meet all of the criteria defining a live-in aide. Because live-in aides are not *family* members, a relative who serves as a live-in aide would not be considered a remaining member of a tenant family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A family's request for a live-in aide must be made in writing. Written verification will be required from a reliable, knowledgeable professional, such as a doctor, social worker, or case worker, that the live-in aide is essential for the care and well-being of the elderly, near-elderly, or disabled family member. If the live-in aide is approved, the family and live-in aide may be required to submit a certification stating that the live-in aide is (1) not obligated for the support of the person(s) needing the care, and (2) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services.

The Augusta Housing Authority has the discretion not to approve a particular person as a live-in aide, and may withdraw such approval if [24 CFR 982.316(b)]:

- The person commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;

- The person commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity; or

- The person currently owes rent or other amounts to the Augusta Housing Authority or to another Public Housing Authority in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

Within 10 business days of receiving a request for a live-in aide, including all required documentation related to the request, the Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family of its decision in writing.

In addition, the family is required to notify the Augusta Housing Authority when the live-in aide is no longer needed to assist the family.

PART II: BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

3-II.A. INCOME ELIGIBILITY AND TARGETING

Income Limits

HUD establishes income limits for all areas of the country and publishes them annually in the *Federal Register*. They are based upon estimates of median family income with adjustments for family size. The income limits are used to determine eligibility for the program and for income targeting purposes as discussed in this section.

Definitions of the Income Limits [24 CFR 5.603(b)]

Low-income family. A family whose annual income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area, adjusted for family size.

Very low-income family. A family whose annual income does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the area, adjusted for family size.

Extremely low-income family. A family whose annual income does not exceed the federal poverty level or 30 percent of the median income for the area, whichever number is higher.

Area median income is determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30, 50, or 80 percent of the median income for an area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

Using Income Limits for Eligibility [24 CFR 982.201]

Income limits are used for eligibility only at admission. Income eligibility is determined by comparing the annual income of an applicant to the applicable income limit for their family size. In order to be income eligible, an applicant family must be one of the following:

- A *very low-income* family
- A *low-income* family that has been "continuously assisted" under the 1937 Housing Act. A family is considered to be continuously assisted if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program at the time the family is admitted to the HCV program [24 CFR 982.4]
 - Augusta Policy
 - The Augusta Housing Authority will consider a family to be continuously assisted if the family was leasing a unit under any 1937 Housing Act program at the time they were selected from the Augusta Housing Authority's waiting list.
- A low-income family that qualifies for voucher assistance as a non-purchasing household living in HOPE 1 (public housing homeownership), HOPE 2 (multifamily housing homeownership) developments, or other HUD-assisted multifamily homeownership programs covered by 24 CFR 248.173
- A low-income or moderate-income family that is displaced as a result of the prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract on eligible low-income housing as defined in 24 CFR 248.101

HUD permits the Augusta Housing Authority to establish additional categories of low-income families that may be determined eligible. The additional categories must be consistent with the Augusta Housing Authority plan and the consolidated plans for local governments within the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority has not established any additional categories of eligible low-income families.

Using Income Limits for Targeting [24 CFR 982.201]

At least 75 percent of the families admitted to the Augusta Housing Authority's program during the Augusta Housing Authority fiscal year must be extremely low-income families. HUD may approve exceptions to this requirement if the Augusta Housing Authority demonstrates that it has made all required efforts, but has been unable to attract an adequate number of qualified extremely low-income families.

Families continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act and families living in eligible low-income housing that are displaced as a result of prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract are not counted for income targeting purposes.

3-II.B. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5, Subpart E]

Housing assistance is available only to individuals who are U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals (herein referred to as citizens and nationals), or noncitizens that have eligible immigration status. At least one family member must be a citizen, national, or noncitizen with eligible immigration status in order for the family to qualify for any level of assistance.

All applicant families must be notified of the requirement to submit evidence of their citizenship status when they apply. Where feasible, and in accordance with the Augusta Housing Authority's Limited English Proficiency Plan, the notice must be in a language that is understood by the individual if the individual is not proficient in English.

Declaration [24 CFR 5.508]

HUD requires each family member to declare whether the individual is a citizen, a national, or an eligible noncitizen, except those members who elect not to contend that they have eligible immigration status. Those who elect not to contend their status are considered to be ineligible noncitizens. For citizens, nationals and eligible noncitizens the declaration must be signed personally by the head, spouse, cohead, and any other family member 18 or older, and by a parent or guardian for minors. The family must identify in writing any family members who elect not to contend their immigration status (see Ineligible Noncitizens below). No declaration is required for live-in aides, foster children, or foster adults.

U.S. Citizens and Nationals

In general, citizens and nationals are required to submit only a signed declaration as verification of their status. However, HUD regulations permit the Augusta Housing Authority to request additional documentation of their status, such as a passport.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Family members who declare citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless the Augusta Housing Authority receives information indicating that an individual's declaration may not be accurate.

Eligible Noncitizens

In addition to providing a signed declaration, those declaring eligible noncitizen status must sign a verification consent form and cooperate with Augusta Housing Authority efforts to verify their immigration status as described in Chapter 7. The documentation required for establishing eligible noncitizen status varies depending upon factors such as the date the person entered the U.S., the conditions under which eligible immigration status has been granted, the person's age, and the date on which the family began receiving HUD-funded assistance.

Lawful residents of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, together known as the Freely Associated States, or FAS, are eligible for housing assistance under section 141 of the Compacts of Free Association between the U.S. Government and the Governments of the FAS [Public Law 106-504].

Ineligible Noncitizens

Those noncitizens who do not wish to contend their immigration status are required to have their names listed on a noncontending family members listing, signed by the head, spouse, or cohead (regardless of citizenship status), indicating their ineligible immigration status. The Augusta Housing Authority is not required to verify a family member's ineligible status and is not required to report an individual's unlawful presence in the U.S. to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Providing housing assistance to noncitizen students is prohibited [24 CFR 5.522]. This prohibition extends to the noncitizen spouse of a noncitizen student as well as to minor children who accompany or follow to join the noncitizen student. Such prohibition does not extend to the citizen spouse of a noncitizen student or to the children of the citizen spouse and noncitizen student. Such a family is eligible for prorated assistance as a mixed family.

Mixed Families

A family is eligible for assistance as long as at least one member is a citizen, national, or eligible noncitizen. Families that include eligible and ineligible individuals are considered *mixed families*. Such families will be given notice that their assistance will be prorated, and that they may request a hearing if they contest this determination. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of how rents are prorated, and Chapter 16 for a discussion of informal hearing procedures.

Ineligible Families [24 CFR 5.514(d), (e), and (f)]

The Augusta Housing Authority may elect to provide assistance to a family before the verification of the eligibility of the individual or one family member [24 CFR 5.512(b)]. Otherwise, no individual or family may be assisted prior to the affirmative establishment by the Augusta Housing Authority that the individual or at least one family member is eligible. Verification of eligibility for this purpose occurs when the individual or family members have submitted documentation to the Augusta Housing Authority in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 5.512(a)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will not provide assistance to a family before the verification of at least one family member as a citizen, national, or eligible noncitizen.

When the Augusta Housing Authority determines that an applicant family does not include any citizens, nationals, or eligible noncitizens, following the verification process, the family will be sent a written notice within 10 business days of the determination.

The notice will explain the reasons for the denial of assistance and will advise the family of its right to request an appeal to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), or to request an informal hearing with the Augusta Housing Authority. The informal hearing with the Augusta Housing Authority may be requested in lieu of the USCIS appeal, or at the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process. The notice must also inform the applicant family that assistance may not be delayed until the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process, but that it may be delayed pending the completion of the informal hearing process.

Informal hearing procedures are contained in Chapter 16.

Timeframe for Determination of Citizenship Status [24 CFR 5.508(g)]

For new occupants joining the assisted family, the Augusta Housing Authority must verify status at the first interim or regular reexamination following the person's occupancy, whichever comes first.

If an individual qualifies for a time extension for the submission of required documents, the Augusta Housing Authority must grant such an extension for no more than 30 days [24 CFR 5.508(h)].

Each family member is required to submit evidence of eligible status only one time during continuous occupancy.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will verify the citizenship status of applicants at the time other eligibility factors are determined.

3-II.C. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216 and 5.218, Notice PIH 2012-10]

The applicant and all members of the applicant's household must disclose the complete and accurate social security number (SSN) assigned to each household member, and the documentation necessary to verify each SSN. If a child under age 6 has been added to an applicant family within 6 months prior to voucher issuance, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program and must disclose and document the child's SSN within 90 days of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. A detailed discussion of acceptable documentation is provided in Chapter 7.

Note: These requirements do not apply to noncitizens who do not contend eligible immigration status.

In addition, each participant who has not previously disclosed an SSN, has previously disclosed an SSN that HUD or the SSA determined was invalid, or has been issued a new SSN must submit their complete and accurate SSN and the documentation required to verify the SSN at the time of the next interim or annual reexamination or recertification. Participants age 62 or older as of January 31, 2010, whose determination of eligibility was begun before January 31, 2010, are exempt from this requirement and remain exempt even if they move to a new assisted unit.

The Augusta Housing Authority must deny assistance to an applicant family if they do not meet the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements contained in 24 CFR 5.216.

3-II.D. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 5.230; HCV GB, p. 5-13]

HUD requires each adult family member, and the head of household, spouse, or cohead, regardless of age, to sign form HUD-9886, Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice, and other consent forms as needed to collect information relevant to the family's eligibility and level of assistance. Chapter 7 provides detailed information concerning the consent forms and verification requirements.

The Augusta Housing Authority must deny admission to the program if any member of the applicant family fails to sign and submit the consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with 24 CFR 5, Subparts B and F [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)].

3-II.E. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION [24 CFR 5.612, FR Notice 4/10/06, FR Notice 9/21/16]

Section 327 of Public Law 109-115 and the implementing regulation at 24 CFR 5.612 established new restrictions on the eligibility of certain students (both part- and full-time) who are enrolled in institutions of higher education.

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have a dependent child, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the student's eligibility must be examined along with the income eligibility of the student's parents. In these cases, both the student and the student's parents must be income eligible for the student to receive HCV assistance. If, however, a student in these circumstances is determined independent from his/her parents in accordance with Augusta Housing Authority policy, the income of the student's parents will not be considered in determining the student's eligibility.

The new law does not apply to students who reside with parents who are applying to receive HCV assistance. It is limited to students who are seeking assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

Definitions

In determining whether and how the new eligibility restrictions apply to a student, the Augusta Housing Authority will rely on the following definitions [FR Notice 4/10/06, FR Notice 9/21/16].

Dependent Child

In the context of the student eligibility restrictions, *dependent child* means a dependent child of a student enrolled in an institution of higher education. The dependent child must also meet the definition of *dependent* in 24 CFR 5.603, which states that the dependent must be a member of the assisted family, other than the head of household or spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability, or is a full-time student. Foster children and foster adults are not considered dependents.

Independent Student

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will consider a student “independent” from his or her parents and the parents’ income will not be considered when determining the student’s eligibility if the following four criteria are all met:

The individual is of legal contract age under state law.

The individual has established a household separate from his/her parents for at least one year prior to application for occupancy or the individual meets the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of independent student.

To be considered an *independent student* according to the Department of Education, a student must meet one or more of the following criteria:

The individual is at least 24 years old by December 31 of the award year for which aid is sought

The individual is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court, or was an orphan, in foster care, or ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older

The individual is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual’s state of legal residence

The individual is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or is currently serving on active duty in the Armed Forces for other than training purposes

The individual is a graduate or professional student

The individual is married

The individual has one or more legal dependents other than a spouse (for example, dependent children or an elderly dependent parent)

The individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting by:

A local educational agency homeless liaison

The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or a designee of the director

A financial aid administrator

The individual is a student for whom a financial aid administrator makes a documented determination of independence by reason of other unusual circumstances

The individual was not claimed as a dependent by his/her parents pursuant to IRS regulations, as demonstrated on the parents' most recent tax forms.

The individual provides a certification of the amount of financial assistance that will be provided by his/her parents. This certification must be signed by the individual providing the support and must be submitted even if no assistance is being provided.

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines that an individual meets the definition of a *vulnerable youth* such a determination is all that is necessary to determine that the person is an *independent student* for the purposes of using only the student's income for determining eligibility for assistance.

The Augusta Housing Authority will verify that a student meets the above criteria in accordance with the policies in Section 7-II.E.

Institution of Higher Education

The Augusta Housing Authority will use the statutory definition under section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to determine whether a student is attending an *institution of higher education* (see Exhibit 3-2).

Parents

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For purposes of student eligibility restrictions, the definition of *parents* includes biological or adoptive parents, stepparents (as long as they are currently married to the biological or adoptive parent), and guardians (e.g., grandparents, aunt/uncle, godparents, etc.).

Person with Disabilities

The Augusta Housing Authority will use the statutory definition under section 3(b)(3)(E) of the 1937 Act to determine whether a student is a *person with disabilities* (see Exhibit 3-1).

Veteran

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A *veteran* is a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Vulnerable Youth

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A *vulnerable youth* is an individual who meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *independent student* in paragraphs (b), (c), or (h), as adopted in Section II of FR Notice 9/21/16:

The individual is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court, or was an orphan, in foster care, or ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older

The individual is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual's state of legal residence

The individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting by:

A local educational agency homeless liaison

The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or a designee of the director

A financial aid administrator

Determining Student Eligibility

If a student is applying for assistance on his/her own, apart from his/her parents, the Augusta Housing Authority must determine whether the student is subject to the eligibility restrictions contained in 24 CFR 5.612. If the student is subject to those restrictions, the Augusta Housing Authority must ensure that: (1) the student is individually eligible for the program, (2) either the student is independent from his/her parents or the student's parents are income eligible for the program, and (3) the "family" with which the student is applying is collectively eligible for the program.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For any student who is subject to the 5.612 restrictions, the Augusta Housing Authority will:

Follow its usual policies in determining whether the student individually and the student's "family" collectively are eligible for the program

Determine whether the student is independent from his/her parents in accordance with the definition of *independent student* in this section

Follow the policies below, if applicable, in determining whether the student's parents are income eligible for the program

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines that the student, the student's parents (if applicable), or the student's "family" is not eligible, the Augusta Housing Authority will send a notice of denial in accordance with the policies in Section 3-III.F, and the applicant family will have the right to request an informal review in accordance with the policies in Section 16-III.B.

Determining Parental Income Eligibility

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For any student who is subject to the 5.612 restrictions and who does not satisfy the definition of *independent student* in this section, the Augusta Housing Authority will determine the income eligibility of the student's parents as follows:

If the student's parents are married and living together, the Augusta Housing Authority will obtain a joint income declaration and certification of joint income from the parents.

If the student's parent is widowed or single, the Augusta Housing Authority will obtain an income declaration and certification of income from that parent.

If the student's parents are divorced or separated, the Augusta Housing Authority will obtain an income declaration and certification of income from each parent.

If the student has been living with one of his/her parents and has not had contact with or does not know where to contact his/her other parent, the Augusta Housing Authority will require the student to submit a certification under penalty of perjury describing the circumstances and stating that the student does not receive financial assistance from the other parent. The Augusta Housing Authority will then obtain an income declaration and certification of income from the parent with whom the student has been living or had contact.

In determining the income eligibility of the student's parents, the Augusta Housing Authority will use the income limits for the jurisdiction in which the parents live.

PART III: DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE

3-III.A. OVERVIEW

A family that does not meet the eligibility criteria discussed in Parts I and II, must be denied assistance. In this section, we will discuss other situations and circumstances in which denial of assistance is mandatory for the Augusta Housing Authority, and those in which denial of assistance is optional for the Augusta Housing Authority.

Forms of Denial [24 CFR 982.552(a)(2); HCV GB, p. 5-35]

Denial of assistance includes any of the following:

- Not placing the family's name on the waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Not approving a request for tenancy or refusing to enter into a HAP contract
- Refusing to process a request for or to provide assistance under portability procedures

Prohibited Reasons for Denial of Program Assistance [24 CFR 982.202(b), 24 CFR 5.2005(b)]

HUD rules prohibit denial of program assistance to the program based on any of the following criteria:

- Age, disability, race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (See Chapter 2 for additional information about fair housing and equal opportunity requirements.)
- Where a family lives prior to admission to the program
- Where the family will live with assistance under the program. Although eligibility is not affected by where the family will live, there may be restrictions on the family's ability to move outside the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction under portability. (See Chapter 10.)
- Whether members of the family are unwed parents, recipients of public assistance, or children born out of wedlock
- Whether the family includes children
- Whether a family decides to participate in a family self-sufficiency program
- Whether or not a qualified applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking if the applicant is otherwise qualified for assistance (See section 3-III.G.)

3-III.B. MANDATORY DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.553(a)]

HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to deny assistance in the following cases:

- Any member of the household has been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last 3 years for drug-related criminal activity. HUD permits, but does not require, the Augusta Housing Authority to admit an otherwise-eligible family if the household member has completed a Augusta Housing Authority-approved drug rehabilitation program or the circumstances which led to eviction no longer exist (e.g., the person involved in the criminal activity no longer lives in the household).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will admit an otherwise-eligible family who was evicted from federally-assisted housing within the past 3 years for drug-related criminal activity, if the Augusta Housing Authority is able to verify that the household member who engaged in the criminal activity has completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the Augusta Housing Authority, or the person who committed the crime, is no longer living in the household.

- The Augusta Housing Authority determines that any household member is currently engaged in the use of illegal drugs.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Currently engaged in is defined as any use of illegal drugs during the previous six months.

- The Augusta Housing Authority has reasonable cause to believe that any household member's current use or pattern of use of illegal drugs, or current abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol, may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In determining reasonable cause, the Augusta Housing Authority will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of convictions, arrests, or evictions of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or the abuse of alcohol. A conviction will be given more weight than an arrest. The Augusta Housing Authority will also consider evidence from treatment providers or community-based organizations providing services to household members.

- Any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the production or manufacture of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing
- Any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program

3-III.C. OTHER PERMITTED REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE

HUD permits, but does not require, the Augusta Housing Authority to deny assistance for the reasons discussed in this section.

Criminal Activity [24 CFR 982.553]

HUD permits, but does not require, the Augusta Housing Authority to deny assistance if the Augusta Housing Authority determines that any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in during a reasonable time before the family would receive assistance, certain types of criminal activity.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in any of the following criminal activities, within the past five years, the family will be denied assistance.

Drug-related criminal activity, defined by HUD as the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use the drug [24 CFR 5.100].

Violent criminal activity, defined by HUD as any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage [24 CFR 5.100].

Criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity; or

Criminal activity that may threaten the health or safety of property owners, management staff, and persons performing contract administration functions or other responsibilities on behalf of the Augusta Housing Authority (including a Augusta Housing Authority employee or an Augusta Housing Authority contractor, subcontractor, or agent).

Immediate vicinity means within a three-block radius of the premises.

Evidence of such criminal activity includes, but is not limited to:

- Any conviction for drug-related or violent criminal activity within the past 5 years.

- Records of arrests for drug-related or violent criminal activity within the past 5 years, although a record of arrest(s) will not be used as the basis for the denial or proof that the applicant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

- Any record of eviction from public or privately-owned housing as a result of criminal activity within the past 5 years.

- A conviction for drug-related or violent criminal activity will be given more weight than an arrest for such activity.

In making its decision to deny assistance, the Augusta Housing Authority will consider the factors discussed in Section 3-III.E. Upon consideration of such factors, the Augusta Housing Authority may, on a case-by-case basis, decide not to deny assistance.

Previous Behavior in Assisted Housing [24 CFR 982.552(c)]

HUD authorizes the Augusta Housing Authority to deny assistance based on the family's previous behavior in assisted housing:

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority **will not** deny assistance to an otherwise eligible family because the family previously failed to meet its obligations under the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program.

The Augusta Housing Authority **will** deny assistance to an applicant family if:

1. The family does not provide information that the Augusta Housing Authority or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program.
2. The family does not provide complete and true information to the Augusta Housing Authority.
3. Any family member has been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last three (3) years.
4. Any family member has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.
5. The family owes rent or other amounts to any Public Housing Authority in connection with Section 8 or other public housing assistance under the 1937 Act, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.
6. If the family has not reimbursed any Public Housing Authority for amounts the Public Housing Authority paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.
7. The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with the Public Housing Authority, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt covered in the repayment agreement prior to being selected from the waiting list.
8. A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward Augusta Housing Authority personnel.

Abusive or violent behavior towards Augusta Housing Authority personnel includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to intimidate may be considered abusive or violent behavior.

Threatening refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate intent to abuse or commit violence.

In making its decision to deny assistance, the Augusta Housing Authority will consider the factors discussed in Section 3-III.E. Upon consideration of such factors, the Augusta Housing Authority may, on a case-by-case basis, decide not to deny assistance.

3-III.D. SCREENING

Screening for Eligibility

Public Housing Authorities are authorized to obtain criminal conviction records from law enforcement agencies to screen applicants for admission to the HCV program. This authority assists the Augusta Housing Authority in complying with HUD requirements and Augusta Housing Authority policies to deny assistance to applicants who are engaging in or have engaged in certain criminal activities. In order to obtain access to the records, the Augusta Housing Authority must require every applicant family to submit a consent form signed by each adult household member [24 CFR 5.903].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will perform a criminal background check through local law enforcement for every adult household member.

If the results of the criminal background check indicate that there may be past criminal activity, but the results are inconclusive, the Augusta Housing Authority will request a fingerprint card and will request information from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

Public housing authorities are required to perform criminal background checks necessary to determine whether any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender program in the state where the housing is located, as well as in any other state where a household member is known to have resided [24 CFR 982.553(a)(2)(i)].

Additionally, Augusta Housing Authority must ask whether the applicant, or any member of the applicant's household, is subject to a lifetime registered sex offender registration requirement in any state [Notice PIH 2012-28].

If the Augusta Housing Authority proposes to deny assistance based on a criminal record or on lifetime sex offender registration information, the Augusta Housing Authority must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the applicant a copy of the record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information prior to a denial of admission. [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)].

Screening for Suitability as a Tenant [24 CFR 982.307]

The Augusta Housing Authority has no liability or responsibility to the owner for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. The public housing authority has the discretion to conduct additional screening to determine whether an applicant is likely to be a suitable tenant.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will not conduct additional screening to determine an applicant family's suitability for tenancy.

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. The Augusta Housing Authority must inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner. An owner may consider a family's history with respect to factors such as: payment of rent and utilities, caring for a unit and premises, respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing, criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety or property of others, and compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.

HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to provide prospective owners with the family's current and prior address (as shown in Augusta Housing Authority records) and the name and address (if known) of the owner at the family's current and prior addresses. HUD permits the Augusta Housing Authority to provide owners with additional information, as long as families are notified that the information will be provided, and the same type of information is provided to all owners.

The Augusta Housing Authority may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided to the Augusta Housing Authority by the family in response to a Augusta Housing Authority request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking except at the written request or with the written consent of the individual providing the documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(a)(4)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will inform owners of their responsibility to screen prospective tenants. In addition, at the written request of the owner, the Augusta Housing Authority will provide owners with the required known name and address information, at the time of the initial HQS inspection or before. The Augusta Housing Authority will not provide any additional information to the owner, such as tenancy history or criminal history, etc.

3-III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO DENY ASSISTANCE

Evidence [24 CFR 982.553(c)]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will use the concept of the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all admission decisions.

Preponderance of the evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.

Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)]

HUD authorizes the Augusta Housing Authority to consider all relevant circumstances when deciding whether to deny assistance based on a family's past history except in the situations for which denial of assistance is mandatory (see Section 3-III.B).

In the event the Augusta Housing Authority receives unfavorable information with respect to an applicant, consideration must be given to the time, nature, and extent of the applicant's conduct (including the seriousness of the offense). In a manner consistent with its policies, Augusta Housing Authority may give consideration to factors which might indicate a reasonable probability of favorable future conduct.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will consider the following facts and circumstances prior to making its decision:

1. The seriousness of the case, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents' safety or property
2. The effects that denial of assistance may have on other members of the family who were not involved in the action or failure to act
3. The extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, including whether the culpable family member is a minor or a person with disabilities, or (as discussed further in section 3-III.G) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking
4. The length of time since the violation occurred, including the age of the individual at the time of the conduct, as well as the family's recent history and the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future
5. Evidence of criminal conduct will be considered if it indicates a demonstrable risk to safety and/or property

6. In the case of drug or alcohol abuse, whether the culpable household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully

The Augusta Housing Authority will require the applicant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in or successful completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully.

Removal of a Family Member's Name from the Application

Should the Augusta Housing Authority's screening process reveal that an applicant's household includes an individual subject to state lifetime registered sex offender registration, the Augusta Housing Authority must offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, the Augusta Housing Authority must deny admission to the family [Notice PIH 2012-28].

For other criminal activity, the Augusta Housing Authority may permit the family to exclude the culpable family members as a condition of eligibility. [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(ii)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

As a condition of receiving assistance, a family may agree to remove the culpable family member from the application. In such instances, the head of household must certify that the family member will not be permitted to visit, stay as a guest, or reside in the assisted unit.

After admission to the program, the family must present evidence of the former family member's current address upon Augusta Housing Authority request.

Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(iv)]

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the Augusta Housing Authority's decision concerning denial of admission is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for the proposed denial of assistance, the Augusta Housing Authority will determine whether the behavior is related to the stated disability. If so, upon the family's request, the Augusta Housing Authority will determine whether admitting the family as a reasonable accommodation is appropriate. The Augusta Housing Authority will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed denial of assistance. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodation.

3-III.F. NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY OR DENIAL

If the family is eligible for assistance, the Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family in writing and schedule a tenant briefing, as discussed in Chapter 5.

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines that a family is not eligible for the program for any reason, the family must be notified promptly. The notice must describe: (1) the reasons for which assistance has been denied, (2) the family's right to an informal review, and (3) the process for obtaining the informal review [24 CFR 982.554 (a)]. See Chapter 16, for informal review policies and procedures.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family will be notified of a decision to deny assistance in writing within 10 business days of the determination.

If a public housing authority uses a criminal record or sex offender registration information obtained under 24 CFR 5, Subpart J, as the basis of a denial, a copy of the record must precede the notice to deny, with an opportunity for the applicant to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before the public housing authority can move to deny the application. In addition, a copy of the record must be provided to the subject of the record [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)]. The public housing authority must give the family an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of that record, in the informal review process in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 982.553(d)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If, based on a criminal record or sex offender registration information, an applicant family appears to be ineligible the Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family in writing of the proposed denial and provide a copy of the record to the applicant and to the subject of the record. The family will be given 10 business days to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information. If the family does not contact the Augusta Housing Authority to dispute the information within that 10-day period, the Augusta Housing Authority will proceed with issuing the notice of denial of admission. A family that does not exercise their right to dispute the accuracy of the information prior to issuance of the official denial letter will still be given the opportunity to do so as part of the informal review process.

Notice requirements related to denying assistance to noncitizens are contained in Section 3-II.B.

Notice policies related to denying admission to applicants who may be victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking are contained in Section 3-III.G.

3-III.G. PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING

The Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) and the HUD regulation at 24 CFR 5.2005(b) prohibit PHAs from denying an applicant admission to the HCV program “on the basis that the applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, if the applicant otherwise qualifies for assistance or admission.”

Definitions of key terms used in VAWA are provided in section 16-IX of this plan, where general VAWA requirements and policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality are also located.

Notification

VAWA 2013 expanded notification requirements to include the obligation for PHAs to provide applicants who are denied assistance with a notice of rights and the form HUD-5382 at the time the applicant is denied.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority acknowledges that a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking may have an unfavorable history (e.g., a poor credit history, a record of previous damage to an apartment, a prior arrest record) that would warrant denial under the Augusta Housing Authority’s policies. Therefore, if the Augusta Housing Authority makes a determination to deny assistance to an applicant family, the Augusta Housing Authority will include in its notice of denial the VAWA information described in section 16-IX.C of this plan as well as include a copy of the form HUD-5382.

Documentation

Victim Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If an applicant claims the protection against denial of assistance that VAWA provides to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, the PHA will request in writing that the applicant provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with section 16-IX.D of this plan.

Perpetrator Documentation

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the perpetrator of the abuse is a member of the applicant family, the applicant must provide additional documentation consisting of one of the following:

A signed statement (1) requesting that the perpetrator be removed from the application and (2) certifying that the perpetrator will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the assisted unit

Documentation that the perpetrator has successfully completed, or is successfully undergoing, rehabilitation or treatment. The documentation must be signed by an employee or agent of a domestic violence service provider or by a medical or other knowledgeable professional from whom the perpetrator has sought or is receiving assistance in addressing the abuse. The signer must attest under penalty of perjury to his or her belief that the rehabilitation was successfully completed or is progressing successfully. The victim and perpetrator must also sign or attest to the documentation.

EXHIBIT 3-1: DETAILED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO DISABILITIES

Person with Disabilities [24 CFR 5.403]

The term *person with disabilities* means a person who has any of the following types of conditions:

- Has a disability, as defined in 42 U.S.C. Section 423(d)(1)(A), which reads:
Inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months; *or*
In the case of an individual who has attained the age of 55 and is blind (within the meaning of “blindness” as defined in section 416(i)(1) of this title), inability by reason of such blindness to engage in substantial gainful activity, requiring skills or ability comparable to those of any gainful activity in which he has previously engaged with some regularity and over a substantial period of time.
- Has a developmental disability as defined in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 [42 U.S.C.15002(8)], which defines developmental disability in functional terms as follows:

(A) In General

The term “developmental disability” means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

- (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
- (ii) is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
- (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely;
- (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: (I) Self-care, (II) Receptive and expressive language, (III) Learning, (IV) Mobility, (V) Self-direction, (VI) Capacity for independent living, (VII) Economic self-sufficiency; and
- (v) reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

(B) Infants and Young Children

An individual from birth to age 9, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting 3 or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A) if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.

- Has a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration; substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently, and is of such a nature that the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions.

People with the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for AIDS are not excluded from this definition.

A person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence does not qualify as a person with disabilities for the purposes of this program.

For purposes of reasonable accommodation and program accessibility for persons with disabilities, the term person with disabilities refers to an individual with handicaps.

Individual with Handicaps [24 CFR 8.3]

Individual with handicaps means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. The term does not include any individual who is an alcoholic or drug abuser whose current use of alcohol or drugs prevents the individual from participating in the program or activity in question, or whose participation, by reason of such current alcohol or drug abuse, would constitute a direct threat to property or the safety of others. As used in this definition, the phrase:

- (1) Physical or mental impairment includes:
 - (a) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or
 - (b) Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction and alcoholism.
- (2) *Major life activities* mean functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.
- (3) Has a record of such an impairment means has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

(4) *Is regarded as having an impairment* means:

- (a) Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit one or more major life activities but that is treated by a recipient as constituting such a limitation;
- (b) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or
- (c) Has none of the impairments defined in paragraph (1) of this section but is treated by a recipient as having such an impairment.

EXHIBIT 3-2: DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION
[20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002]

Eligibility of Students for Assisted Housing Under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937; Supplementary Guidance; Notice [Federal Register, April 10, 2006]

Institution of Higher Education shall have the meaning given this term in the Higher Education Act of 1965 in 20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002.

Definition of “Institution of Higher Education” From 20 U.S.C. 1001

- (a) Institution of higher education. For purposes of this chapter, other than subchapter IV and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of Title 42, the term “institution of higher education” means an educational institution in any State that
 - (1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
 - (2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
 - (3) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
 - (4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
 - (5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.
- (b) Additional institutions included. For purposes of this chapter, other than subchapter IV and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of Title 42, the term “institution of higher education” also includes—
 - (1) Any school that provides not less than a 1-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and that meets the provision of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of subsection (a) of this section; and
 - (2) A public or nonprofit private educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in subsection (a)(1) of this section, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.
- (c) List of accrediting agencies. For purposes of this section and section 1002 of this title, the Secretary shall publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies or associations that the Secretary determines, pursuant to subpart 2 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter, to be reliable authority as to the quality of the education or training offered.

Definition of “Institution of Higher Education” From 20 U.S.C. 1002

- (a) Definition of institution of higher education for purposes of student assistance programs

(1) Inclusion of additional institutions. Subject to paragraphs (2) through (4) of this subsection, the term “institution of higher education” for purposes of subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 includes, in addition to the institutions covered by the definition in section 1001 of this title—

(A) A proprietary institution of higher education (as defined in subsection (b) of this section);

(B) A postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in subsection (c) of this section); and

(C) Only for the purposes of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter, an institution outside the United States that is comparable to an institution of higher education as defined in section 1001 of this title and that has been approved by the Secretary for the purpose of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(2) Institutions outside the United States

(A) In general. For the purpose of qualifying as an institution under paragraph (1)(C), the Secretary shall establish criteria by regulation for the approval of institutions outside the United States and for the determination that such institutions are comparable to an institution of higher education as defined in section 1001 of this title (except that a graduate medical school, or a veterinary school, located outside the United States shall not be required to meet the requirements of section 1001 (a)(4) of this title). Such criteria shall include a requirement that a student attending such school outside the United States is ineligible for loans made, insured, or guaranteed under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter unless—

(i) In the case of a graduate medical school located outside the United States—

(I)(aa) At least 60 percent of those enrolled in, and at least 60 percent of the graduates of, the graduate medical school outside the United States were not persons described in section 1091(a)(5) of this title in the year preceding the year for which a student is seeking a loan under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter; and

(bb) At least 60 percent of the individuals who were students or graduates of the graduate medical school outside the United States or Canada (both nationals of the United States and others) taking the examinations administered by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates received a passing score in the year preceding the year for which a student is seeking a loan under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter; or

(II) The institution has a clinical training program that was approved by a State as of January 1, 1992; or

(ii) In the case of a veterinary school located outside the United States that does not meet the requirements of section 1001(a)(4) of this title, the institution’s students complete their clinical training at an approved veterinary school located in the United States.

(B) Advisory panel

- (i) In general. For the purpose of qualifying as an institution under paragraph (1)(C) of this subsection, the Secretary shall establish an advisory panel of medical experts that shall—
 - (I) Evaluate the standards of accreditation applied to applicant foreign medical schools; and
 - (II) Determine the comparability of those standards to standards for accreditation applied to United States medical schools.
 - (ii) Special rule if the accreditation standards described in clause (i) are determined not to be comparable, the foreign medical school shall be required to meet the requirements of section 1001 of this title.
- (C) Failure to release information. The failure of an institution outside the United States to provide, release, or authorize release to the Secretary of such information as may be required by subparagraph (A) shall render such institution ineligible for the purpose of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter.
- (D) Special rule. If, pursuant to this paragraph, an institution loses eligibility to participate in the programs under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, then a student enrolled at such institution may, notwithstanding such loss of eligibility, continue to be eligible to receive a loan under part B while attending such institution for the academic year succeeding the academic year in which such loss of eligibility occurred.
- (3) Limitations based on course of study or enrollment. An institution shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if such institution—
- (A) Offers more than 50 percent of such institution's courses by correspondence, unless the institution is an institution that meets the definition in section 2471 (4)(C) of this title;
 - (B) Enrolls 50 percent or more of the institution's students in correspondence courses, unless the institution is an institution that meets the definition in such section, except that the Secretary, at the request of such institution, may waive the applicability of this subparagraph to such institution for good cause, as determined by the Secretary in the case of an institution of higher education that provides a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards an associate or baccalaureate degree, respectively;
 - (C) Has a student enrollment in which more than 25 percent of the students are incarcerated, except that the Secretary may waive the limitation contained in this subparagraph for a nonprofit institution that provides a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree, or an associate's degree or a postsecondary diploma, respectively; or
 - (D) Has a student enrollment in which more than 50 percent of the students do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and does not provide a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree, respectively, except that the Secretary may waive the

limitation contained in this subparagraph if a nonprofit institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the institution exceeds such limitation because the institution serves, through contracts with Federal, State, or local government agencies, significant numbers of students who do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

- (4) Limitations based on management. An institution shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if—
 - (A) The institution, or an affiliate of the institution that has the power, by contract or ownership interest, to direct or cause the direction of the management or policies of the institution, has filed for bankruptcy, except that this paragraph shall not apply to a nonprofit institution, the primary function of which is to provide health care educational services (or an affiliate of such an institution that has the power, by contract or ownership interest, to direct or cause the direction of the institution's management or policies) that files for bankruptcy under chapter 11 of title 11 between July 1, 1998, and December 1, 1998; or
 - (B) The institution, the institution's owner, or the institution's chief executive officer has been convicted of, or has pled nolo contendere or guilty to, a crime involving the acquisition, use, or expenditure of funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, or has been judicially determined to have committed fraud involving funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42.
- (5) Certification. The Secretary shall certify an institution's qualification as an institution of higher education in accordance with the requirements of subpart 3 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter.
- (6) Loss of eligibility. An institution of higher education shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if such institution is removed from eligibility for funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 as a result of an action pursuant to part G of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(b) Proprietary institution of higher education

- (1) Principal criteria. For the purpose of this section, the term “proprietary institution of higher education” means a school that—
 - (A) Provides an eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;
 - (B) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1001 (a) of this title;
 - (C) Does not meet the requirement of paragraph (4) of section 1001 (a) of this title;
 - (D) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary pursuant to part G of subchapter IV of this chapter;
 - (E) Has been in existence for at least 2 years; and
 - (F) Has at least 10 percent of the school's revenues from sources that are not derived from funds provided under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of

chapter 34 of title 42, as determined in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

- (2) Additional institutions. The term “proprietary institution of higher education” also includes a proprietary educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in paragraph (1) of section 1001 (a) of this title, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.
- (c) Postsecondary vocational institution.
 - (1) Principal criteria. For the purpose of this section, the term “postsecondary vocational institution” means a school that—
 - (A) Provides an eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;
 - (B) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of section 1001 (a) of this title; and
 - (C) Has been in existence for at least 2 years.
 - (2) Additional institutions. The term “postsecondary vocational institution” also includes an educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in paragraph (1) of section 1001 (a) of this title, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.

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 Augusta Housing Authority with the information needed to determine the family's eligibility. HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to place all families that apply for assistance on a waiting list. When HCV assistance becomes available, the Augusta Housing Authority must select families from the waiting list in accordance with HUD requirements and Augusta Housing Authority policies as stated in the Administrative Plan and the Annual Plan.

The public housing authority 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 public housing authority 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 public housing authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority will handle the applications it receives.

Part II: Managing the Waiting List. This part presents the policies that govern how the Augusta Housing Authority'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 Augusta Housing Authority will use to keep the waiting list current.

Part III: Selection for HCV Assistance. This part describes the policies that guide the Augusta Housing Authority in selecting families for HCV assistance as such assistance becomes available. It also specifies how in-person or remote (phone, webcast, video call, or other electronic communications) interviews will be used to ensure that the Augusta Housing Authority has the information needed to make a final eligibility determination.

PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

4-I.A. OVERVIEW

This part describes the Augusta Housing Authorities 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 Augusta Housing Authority's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process to elderly persons, people with disabilities, and people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

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 Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority. The Augusta Housing Authority must include Form HUD-92006, Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing, as part of the Augusta Housing Authority's application.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

An application is completed by an applicant to allow the Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority's programs must complete an on-line application at www.augustapha.org and elderly/disabled families may apply in person at the Augusta Housing Authority's main office when the Augusta Housing Authority is accepting applications. 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. The application process will involve two phases. The first is the "initial" application for assistance referred to as a pre-application. This first phase results in the family's placement on the waiting list. The pre-application will be dated, time-stamped, and referred to the Augusta Housing Authority's eligibility section where it will be maintained until such time as it is needed for processing. The second phase is the "final determination of eligibility" referred to as the full application. The full application takes place when the family reaches the top of the waiting list. At this time, the Augusta Housing Authority ensures that verification of all HUD and Augusta Housing Authority eligibility factors is current in order to determine the family's eligibility for the issuance of a Voucher.

4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

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

The Augusta Housing Authority must take steps to ensure that the application process is accessible to those people who might have difficulty complying with the normal, standard Augusta Housing Authority application process. This could include people with disabilities, certain elderly individuals, as well as persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). The application-taking facility and the application process must be fully accessible, or the Augusta Housing Authority must provide an alternate approach that provides full access to the application process. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of the Augusta Housing Authority's policies related to providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Limited English Proficiency

The Augusta Housing Authority is required to take reasonable steps to ensure equal access to their programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency [24 CFR 1]. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion on the Augusta Housing Authority's policies related to ensuring access to people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST

The Augusta Housing Authority must review each complete application received and make a preliminary assessment of the family's eligibility. The Augusta Housing Authority must accept applications from families when 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 Augusta Housing Authority 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

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority 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

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Placement on the waiting list does not indicate that the family is, in fact, eligible for assistance. A final determination of eligibility and qualification for preferences 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 Augusta Housing Authority.

PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

4-II.A. OVERVIEW

The Augusta Housing Authority 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 public housing authority may structure its waiting list and how families must be treated if they apply for assistance from a public housing authority that administers more than one assisted housing program.

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

The Augusta Housing Authority's HCV waiting list must be organized in such a manner to allow the Augusta Housing Authority to accurately identify and select families for assistance in the proper order, according to the admissions policies described in this Administrative 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 public housing authority to maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program unless it serves more than one county or municipality. Such public housing authorities are permitted, but not required, to maintain a separate waiting list for each county or municipality served.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will maintain a single waiting list for the HCV Program.

The Augusta Housing Authority will also maintain waiting list for each of the following programs:

1. Moderate Rehabilitation Program (River Glen Apartments)
2. Project Based Programs (Hope House Apartments, Legacy at Walton Oaks, Walton Oaks Family II, The Legacy at Walton Oaks II, and Legacy at Walton Green II)

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 Augusta Housing Authority 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 the Augusta Housing Authority 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.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will not merge the HCV waiting list with the waiting list for any other program the Augusta Housing Authority operates.

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

Closing the Waiting List

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

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will close the waiting list when the estimated waiting period for housing assistance for applicants on the list reaches 24 months for the most current applicants. Where the Augusta Housing Authority has particular preferences or funding criteria that require a specific category of family, the Augusta Housing Authority may elect to continue to accept applications from these applicants while closing the waiting list to others.

Reopening the Waiting List

If the waiting list has been closed, it cannot be reopened until the Augusta Housing Authority 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.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority will give public notice by publishing the relevant information in suitable media outlets including, but not limited to:

Augusta Chronicle

Metro Courier

UrbanPro

Augusta Housing Authority website www.augustapha.org

Augusta Housing Authority Facebook Page

Augusta Housing Authority Twitter Account

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

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

Because HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to admit a specified percentage of extremely low-income families to the program (see Chapter 4, Part III), the Augusta Housing Authority 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].

Augusta Housing Authority 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

Augusta Housing Authority 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 population
- Developing partnerships with other organizations that serve similar populations, including agencies that provide services for persons with disabilities

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will monitor the characteristics of the population being served and the characteristics of the population as a whole in the Augusta Housing Authority'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

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

While the family is on the waiting list, the family must inform the Augusta Housing Authority, within 10 business days, of changes in family size or composition, preference status, or contact information, including current residence, mailing address, and phone number. The changes must be submitted in writing. Applicants are also required to respond to requests from the Augusta Housing Authority to update information on their application regarding their interest in assistance.

Changes in an applicant's circumstances while on the waiting list may affect the family's qualification for a particular bedroom size or entitlement to a preference. When an applicant reports a change that affects their placement on the waiting list, the waiting list will be updated accordingly.

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

HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to establish policies to use when removing applicant names from the waiting list.

Purging the Waiting List and Removal from 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 the Augusta Housing Authority's request for information or updates, and the Augusta Housing Authority determines that the family did not respond because of the family member's disability, the Augusta Housing Authority must reinstate the applicant family to their former position on the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(c)(2)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

1. The waiting list will be updated periodically to ensure that all applicants and applicant information is current and timely.
2. To update the waiting list, the PHA will send an update request via first class mail to each family on the waiting list to determine whether the family continues to be interested in, and to qualify for, the program. This update request will be sent to the last address that the PHA has on record for the family. The update request will provide a deadline by which the family must respond and will state that failure to respond will result in the applicant's name being removed from the waiting list.
3. The family's response must be in writing and may be delivered in person, by mail, by email, or by fax. Responses should be postmarked or received by the PHA not later than 10 business days from the date of the PHA letter.
4. If the family fails to respond within 10 business days, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.
5. If the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, the applicant will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

6. If the notice is returned by the post office with a forwarding address, the notice will be re-sent to the address indicated. The family will have 10 business days to respond from the date the letter was re-sent. If the family fails to respond within this time frame, the applicant's name will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.
7. If a family is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, the Augusta Housing Authority may reinstate the family if it is determined that the lack of response was due to Augusta Housing Authority error, or to circumstances beyond the family's control.
8. If a family is removed from the waiting list during the update process for failure to respond, an informal review will not be offered to the applicant. Such failures to act on the part of the applicant prevent the Augusta Housing Authority from making an eligibility determination; therefore, an informal hearing is not required.

Additional Removal from the Waiting List

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will remove applicants from the waiting list if they have requested that their name be removed. In such cases, an informal hearing is not required.

If at any time an applicant family is on the waiting list, the Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority'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 Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority 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]

If HUD awards the Augusta Housing Authority program funding that is targeted for specifically named families, the Augusta Housing Authority will admit these families under a Special Admission procedure. HUD may award funding for 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 Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority must maintain records showing that such families were admitted with special program funding.

Special admissions families will be admitted outside of the regular waiting list process. They do not have to qualify for any preferences, nor are they required to be on a program waiting list. The Augusta Housing Authority maintains separate records of these admissions. Each admission must contain notes in the system and the client's file to denote the specific approved special admissions category.

The Augusta Housing Authority will consider elderly families under Special Admissions who are currently receiving other housing assistance through the AHA's public housing program. These families must currently reside in properties owned by AHA which may include Peabody Apartments, Hal Powell Apartments, Ervin Towers, and M.M. Scott Apartments. These families will be eligible if the Section 8 Assisted Housing Department receives written notification that the families have been displaced due to the Capital Fund/Modernization Project initiated by the Augusta Housing Authority. The Augusta Housing Authority will also consider persons affected by redevelopment for the City of Augusta and the State of Georgia to be admitted under the special admissions criteria.

The Augusta Housing Authority will also consider families under Special Admissions who have been terminated from the Tenant Based or Project Based Programs due to lack of sufficient funding. These families must meet all eligibility criteria to be readmitted into the Tenant Based or Project Based Program.

The special program currently administered by the Augusta Housing Authority is the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program. The following are other examples of types of program funding that may be designated by HUD for families living in a specified unit:

- A family displaced because of demolition or disposition of a public or Indian housing project;
- A family residing in a multifamily rental housing project when HUD sells, forecloses or demolishes the project;
- For housing covered by the Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990;
- A family residing in a project covered by a project-based Section 8 HAP contract at or near the end of the HAP contract term; and
- A non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or HOPE 2 project.

Targeted Funding [24 CFR 982.204(e)]

HUD may award the Augusta Housing Authority funding for a specified category of families on the waiting list. The Augusta Housing Authority must use this funding only to assist the families within the specified category. In order to assist families within a targeted funding category, the Augusta Housing Authority 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.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority currently does not administer any programs that fall under the definition 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

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

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

The Augusta Housing Authority is 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 Augusta Housing Authority to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the Augusta Housing Authority's Plan and the consolidated plan, and must be based on local housing needs and priorities that can be documented by generally accepted data sources.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority uses the following local preference system:

- Date and time of receipt of a completed application.
- Involuntarily displaced.
- Currently living in substandard housing (including homeless families).
- Currently paying more than 50% of their income for rent and utilities ("Rent Burden").

In addition to the above local preferences, the AHA has elected to have an additional local preference for the Project Based Voucher Program – Legacy at Walton Green 2. This additional preference only applies to the Project Based Voucher Program - Legacy at Walton Greens 2. Please see Chapter 17 for a discussion of this preference.

Descriptions of these preferences and their "definitional elements" are as follows:

Involuntary Displacement

Involuntarily displaced applicants are applicants who have been involuntarily displaced and are not living in standard, permanent replacement housing, or will be involuntarily displaced within no more than six months from the date of preference status certification by the family/verification by the Augusta Housing Authority.

Families are considered to be involuntarily displaced if they are required to vacate housing as a result of the following:

1. A disaster (fire, flood, earthquake, etc.) that has caused the unit to be uninhabitable.
2. Federal, state or local government action related to code enforcement, public improvement or development.
3. Action by a housing owner which is beyond an applicant's ability to control, and which occurs despite the applicant's having met all previous conditions of occupancy, and is other than a rent increase.

For purposes of this definitional element, reasons for an applicant to vacate a housing unit include, but are not limited to:

- Conversion of an applicant's housing unit to non-rental or non-residential use;
 - Closure of an applicant's housing unit for rehabilitation or non-residential use;
 - Notice to an applicant that s/he must vacate a unit because the owner wants the unit for the owner's personal or family use or occupancy;
 - Sale of a housing unit in which an applicant resides under an agreement that the unit must be vacant when possession is transferred; or
 - Any other legally authorized act that results, or will result, in the withdrawal by the owner of the unit or structure from the rental market.
4. To avoid reprisals because the family provided information on criminal activities to a law enforcement agency and, after a threat assessment, the law enforcement agency recommends rehousing the family to avoid or reduce risk of violence against the family.
- The family must be part of a Witness Protection Program, or the HUD Office or law enforcement agency must have informed the Augusta Housing Authority that the family is part of a similar program.
 - The Augusta Housing Authority will take precautions to ensure that the new location of the family is concealed in cases of witness protection.
5. By hate crimes if a member of the family has been the victim of one or more hate crimes, and the applicant has vacated the unit because of the crime or the fear of such a crime has destroyed the applicant's peaceful enjoyment of the unit.
- A hate crime is actual or threatened physical violence or intimidation that is directed against a person or his property and is based on the person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or familial status.
 - The Augusta Housing Authority will determine that the hate crime involved occurred recently or is of a continuing nature.
6. Displacement by non-suitability of the unit when a member of the family has a mobility or other impairment that makes the person unable to use critical elements of the unit and the owner is not legally obligated to make changes to the unit.
- Critical elements are as follows:
- entry and egress of unit and building
 - a sleeping area,
 - a full bathroom,
 - a kitchen if the person with a disability must do their own food preparation/other.
7. Due to HUD disposition of a multifamily project under Section 203 of the Housing and Community Development Amendments of 1978.

Standard Replacement Housing In order to receive the displacement preference, applicants who have been displaced must not be living in "standard, permanent replacement housing." Standard replacement housing is defined as housing that is decent, safe and sanitary according to Housing Quality Standards, that is adequate for the family size according to Housing Quality Standards, and that the family is occupying pursuant to a lease or occupancy agreement.

Standard replacement housing *does not* include transient facilities, hotels, motels, temporary shelters, and (in the case of Victims of Domestic Violence) housing occupied by the individual who engages in such violence. It does not include any individual imprisoned or detained

pursuant to State Law or an Act of Congress. Shared housing with family or friends is considered temporary and is not considered standard replacement housing.

Substandard Housing

Applicants who live in substandard housing are families whose dwelling meets one or more of the following criteria provided that the family did not cause the condition:

- Is dilapidated, as cited by officials of local code enforcement office and does not provide safe, adequate shelter; has one or more critical defects or a combination of defects requiring considerable repair; endangers the health, safety, and well-being of family.
- Does not have operable indoor plumbing.
- Does not have usable flush toilet in the unit for the exclusive use of the family.
- Does not have usable bathtub or shower in unit for exclusive family use.
- Does not have adequate, safe electrical service.
- Does not have an adequate, safe source of heat.
- Should, but does not, have a kitchen. (Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Housing is not substandard solely because it does not contain sanitary and/or food preparation facilities in the unit).
- Has been declared unfit for habitation by a government agency.

An applicant who is a "Homeless Family" is considered to be living in substandard housing. "Homeless Families":

- Lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; and
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised public or private shelter providing temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters and transitional housing), or an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Homeless families may maintain their place on the waiting list while completing a transitional housing program.

Families who are residing with friends or relatives on a temporary basis will not be included in the homeless definition.

Persons who reside as part of a family unit shall not be considered a separate household.

Rent Burden

Families paying more than 50% of their income for rent and utilities for at least 90 days commencing before they were selected from the Waiting List/and continuing through the verification of preference will receive this preference. For purposes of this preference, "Family Income" is Gross Monthly Income as defined in the regulations.

"Rent" is defined as the actual amount due under a lease or occupancy agreement calculated on a monthly basis without regard to the amount actually paid, plus the monthly amount of tenant-supplied utilities which can be either:

- The Augusta Housing Authority's reasonable estimate of the cost of such utilities, using the Section 8 Utility Allowance Schedule; or
- The average monthly payments the family actually made for these utilities in the most recent 12-month period, or if information is not obtainable for an appropriate period.

An applicant family may choose which method to use to calculate utilities expense. Any amounts paid to or on behalf of a family under any energy assistance program must be subtracted from the total rent burden if included in Family Income. The applicant must show that they actually paid the utility bills, regardless of whose name the service is under.

If an applicant owns a mobile home, but rents the space upon which it is located, then "Rent" must include the monthly payment made to amortize the purchase price of the home. Members of a cooperative are "renters" for the purposes of qualifying for the preference. In this case, "Rent" would mean the charges under the occupancy agreement.

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 Augusta Housing Authority'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, the Augusta Housing Authority 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)].

Since the Augusta Housing Authority operates the HCV Program, admissions of extremely low-income families to the Augusta Housing Authority's HCV program during a Augusta Housing Authority fiscal year that exceed the 75% minimum target requirement for the voucher program, shall be credited against the Augusta Housing Authority's basic targeting requirement in the public housing program for the same fiscal year. However, under these circumstances the fiscal year credit to the public housing program must not exceed the lower of: (1) ten percent of public housing waiting list admissions during the Augusta Housing Authority fiscal year; (2) ten percent of waiting list admissions to the Augusta Housing Authority's housing choice voucher program during the Augusta Housing Authority fiscal year; or (3) the number of qualifying low-income families who commence occupancy during the fiscal year of Augusta Housing Authority public housing units located in census tracts with a poverty rate of 30 percent or more. For this purpose, qualifying low-income family means a low-income family other than an extremely low-income family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority 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 the Augusta Housing Authority 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)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Families will be selected from the waiting list based on the selection preference(s) for which they qualify. Within each preference category, families will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis according to the date and time their complete application is received by the Augusta Housing Authority.

Local preferences will be used to select families from the waiting list. All local preferences will be treated equally at the Augusta Housing Authority.

Among applicants with equal preference status, the waiting list will be organized by the following:

1. By date and time of the application.
2. By priority rating:
 - First Priority – Applicants qualifying for a local preference who are occupying Substandard Housing, Involuntary Displaced or Rent Burden (paying more than 50% of family income for rent)
 - Second Priority – Applicants not qualifying for a local preference, but paying between 31% and 50% of family income for rent.
 - Third Priority – Applicants not qualifying for a local preference but paying 30% or less of family income for rent.

4-III.D. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

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

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family by first class mail when the family has been selected from the waiting list.

The notice will inform the family of the following:

1. Date, time, and location of the scheduled application interview, including any procedures for rescheduling the interview
2. Who is required to attend the interview
3. Documents that must be provided at the interview to document the legal identity of household members, including information about what constitutes acceptable documentation
4. Documents that must be provided at the interview to document eligibility for a preference, if applicable
5. Other documents and information that should be brought to the interview

If a notification letter is returned to the Augusta Housing Authority with no forwarding address, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

4-III.E. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW

HUD recommends that the Augusta Housing Authority obtain the information and documentation needed to make an eligibility determination through a face to face interview with an Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority [Notice PIH 2012-10].

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

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

1. Families selected from the waiting list are required to participate in an eligibility interview.
2. All adult family members including spouse/co-head are required to attend the interview and sign the required documents. Exceptions may be made for students attending school out of state and for members for whom attendance would be a hardship. 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 Augusta Housing Authority.

3. The interview will be conducted only if the adult family members provide acceptable documentation of legal identity including a copy of the state driver's license or state identification. (Chapter 7 provides a discussion of proper documentation of legal identity.) If the family members do not provide the required documentation at the time of the interview, he or she will be required to provide it within 10 business days.
4. Pending disclosure and documentation of social security numbers, the Augusta Housing Authority will allow the family to retain its place on the waiting list for 10 business days. If not, all household members have disclosed their SSNs at the next time the Augusta Housing Authority is issuing vouchers, the Augusta Housing Authority will issue a voucher to the next eligible applicant family on the waiting list.
5. If the family is claiming a waiting list preference, the family must provide documentation to verify their eligibility for a preference. If the family is verified as eligible for the preference, the Augusta Housing Authority will proceed with the interview. If the Augusta Housing Authority determines the family is not eligible for the preference, the interview will not proceed and the family will be placed back on the waiting list according to the date and time of their application.
6. The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility and determine the appropriate level of assistance, as well as completing required forms, providing required signatures, and submitting required documentation. All adult members must also sign consent forms to release criminal conviction records and allow the Augusta Housing Authority to receive records and use them in accordance with HUD regulations. If any materials are missing, the Augusta Housing Authority will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted.
7. 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).
8. An advocate, interpreter, or other assistant may assist the family with the application and the interview process.
9. Interviews will be conducted in English. For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, the Augusta Housing Authority will provide translation services in accordance with the Augusta Housing Authority's LEP plan.
10. If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the Augusta Housing Authority in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, the Augusta Housing Authority will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews

without Augusta Housing Authority 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 Augusta Housing Authority must verify all information provided by the family (see Chapter 7). Based on verified information, the Augusta Housing Authority 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.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines that the family is ineligible, the Augusta Housing Authority 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. targeted funding, extremely low-income), the family will be returned to its original position on the waiting list. The Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family in writing that it has been returned to the waiting list, and will specify the reasons for it.

If after a review of the pre-application the family is determined to be preliminarily eligible, they will be notified in writing (in an accessible format upon request as a reasonable accommodation) within 10 business days regarding their eligibility. The notice will contain the approximate date that assistance may be offered, and will further explain that the estimated date is subject to factors such as turnover and available funding which are beyond the Augusta Housing Authority's control. This written notification of preliminary eligibility will be forwarded to the applicant by U.S. mail. The Augusta Housing Authority will invite the family to attend a briefing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

BRIEFINGS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the briefing and voucher issuance process. When a family is determined to be eligible for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, the Augusta Housing Authority must ensure that the family fully understands the way the program operates and the family's obligations under the program. This is accomplished through both an oral briefing and provision of a briefing packet containing the HUD-required documents and other information the family needs to know in order to lease a unit under the program. Once the family is fully informed of the program's requirements, the Augusta Housing Authority will issue the family a voucher. The voucher includes the unit size for which the family qualifies based on the Augusta Housing Authority's subsidy standards, as well as the issue and expiration date of the voucher. The voucher is the document that authorizes the family to begin its search for a unit, and limits the amount of time the family has to successfully locate an acceptable unit.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and Augusta Housing Authority policies related to these topics in two parts:

Part I: Briefings and Family Obligations. This part details the program's requirements for briefing families orally, and for providing written materials describing the program and its requirements. It includes a particular focus on the family's obligations under the program.

Part II: Subsidy Standards and Voucher Issuance. This part discusses the Augusta Housing Authority's standards for determining how many bedrooms a family of a given composition qualifies for, which in turn affects the amount of subsidy the family can receive. It also discusses the policies that dictate how vouchers are issued, and how long families have to locate a unit.

PART I: BRIEFINGS AND FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

5-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD regulations require the Augusta Housing Authority to conduct mandatory briefings for applicant families who qualify for a voucher. The briefing provides a broad description of owner and family responsibilities, explains the Augusta Housing Authority's procedures, and includes instructions on how to lease a unit. This part describes how oral briefings (in person or remotely-phone, webcast, video call, or other electronic communications) will be conducted, specifies what written information will be provided to families, and lists the family's obligations under the program.

5-I.B. BRIEFING [24 CFR 982.301]

The Augusta Housing Authority must give the family an oral briefing (in person or remotely-phone, webcast, video call, and other electronic communications) and provide the family with a briefing packet containing written information about the program. Families may be briefed individually or in groups. At the briefing, the Augusta Housing Authority must ensure effective communication in accordance with Section 504 requirements (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973), and ensure that the briefing site is accessible to individuals with disabilities. For a more thorough discussion of accessibility requirements, refer to Chapter 2.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

1. Briefings will be conducted in individual and group meetings.
2. Generally, the head of household is required to attend the briefing. If the head of household is unable to attend, the Augusta Housing Authority may approve another adult family member to attend the briefing. The Augusta Housing Authority will not issue a Voucher to a family unless the household representative has attended a briefing and signed the Voucher.
3. Families that attend group briefings and still need individual assistance will be referred to an appropriate Augusta Housing Authority staff person.
4. Briefings will be conducted in English. For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, the Augusta Housing Authority will provide translation services in accordance with the Augusta Housing Authority's LEP plan (See Chapter 2).

Notification and Attendance

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

1. Families will be notified of their eligibility for assistance at the time they are invited to attend a briefing. The notice will identify who is required to attend the briefing, as well as the date and time of the scheduled briefing.
2. If the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, the applicant will be denied and their name will not be placed back on the waiting list. If the notice is returned by the post office with a forwarding address, the notice will be re-sent to the address indicated.
3. Applicants who fail to attend a scheduled briefing will be scheduled for another briefing automatically. The Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family of the date and time of the second scheduled briefing. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled briefings, without prior Augusta Housing Authority approval, will be denied assistance (see Chapter 3).

Oral Briefing [24 CFR 982.301(a)]

Each briefing must provide information on the following subjects:

- How the Housing Choice Voucher program works;
- Family and owner responsibilities;
- Where the family can lease a unit, including renting a unit inside or outside the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction;
- An explanation of how portability works. The Augusta Housing Authority may not discourage the family from choosing to live anywhere in the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction or outside the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction under portability, unless otherwise expressly authorized by statute, regulation, PIH Notice, or court order;
- The Augusta Housing Authority must inform the family of how portability may affect the family's assistance through screening, subsidy standards, payment standards, and any other elements of the portability process which may affect the family's assistance;
- The advantages of areas that do not have a high concentration of low-income families; and

Briefing Packet [24 CFR 982.301(b)]

Documents and information provided in the briefing packet must include the following:

- The term of the voucher, voucher suspensions, and the Augusta Housing Authority's policies on any extensions of the term. The packet must explain how the family can request an extension from the Augusta Housing Authority.
- A description of the method used to calculate the housing assistance payment for a family, including how the Augusta Housing Authority determines the payment standard for a family, how the Augusta Housing Authority determines total tenant payment for a family, and information on the payment standard and utility allowance schedule.
- An explanation of how the Augusta Housing Authority determines the maximum allowable rent for an assisted unit.
- Where the family may lease a unit and an explanation of how portability works, including information on how portability may affect the family's assistance through screening, subsidy standards, payment standards, and any other elements of the portability process that may affect the family's assistance.
- The HUD-required tenancy addendum, which must be included in the lease.
- The form the family must use to request approval of tenancy, and a description of the procedure for requesting approval for a tenancy.
- A statement of the Augusta Housing Authority policy on providing information about families to prospective owners.
- The Augusta Housing Authority subsidy standards including when and how exceptions are made.
- Materials (e.g., brochures) on how to select a unit and any additional information on selecting a unit as provided by HUD.
- Information on federal, state, and local equal opportunity laws and a copy of the housing discrimination complaint form.
- A list of landlords known to the Augusta Housing Authority who may be willing to lease a unit to the family or other resources (e.g., newspapers, organizations, online search tools) known to the Augusta Housing Authority that may assist the family in locating a unit. The Augusta Housing Authority must ensure that the list of landlords or other resources covers areas outside of poverty or minority concentration.
- Notice that if the family includes a person with disabilities, the family may request a list of available accessible units known to the Augusta Housing Authority.
- The family obligations under the program, including any obligations of a welfare-to-work family.
- The grounds on which the Augusta Housing Authority may terminate assistance for a participant family because of family action or failure to act.

- Augusta Housing Authority informal hearing procedures including when the Augusta Housing Authority is required to offer a participant family the opportunity for an informal hearing, and how to request the hearing.
- An explanation of the advantages of moving to an area that does not have a high concentration of low-income families.

Since the Augusta Housing Authority is located in a metropolitan area, the following additional information must be included in the briefing packet in order to receive full points under SEMAP Indicator 7, Expanding Housing Opportunities [24 CFR 985.3(g)]:

- Maps showing areas with housing opportunities outside areas of poverty or minority concentration, both within its jurisdiction and its neighboring jurisdiction
- Information about the characteristics of these areas including job opportunities, schools, transportation, and other services
- An explanation of how portability works, including a list of portability contact persons for neighboring PHAs with names, addresses, and telephone numbers

Additional Items to Be Included in the Briefing Packet

In addition to items required by the regulations, PHAs may wish to include supplemental materials to help explain the program to both participants and owners [HCV GB p. 8-7, Notice PIH 2010-19].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will provide the following additional materials in the briefing packet:

1. The HUD pamphlet on lead-based paint entitled *Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home*
2. Information on how to fill out and file a housing discrimination complaint form
3. Information about the protections afforded by the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking (see section 16-IX.C)
4. “Is Fraud Worth It?” (form HUD-1141-OIG), which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse
5. “What You Should Know about EIV,” a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2010-19
6. Other relevant documents to assist the family in understanding the HCV Program

5-I.C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

Obligations of the family are described in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) regulations and on the voucher. These obligations include responsibilities the family is required to fulfill, as well as prohibited actions. The Augusta Housing Authority must inform families of these obligations during the oral briefing, and the same information must be included in the briefing packet. When the family's unit is approved and the HAP contract is executed, the family must meet those obligations in order to continue participating in the program. Violation of any family obligation may result in termination of assistance, as described in Chapter 12.

Time Frames for Reporting Changes Required By Family Obligations

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Unless otherwise noted by the Augusta Housing Authority, the family is required to respond to requests made by the Augusta Housing Authority within 10 days of the request. The family is also required to notify the Augusta Housing Authority of changes within 10 business days is considered prompt notice.

When a family is required to provide notice to the Augusta Housing Authority, the notice must be in writing.

Family Obligations [24 CFR 982.551]

The family obligations of the voucher are listed as follows:

- The family must supply any information that the Augusta Housing Authority or HUD determines to be necessary, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status.
- The family must supply any information requested by the Augusta Housing Authority or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition.
- The family must disclose and verify social security numbers and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
- Any information supplied by the family must be true and complete.
- The family is responsible for any Housing Quality Standards (HQS) breach by the family caused by failure to pay tenant-provided utilities or appliances, or damages to the dwelling unit or premises beyond normal wear and tear caused by any member of the household or guest.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Damages beyond normal wear and tear will be considered to be damages which could be assessed against the security deposit.

- The family must allow the Augusta Housing Authority to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice, as described in Chapter 8 of this plan.

- The family must not commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will determine if a family has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence, including but not limited to, a court-ordered eviction or an owner's notice to evict, police reports, and affidavits from the owner, neighbors, or other credible parties with direct knowledge.

Serious and repeated lease violations will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises, and criminal activity. Generally, the criterion to be used will be whether or not the reason for the eviction was the fault of the tenant or guests. Any incidents of, or criminal activity related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking will not be construed as serious or repeated lease violations by the victim [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

- The family must notify the Augusta Housing Authority and the owner before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must comply with lease requirements regarding written notice to the owner. The family must provide written notice to the Augusta Housing Authority at the same time the owner is notified.

- The family must promptly give the Augusta Housing Authority a copy of any owner eviction notice.
- The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.
- The composition of the assisted family residing in the unit must be approved by the Augusta Housing Authority. The family must notify the Augusta Housing Authority in writing within 10 days of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request Augusta Housing Authority approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The request to add a family member must be submitted in writing and approved prior to the person moving into the unit. The Augusta Housing Authority will determine eligibility of the new member in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3.

- The family must promptly notify the Augusta Housing Authority in writing if any family member no longer lives in the unit.

- If the Augusta Housing Authority has given approval, a foster child or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. The Augusta Housing Authority has the discretion to adopt reasonable policies concerning residency by a foster child or a live-in aide, and to define when Augusta Housing Authority consent may be given or denied. For policies related to the request and approval/disapproval of foster children, foster adults, and live-in aides, see Chapter 3 (sections I.K and I.M), and Chapter 11 (section II.B).
- The family must not sublease the unit, assign the lease, or transfer the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Subleasing includes receiving payment to cover rent and utility costs by a person living in the unit who is not listed as a family member.

- The family must supply any information requested by the Augusta Housing Authority to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.
- The family must promptly notify the Augusta Housing Authority when the family is absent from the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Notice is required under this provision only when all family members will be absent from the unit for an extended period. An extended period is defined as any period greater than 30 calendar days. Written notice must be provided to the Augusta Housing Authority at the start of the extended absence.

- The family must pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease [Form HUD-52646, Voucher].
- The family must not own or have any interest in the unit, (other than in a cooperative and owners of a manufactured home leasing a manufactured home space).
- Family members must not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program. (See Chapter 14, Program Integrity for additional information).
- Family members must not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for HUD and PHA policies related to drug-related and violent criminal activity.
- Members of the household must not engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for a discussion of HUD and PHA policies related to alcohol abuse.
- An assisted family or member of the family must not receive HCV program assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other federal, state or local housing assistance program.
- A family must not receive HCV program assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless

the Augusta Housing Authority has determined (and has notified the owner and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities. [Form HUD-52646, Voucher]

PART II: SUBSIDY STANDARDS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE

5-II.A. OVERVIEW

The Augusta Housing Authority must establish subsidy standards that determine the number of bedrooms needed for families of different sizes and compositions. This part presents the policies that will be used to determine the family unit size (also known as the voucher size) a particular family should receive, and the policies that govern making exceptions to those standards. The Augusta Housing Authority must also establish policies related to the issuance of the voucher, to the voucher term, and to any extensions of the voucher term.

5-II.B. DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT (VOUCHER) SIZE [24 CFR 982.402]

For each family, the Augusta Housing Authority determines the appropriate number of bedrooms under the Augusta Housing Authority subsidy standards and enters the family unit size on the voucher that is issued to the family. The family unit size does not dictate the size of unit the family must actually lease, nor does it determine who within a household will share a bedroom/sleeping room.

The following requirements apply when the Augusta Housing Authority determines family unit size:

- The subsidy standards must provide for the **smallest** number of bedrooms needed to house a family without overcrowding. One bedroom will be generally assigned for each two family members.
- The subsidy standards must be consistent with space requirements under the housing quality standards.
- The subsidy standards must be applied consistently for all families of like size and composition.
- A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family in determining the family unit size.
- A family that consists of a pregnant woman (with no other persons) must be treated as a two-person family.
- Any live-in aide (approved by the Augusta Housing Authority to reside in the unit to care for a family member who is disabled) must be counted in determining the family unit size. No additional bedrooms are provided for the aide's family;

- Unless a live-in-aide resides with a family, the family unit size for any family consisting of a single person must be either a zero or one-bedroom unit, as determined under the Augusta Housing Authority subsidy standards.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will assign one bedroom for each two persons within the household, except in the following circumstances:

Persons of the opposite sex (other than spouses and children under age 6) will be allocated separate bedrooms.

Persons of different generations will not be required to share a bedroom. A generation is defined as a body of living beings constituting a single step in the line of descent from an ancestor (the average length of time between the birth of parents and the birth of their children which is around 20-30 years).

Live-in aides will be allocated a separate bedroom. No additional bedroom will be provided for the live-in aide's family

Single person families will be allocated a zero or one bedroom.

Foster children will be included in determining unit size if they will be in the unit for more than 12 months.

The Augusta Housing Authority will reference the following chart in determining the appropriate voucher size for a family:

Voucher Size	Minimum Number of Person	Maximum Number of Person
0 Bedroom	1	1
1 Bedroom	1	2
2 Bedrooms	2	4
3 Bedrooms	3	6
4 Bedrooms	4	8
5 Bedrooms	6	10

5-II.C. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS

In determining family unit size for a particular family, the Augusta Housing Authority may grant an exception to its established subsidy standards if the Augusta Housing Authority determines that the exception is justified by the age, sex, health, handicap, or relationship of family members or other personal circumstances [24 CFR 982.402(b)(8)]. Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

- A need for an additional bedroom for medical equipment
- A need for a separate bedroom for reasons related to a family member's disability, medical or health condition

For a single person who is not elderly, disabled, or a remaining family member, an exception cannot override the regulatory limit of a zero or one bedroom [24 CFR 982.402(b)(8)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will consider granting an exception to the subsidy standards at the family's written request if the Augusta Housing Authority determines the exception is justified by the age, sex, health, handicap, or relationship of family members or other personal circumstances.

The request must explain the need or justification for a larger family unit size, and must include appropriate documentation. Requests based on health-related reasons must be verified by a knowledgeable professional source (e.g., doctor or health professional), unless the disability and the disability-related request for accommodation is readily apparent or otherwise known. If necessary, the family's continued need for an additional bedroom due to special medical equipment will be re-verified at annual reexamination.

The Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family of its determination within 10 business days of receiving the family's request. If a participant family's request is denied, the notice will inform the family of their right to request an informal hearing.

5-II.D. VOUCHER ISSUANCE [24 CFR 982.302]

When a family is selected from the waiting list (or as a special admission as described in Chapter 4), or when a participant family wants to move to another unit, the Augusta Housing Authority issues a Housing Choice Voucher, form HUD-52646. This chapter deals only with voucher issuance for applicants. For voucher issuance associated with moves of program participants, please refer to Chapter 10.

The voucher is the family's authorization to search for housing. It specifies the unit size for which the family qualifies, and includes both the date of voucher issuance and date of expiration. It contains a brief description of how the program works and explains the family obligations under the program. The voucher is evidence that the Augusta Housing Authority has determined the family to be eligible for the program, and that the Augusta Housing Authority expects to have money available to subsidize the family if the family finds an approvable unit. However, the Augusta Housing Authority does not have any liability to any party by the issuance of the voucher, and the voucher does not give the family any right to participate in the Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program [Voucher, form HUD-52646]

A voucher can be issued to an applicant family only after the Augusta Housing Authority has determined that the family is eligible for the program based on verification of information received within the 60 days prior to issuance [24 CFR 982.201(e)] and after the family has attended an oral briefing [HCV 8-1].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Vouchers will be issued to eligible applicants immediately following the mandatory briefing.

The Augusta Housing Authority should have sufficient funds to house an applicant before issuing a voucher. If funds are insufficient to house the family at the top of the waiting list, the Augusta Housing Authority must wait until it has adequate funds before it calls another family from the list [HCV GB p. 8-10].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Prior to issuing any vouchers, the Augusta Housing Authority will determine whether it has sufficient funding in accordance with the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16.

If the PHA determines that there is insufficient funding after a voucher has been issued, the Augusta Housing Authority may rescind the voucher and place the affected family back on the waiting list.

5-II.E. VOUCHER TERM AND EXTENSIONS

Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303]

The initial term of a voucher must be at least 60 calendar days. The initial term must be stated on the voucher [24 CFR 982.303(a)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The initial voucher term will be 60 calendar days.

The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval and proposed lease within the 60-day period unless the Augusta Housing Authority grants an extension.

Extensions of Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303(b)]

The Augusta Housing Authority has the authority to grant extensions of search time, to specify the length of an extension, and to determine the circumstances under which extensions will be granted. Discretionary policies related to extension and expiration of search time must be described in the Augusta Housing Authority's administrative plan [24 CFR 982.54].

The Augusta Housing Authority must approve additional search time if needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by a person with disabilities. The extension period must be reasonable for the purpose of locating an approvable unit.

The family must be notified in writing of the Augusta Housing Authority's decision to approve or deny an extension. The Augusta Housing Authority's decision to deny a request for an extension of the voucher term is not subject to informal review [24 CFR 982.554(c)(4)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will automatically approve one 30-day extension upon written request from the family.

The Augusta Housing Authority will approve an additional 30 day extension with written documentation verifying that the family has made a reasonable effort to locate a unit, including seeking the assistance of the Augusta Housing Authority, throughout the previous 90 days. A complete search record is required.

The Augusta Housing Authority will approve additional time beyond the 120 days (initial 60 days plus two 30 day extensions) only in the following circumstances:

It is necessary as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.

It is necessary due to reasons beyond the family's control, as determined by the Augusta Housing Authority. Following is a list of extenuating circumstances that the Augusta Housing Authority may consider in making its decision. The presence of these circumstances does not guarantee that an extension will be granted:

1. Hospitalization of head of household of approved family members
2. Serious illness or death in the family
3. Other family emergency for an extended period of time

4. Whether the family has already submitted requests for tenancy approval that were not approved by the Augusta Housing Authority
5. Whether family size or other special circumstances make it difficult to find a suitable unit

Any request for an additional extension must include the reason(s) an additional extension is necessary. The Augusta Housing Authority requires the family to provide documentation to support the request or obtain verification from a qualified third party.

All requests for extensions to the voucher term must be made in writing and submitted to the Augusta Housing Authority prior to the expiration date of the voucher (or extended term of the voucher).

The Augusta Housing Authority will decide whether to approve or deny an extension request within 10 business days of the date the request is received, and will immediately provide the family written notice of its decision.

Suspensions of Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303(c)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must provide for suspension of the initial or any extended term of the voucher from the date the family submits a Request for Tenancy Approval until the date the Augusta Housing Authority notifies the family in writing whether the request has been approved or denied.

Expiration of Voucher Term

Once a family's housing choice voucher term (including any extensions) expires, the family is no longer eligible to search for housing under the program. If the family still wishes to receive assistance, the Augusta Housing Authority requires that the family reapply for assistance. Such a family does not become ineligible for the program on the grounds that it was unable to locate a unit before the voucher expired [HCV GB p. 8-13].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If an applicant family's voucher term or extension expires before the Augusta Housing Authority has approved a tenancy, the Augusta Housing Authority will require the family to reapply for assistance.

Within 10 business days after the expiration of the voucher term or any extension, the Augusta Housing Authority will notify the family in writing that the voucher term has expired and that the family must reapply in order to be placed on the waiting list. The family will not be entitled to a review or hearing. If the family is currently assisted, they may remain as a participant in their unit if there is an assisted lease and Housing Assistance Payment Contract in effect.

Chapter 6

INCOME AND SUBSIDY DETERMINATIONS

[24 CFR Part 5, Subparts E and F; 24 CFR 982]

INTRODUCTION

A family's income determines eligibility for assistance and is also used to calculate the family's payment and the Augusta Housing Authority's subsidy. The Augusta Housing Authority will use the policies and methods described in this chapter to ensure that only eligible families receive assistance and that no family pays more or less than its obligation under the regulations. This chapter describes HUD regulations and Augusta Housing Authority policies related to these topics in three parts as follows:

- Part I: Annual Income. HUD regulations specify the sources of income to include and exclude to arrive at a family's annual income. These requirements and Augusta Housing Authority policies for calculating annual income are found in Part I.
- Part II: Adjusted Income. Once annual income has been established HUD regulations require the Augusta Housing Authority to subtract from annual income any of five mandatory deductions for which a family qualifies. These requirements and Augusta Housing Authority policies for calculating adjusted income are found in Part II.
- Part III: Calculating Family Share and Augusta Housing Authority Subsidy. This part describes the statutory formula for calculating total tenant payment (TTP), the use of utility allowances, and the methodology for determining Augusta Housing Authority subsidy and required family payment.

PART I: ANNUAL INCOME

6-I.A. OVERVIEW

The general regulatory definition of *annual income* shown below is from 24 CFR 5.609.

5.609 Annual income.

(a) Annual income means all amounts, monetary or not, which:

(1) Go to, or on behalf of, the family head or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other family member; or

(2) Are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date; and

(3) Which are not specifically excluded in paragraph [5.609(c)].

(4) Annual income also means amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access.

In addition to this general definition, HUD regulations establish policies for treating specific types of income and assets. The full texts of those portions of the regulations are provided in exhibits at the end of this chapter as follows:

- Annual Income Inclusions (Exhibit 6-1)
- Annual Income Exclusions (Exhibit 6-2)
- Treatment of Family Assets (Exhibit 6-3)
- Earned Income Disallowance for Persons with Disabilities (Exhibit 6-4)
- The Effect of Welfare Benefit Reduction (Exhibit 6-5)

Sections 6-I.B and 6-I.C discuss general requirements and methods for calculating annual income. The rest of this section describes how each source of income is treated for the purposes of determining annual income. HUD regulations present income inclusions and exclusions separately [24 CFR 5.609(b) and 24 CFR 5.609(c)]. In this plan, however, the discussions of income inclusions and exclusions are integrated by topic (e.g., all policies affecting earned income are discussed together in section 6-I.D). Verification requirements for annual income are discussed in Chapter 7.

6-I.B. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND INCOME

Income received by all family members must be counted unless specifically excluded by the regulations. It is the responsibility of the head of household to report changes in family composition. The rules on which sources of income are counted vary somewhat by family member. The chart below summarizes how family composition affects income determinations.

Summary of Income Included and Excluded by Person	
Live-in aides	Income from all sources is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(c)(5)].
Foster child or foster adult	Income from all sources is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(c)(2)].
Head, spouse, or cohead Other adult family members	All sources of income not specifically excluded by the regulations are included.
Children under 18 years of age	Employment income is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(c)(1)]. All other sources of income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included.
Full-time students 18 years of age or older (not head, spouse, or cohead)	Employment income above \$480/year is excluded [24 CFR 5.609(c)(11)]. All other sources of income, except those specifically excluded by the regulations, are included.

Temporarily Absent Family Members

The income of family members approved to live in the unit will be counted, even if the family member is temporarily absent from the unit [HCV GB, p. 5-18].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Generally, an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for 60 consecutive days or less is considered temporarily absent and continues to be considered a family member. Generally, an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for more than 60 consecutive days is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

Absent Students

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When someone who has been considered a family member attends school away from home, the person will continue to be considered a family member unless information becomes available to the AHA indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household.

Absences Due to Placement in Foster Care

Children temporarily absent from the home as a result of placement in foster care are considered members of the family [24 CFR 5.403].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a child has been placed in foster care, the AHA will verify with the appropriate agency whether and when the child is expected to be returned to the home. Unless the agency confirms that the child has been permanently removed from the home, the child will be counted as a family member.

If the time period is to be greater than two (2) months from the date of removal of the child, the Voucher size will be reduced. If all children are removed from the home permanently, the Voucher size will be reduced in accordance with AHA's subsidy standards.

Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons

If a family member is confined to a nursing home or hospital on a permanent basis, that person is no longer considered a family member and the income of that person is not counted [HCV GB, p. 5-22].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will request verification from a responsible medical professional and will use this determination. If the verification indicates that the family member will be permanently confined to a facility, the family member will be considered permanently absent. If the verification indicates that the family member will return in less than sixty (60) consecutive days, the family member will be considered temporarily absent. If the responsible medical professional cannot provide a determination, the person generally will be considered temporarily absent. The family may present evidence that the family member is confined on a permanent basis and request that the person not be considered a family member.

When an individual who has been counted as a family member is determined permanently absent, the family is eligible for the medical expense deduction only if the remaining head, spouse, or co-head qualify as an elderly person or a person with disabilities.

Joint Custody of Dependents

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Dependents that are subject to a joint custody arrangement will be considered a member of the family, if they live with the applicant or participant family 50 percent or more of the time.

When more than one applicant or participant family is claiming the same dependents as family members, the family with primary custody at the time of the initial examination or reexamination will be able to claim the dependents. If there is a dispute about which

family should claim them, the AHA will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, school enrollment documentation, or an IRS return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes.

Caretakers for a Child

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The approval of a caretaker is at the owner and AHA's discretion and subject to the owner and AHA's screening criteria. If neither a parent nor a designated guardian remains in a household receiving HCV assistance, the AHA will take the following actions.

- (1) If a responsible agency has determined that another adult is to be brought into the assisted unit to care for a child for an indefinite period, the designated caretaker will not be considered a family member until a determination of custody or legal guardianship is made.
- (2) If a caretaker has assumed responsibility for a child without the involvement of a responsible agency or formal assignment of custody or legal guardianship, the caretaker will be treated as a visitor for 30 days. After the 30 days has elapsed, the caretaker must provide documentation from a responsible agency or formal assignment of custody or legal guardianship to confirm that the caretaker's role is temporary. In such cases the AHA will extend the caretaker's status as an eligible visitor.
- (3) At any time that custody or guardianship legally has been awarded to a caretaker, the housing choice voucher will be transferred to the caretaker as the head of household. At that time, the income of the caretaker will be counted.
- (4) During any period that a caretaker is considered a visitor, the income of the caretaker is not counted in annual income and the caretaker does not qualify the family for any deductions from income.

6-I.C. ANTICIPATING ANNUAL INCOME

The Augusta Housing Authority is required to count all income “anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date” [24 CFR 5.609(a)(2)]. Policies related to anticipating annual income are provided below.

Basis of Annual Income Projection

The Augusta Housing Authority generally will use current circumstances to determine anticipated income for the coming 12-month period. HUD authorizes the Augusta Housing Authority to use other than current circumstances to anticipate income when:

- An imminent change in circumstances is expected [HCV GB, p. 5-17]
- It is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over a 12-month period (e.g., seasonal or cyclic income) [24 CFR 5.609(d)]
- The AHA believes that past income is the best available indicator of expected future income [24 CFR 5.609(d)]

The Augusta Housing Authority is required to use HUD’s Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system in its entirety as a third-party source to verify employment and income information, and to reduce administrative subsidy payment errors in accordance with HUD administrative guidance [24 CFR 5.233(a)(2)].

HUD allows the Augusta Housing Authority to use tenant-provided documents (pay stubs) to project income once EIV data has been received in such cases where the family does not dispute the EIV employer data and where the AHA does not determine it is necessary to obtain additional third-party data.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When EIV is obtained and the family does not dispute the EIV employer data, the AHA will use current tenant-provided documents to project annual income. When the tenant-provided documents are pay stubs, the AHA will use at least three (3) current and consecutive pay stubs dated within the last 60 days.

The AHA will obtain written and/or oral third-party verification in accordance with the verification requirements and policy in Chapter 7 in the following cases:

If EIV or other UIV data is not available,

If the family disputes the accuracy of the EIV employer data, and/or

If the AHA determines additional information is needed.

In such cases, the AHA will review and analyze current data to anticipate annual income. In all cases, the family file will be documented with a clear record of the reason for the decision, and a clear audit trail will be left as to how the AHA annualized projected income.

When the AHA cannot readily anticipate income based upon current circumstances (e.g., in the case of seasonal employment, unstable working hours, or suspected fraud), the

AHA will review and analyze historical data for patterns of employment, paid benefits, and receipt of other income and use the results of this analysis to establish annual income.

Any time current circumstances are not used to project annual income, a clear rationale for the decision will be documented in the file. In all such cases, the family may present information and documentation to the AHA to show why the historic pattern does not represent the family's anticipated income.

Known Changes in Income

If the Augusta Housing Authority verifies an upcoming increase or decrease in income, annual income will be calculated by applying each income amount to the appropriate part of the 12-month period.

Example: An employer reports that a full-time employee who has been receiving \$8/hour will begin to receive \$8.25/hour in the eighth week after the effective date of the reexamination. In such a case, the PHA would calculate annual income as follows: $(\$8/\text{hour} \times 40 \text{ hours} \times 7 \text{ weeks}) + (\$8.25 \times 40 \text{ hours} \times 45 \text{ weeks})$.

The family may present information that demonstrates that implementing a change before its effective date would create a hardship for the family. In such cases the AHA will calculate annual income using current circumstances and then require an interim reexamination when the change actually occurs. This requirement will be imposed even if the AHA's policy on reexaminations does not require interim reexaminations for other types of changes.

When tenant-provided third-party documents are used to anticipate annual income, they will be dated within the last 60 days of the reexamination interview date.

Projecting Income

In HUD's EIV webcast of January 2008, HUD stated that PHAs are not to use EIV quarterly wages to project annual income.

6-I.D. EARNED INCOME

Types of Earned Income Included in Annual Income

Wages and Related Compensation

The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services is included in annual income [24 CFR 5.609(b)(1)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For persons who regularly receive bonuses or commissions, the AHA will verify this information with the employer. If the employer cannot anticipate the amount for the next 12 months, AHA will average the amounts received for the preceding year for admission or reexamination. If, by averaging, an estimate can be made for those families whose income fluctuates from month to month this estimate will be used as the income. The method used depends on the regularity, source and type of income. When calculating income from pay stubs, AHA will consider both the average (weekly, bi-weekly, semi-monthly and monthly) pay and year-to-date pay. The year-to-date income is considered because it provides an indication of overtime, bonuses, commissions or other types of income that may be anticipated. Unless there is a sound reason to do otherwise, the higher of these two calculations should be considered the income from employment.

The AHA will consider a credible justification for not using this history to anticipate future bonuses or commissions. If a new employee has not yet received any bonuses or commissions, the AHA will count only the amount estimated by the employer. The file will be documented appropriately.

Some Types of Military Pay

All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces are counted [24 CFR 5.609(b)(8)] except for the special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire [24 CFR 5.609(c)(7)].

Types of Earned Income Not Counted in Annual Income

Temporary, Nonrecurring, or Sporadic Income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(9)]

This type of income is not included in annual income. Sporadic income includes temporary payments from the U.S. Census Bureau for employment lasting no longer than 180 days [Notice PIH 2009-19].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Sporadic income is income that is not received periodically and cannot be reliably predicted. For example, the income of an individual who works occasionally as a handyman would be considered sporadic if future work could not be anticipated and no historic, stable pattern of income existed.

Children's Earnings

Employment income earned by children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years is not included in annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(1)]. (See Eligibility chapter for a definition of *foster children*.)

Certain Earned Income of Full-Time Students

Earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (except for the head, spouse, or cohead) are not counted [24 CFR 5.609(c)(11)]. To be considered "full-time," a student must be considered "full-time" by an educational institution with a degree or certificate program [HCV GB, p. 5-29].

Income of a Live-in Aide

Income earned by a live-in aide, as defined in [24 CFR 5.403], is not included in annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(5)]. (See Eligibility chapter for a full discussion of live-in aides.)

Income Earned under Certain Federal Programs

Income from some federal programs is specifically excluded from consideration as income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)], including:

- Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5044(g), 5058)
- Awards under the federal work-study program (20 U.S.C. 1087 uu)
- Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1985 (42 U.S.C. 3056(f))
- Allowances, earnings, and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12637(d))
- Allowances, earnings, and payments to participants in programs funded under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2931)

Resident Service Stipend

Amounts received under a resident service stipend are not included in annual income. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed \$200 per individual per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, resident initiatives coordination, and serving as a member of the PHA's governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time [24 CFR 5.600(c)(8)(iv)].

State and Local Employment Training Programs

Incremental earnings and benefits to any family member resulting from participation in qualifying state or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff are excluded from annual income. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the training program [24 CFR 5.609(c)(8)(v)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA defines *training program* as “a learning process with goals and objectives, generally having a variety of components, and taking place in a series of sessions over a period to time. It is designed to lead to a higher level of proficiency, and it enhances the individual’s ability to obtain employment. It may have performance standards to measure proficiency. Training may include, but is not limited to: (1) classroom training in a specific occupational skill, (2) on-the-job training with wages subsidized by the program, or (3) basic education” [expired Notice PIH 98-2, p. 3].

The AHA defines *incremental earnings and benefits* as the difference between: (1) the total amount of welfare assistance and earnings of a family member prior to enrollment in a training program, and (2) the total amount of welfare assistance and earnings of the family member after enrollment in the program [expired Notice PIH 98-2, pp. 3–4].

In calculating the incremental difference, the AHA will use as the pre-enrollment income the total annualized amount of the family member’s welfare assistance and earnings reported on the family’s most recently completed HUD-50058.

End of participation in a training program must be reported in accordance with the AHA's interim reporting requirements.

HUD-Funded Training Programs

Amounts received under training programs funded in whole or in part by HUD [24 CFR 5.609(c)(8)(i)] are excluded from annual income. Eligible sources of funding for the training include operating subsidy, Section 8 administrative fees, and modernization, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME program, and other grant funds received from HUD.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

To qualify as a training program, the program must meet the definition of *training program* provided above for state and local employment training programs.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Earned income tax credit (EITC) refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991 (26 U.S.C. 32(j)), are excluded from annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)]. Although many families receive the EITC annually when they file taxes, an EITC can also be received throughout the year. The prorated share of the annual EITC is included in the employee’s payroll check.

Earned Income Disallowance

The earned income disallowance for persons with disabilities is discussed in section 6-I.E below.

6-I.E. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES [24 CFR 5.617; Streamlining Final Rule (SFR) Federal Register 3/8/16]

The earned income disallowance (EID) encourages people with disabilities to enter the work force by not including the full value of increases in earned income for a period of time. The full text of 24 CFR 5.617 is included as Exhibit 6-4 at the end of this chapter. Eligibility criteria and limitations on the disallowance are summarized below.

Eligibility

This disallowance applies only to individuals in families already participating in the HCV program (not at initial examination). To qualify, the family must experience an increase in annual income that is the result of one of the following events:

- Employment of a family member who is a person with disabilities and who was previously unemployed for one or more years prior to employment. *Previously unemployed* includes a person who annually has earned not more than the minimum wage applicable to the community multiplied by 500 hours. The applicable minimum wage is the federal minimum wage unless there is a higher state or local minimum wage.
- Increased earnings by a family member who is a person with disabilities and whose earnings increase during participation in an economic self-sufficiency or job-training program. A self-sufficiency program includes a program designed to encourage, assist, train, or facilitate the economic independence of HUD-assisted families or to provide work to such families [24 CFR 5.603(b)].
- New employment or increased earnings by a family member who is a person with disabilities and who has received benefits or services under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or any other state program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act within the past six months. If the benefits are received in the form of monthly maintenance, there is no minimum amount. If the benefits or services are received in a form other than monthly maintenance, such as one-time payments, wage subsidies, or transportation assistance, the total amount received over the six-month period must be at least \$500.

Calculation of the Disallowance

Calculation of the earned income disallowance for an eligible member of a qualified family begins with a comparison of the member's current income with his or her "baseline income." The family member's baseline income is his or her income immediately prior to qualifying for the EID. The family member's baseline income remains constant throughout the period that he or she is participating in the EID. While qualification for the disallowance is the same for all families, calculation of the disallowance will differ depending on when the family member qualified for the EID. Participants qualifying prior to May 9, 2016, will have the disallowance calculated under the "Original Calculation Method" described below which requires a maximum lifetime disallowance period of up to 48 consecutive months. Participants qualifying on or after May 9, 2016, will be subject to the "Revised Calculation Method" which shortens the lifetime disallowance period to 24 consecutive months.

Under both the original and new methods, the EID eligibility criteria, the benefit amount, the single lifetime eligibility requirement and the ability of the applicable family member to stop and restart employment during the eligibility period are the same.

Original Calculation Method

Initial 12-Month Exclusion

During the initial 12-month exclusion period, the full amount (100 percent) of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings is excluded. The 12 months are cumulative and need not be consecutive.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The initial EID exclusion period will begin on the first of the month following the date an eligible member of a qualified family is first employed or first experiences an increase in earnings.

Second 12-Month Exclusion and Phase-In

During the second 12-month exclusion period, the exclusion is reduced to half (50 percent) of any increase in income attributable to employment or increased earnings. The 12 months are cumulative and need not be consecutive.

Lifetime Limitation

The EID has a four-year (48-month) lifetime maximum. The four-year eligibility period begins at the same time that the initial exclusion period begins and ends 48 months later. The one-time eligibility for the EID applies even if the eligible individual begins to receive assistance from another housing agency, if the individual moves between public housing and Section 8 assistance, or if there are breaks in assistance.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

During the 48-month eligibility period, the AHA will schedule and conduct an interim reexamination each time there is a change in the family member's annual income that affects or is affected by the EID (e.g., when the family member's income falls to a level at or below his/her prequalifying income, when one of the exclusion periods ends, and at the end of the lifetime maximum eligibility period).

Revised Calculation Method

Initial 12-Month Exclusion

During the initial exclusion period of 12 consecutive months, the full amount (100 percent) of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings is excluded.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The initial EID exclusion period will begin on the first of the month following the date an eligible member of a qualified family is first employed or first experiences an increase in earnings.

Second 12-Month Exclusion

During the second exclusion period of 12 consecutive months, the Augusta Housing Authority must exclude at least 50 percent of any increase in income attributable to employment or increased earnings.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

During the second 12-month exclusion period, the AHA will exclude 50 percent of any increase in income attributable to new employment or increased earnings.

Lifetime Limitation

The EID has a two-year (24-month) lifetime maximum. The two-year eligibility period begins at the same time that the initial exclusion period begins and ends 24 months later. During the 24-month period, an individual remains eligible for EID even if they begin to receive assistance from a different housing agency, move between public housing and Section 8 assistance, or have breaks in assistance.

6-I.F. BUSINESS INCOME [24 CFR 5.609(b)(2)]

Annual income includes “the net income from the operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family” [24 CFR 5.609(b)(2)].

Business Expenses

Net income is “gross income less business expense” [HCV GB, p. 5-19].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

To determine business expenses that may be deducted from gross income, the AHA will use current applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules for determining allowable business expenses [see IRS Publication 535], unless a topic is addressed by HUD regulations or guidance as described below.

Business Expansion

HUD regulations do not permit the Augusta Housing Authority to deduct from gross income expenses for business expansion.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Business expansion is defined as any capital expenditures made to add new business activities, to expand current facilities, or to operate the business in additional locations. For example, purchase of a street sweeper by a construction business for the purpose of adding street cleaning to the services offered by the business would be considered a business expansion. Similarly, the purchase of a property by a hair care business to open at a second location would be considered a business expansion.

Capital Indebtedness

HUD regulations do not permit the Augusta Housing Authority to deduct from gross income the amortization of capital indebtedness.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Capital indebtedness is defined as the principal portion of the payment on a capital asset such as land, buildings, and machinery. This means the AHA will allow as a business expense interest, but not principal, paid on capital indebtedness.

Negative Business Income

If the net income from a business is negative, no business income will be included in annual income; a negative amount will not be used to offset other family income.

Withdrawal of Cash or Assets from a Business

HUD regulations require the Augusta Housing Authority to include in annual income the withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession unless the withdrawal reimburses a family member for cash or assets invested in the business by the family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Acceptable investments in a business include cash loans and contributions of assets or equipment. For example, if a member of an assisted family provided an up-front loan of \$2,000 to help a business get started, the AHA will not count as income any withdrawals from the business up to the amount of this loan until the loan has been repaid. Investments do not include the value of labor contributed to the business without compensation.

Co-owned Businesses

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a business is co-owned with someone outside the family, the family must document the share of the business it owns. If the family's share of the income is lower than its share of ownership, the family must document the reasons for the difference.

6-I.G. ASSETS [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3); 24 CFR 5.603(b)]

Overview

There is no asset limitation for participation in the HCV program. However, HUD requires that the Augusta Housing Authority include in annual income the anticipated “interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property” [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3)]. This section discusses how the income from various types of assets is determined. For most types of assets, the Augusta Housing Authority must determine the value of the asset in order to compute income from the asset. Therefore, for each asset type, this section discusses:

- How the value of the asset will be determined
- How income from the asset will be calculated

Exhibit 6-1 provides the regulatory requirements for calculating income from assets [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3)], and Exhibit 6-3 provides the regulatory definition of *net family assets*. This section begins with a discussion of general policies related to assets and then provides HUD rules and Augusta Housing Authority policies related to each type of asset.

Optional policies for family self-certification of assets are found in Chapter 7.

General Policies

Income from Assets

The Augusta Housing Authority generally will use current circumstances to determine both the value of an asset and the anticipated income from the asset. As is true for all sources of income, HUD authorizes the Augusta Housing Authority to use other than current circumstances to anticipate income when (1) an imminent change in circumstances is expected (2) it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over 12 months or (3) the AHA believes that past income is the best indicator of anticipated income. For example, if a family member owns real property that typically receives rental income but the property is currently vacant, the AHA can take into consideration past rental income along with the prospects of obtaining a new tenant.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Anytime current circumstances are not used to determine asset income, a clear rationale for the decision will be documented in the file. In such cases the family may present information and documentation to the AHA to show why the asset income determination does not represent the family’s anticipated asset income.

Valuing Assets

The calculation of asset income sometimes requires the Augusta Housing Authority to make a distinction between an asset's market value and its cash value.

- The market value of an asset is its worth in the market (e.g., the amount a buyer would pay for real estate or the total value of an investment account).
- The cash value of an asset is its market value less all reasonable amounts that would be incurred when converting the asset to cash.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Reasonable costs that would be incurred when disposing of an asset include, but are not limited to, penalties for premature withdrawal, broker and legal fees, and settlement costs incurred in real estate transactions [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

Lump-Sum Receipts

Payments that are received in a single lump sum, such as inheritances, capital gains, lottery winnings, insurance settlements, and proceeds from the sale of property, are generally considered assets, not income. However, such lump-sum receipts are counted as assets only if they are retained by a family in a form recognizable as an asset (e.g., deposited in a savings or checking account) [RHIIP FAQs]. (For a discussion of lump-sum payments that represent the delayed start of a periodic payment, most of which are counted as income, see sections 6-I.H and 6-I.I.)

Imputing Income from Assets [24 CFR 5.609(b)(3), Notice PIH 2012-29]

When net family assets are \$5,000 or less, the Augusta Housing Authority will include in annual income the actual income anticipated to be derived from the assets. When the family has net family assets in excess of \$5,000, the Augusta Housing Authority will include in annual income the greater of (1) the actual income derived from the assets or (2) the imputed income. Imputed income from assets is calculated by multiplying the total cash value of all family assets by an average passbook savings rate as determined by the Augusta Housing Authority.

- Note: The HUD field office no longer provides an interest rate for imputed asset income. The "safe harbor" is now for the PHA to establish a passbook rate within 0.75 percent of a national average.
- The PHA must review its passbook rate annually to ensure that it remains within 0.75 percent of the national average.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will initially set the imputed asset passbook rate at the national rate established by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

The AHA will review the passbook rate annually, in December of each year. The rate will not be adjusted unless the current AHA rate is no longer within 0.75 percent of the national rate. If it is no longer within 0.75 percent of the national rate, the passbook rate will be set at the current national rate.

Changes to the passbook rate will take effect on February 1 following the December review.

Determining Actual Anticipated Income from Assets

It may or may not be necessary for the Augusta Housing Authority to use the value of an asset to compute the actual anticipated income from the asset. When the value is required to compute the anticipated income from an asset, the market value of the asset is used. For example, if the asset is a property for which a family receives rental income, the anticipated income is determined by annualizing the actual monthly rental amount received for the property; it is not based on the property's market value. However, if the asset is a savings account, the anticipated income is determined by multiplying the market value of the account by the interest rate on the account.

Withdrawal of Cash or Liquidation of Investments

Any withdrawal of cash or assets from an investment will be included in income except to the extent that the withdrawal reimburses amounts invested by the family. For example, when a family member retires, the amount received by the family from a retirement investment plan is not counted as income until the family has received payments equal to the amount the family member deposited into the retirement investment plan.

Jointly Owned Assets

The regulation at 24 CFR 5.609(a)(4) specifies that annual income includes "amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access."

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If an asset is owned by more than one person and any family member has unrestricted access to the asset, the AHA will count the full value of the asset. A family member has unrestricted access to an asset when he or she can legally dispose of the asset without the consent of any of the other owners.

If an asset is owned by more than one person, including a family member, but the family member does not have unrestricted access to the asset, the AHA will prorate the asset according to the percentage of ownership. If no percentage is specified or provided for by state or local law, the AHA will prorate the asset evenly among all owners.

Assets Disposed Of for Less than Fair Market Value [24 CFR 5.603(b)]

HUD regulations require the Augusta Housing Authority to count as a current asset any business or family asset that was disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years prior to the effective date of the examination/reexamination, except as noted below.

Minimum Threshold

The *HVC Guidebook* permits the Augusta Housing Authority to set a threshold below which assets disposed of for less than fair market value will not be counted [HCV GB, p. 5-27].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not include the value of assets disposed of for less than fair market value unless the cumulative fair market value of all assets disposed of during the past two years exceeds the gross amount received for the assets by more than \$1,000.

When the two-year period expires, the income assigned to the disposed asset(s) also expires. If the two-year period ends between annual recertifications, the family may request an interim recertification to eliminate consideration of the asset(s).

Assets placed by the family in nonrevocable trusts are considered assets disposed of for less than fair market value except when the assets placed in trust were received through settlements or judgments.

Separation or Divorce

The regulation also specifies that assets are not considered disposed of for less than fair market value if they are disposed of as part of a separation or divorce settlement and the applicant or tenant receives important consideration not measurable in dollar terms.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

All assets disposed of as part of a separation or divorce settlement will be considered assets for which important consideration not measurable in monetary terms has been received. In order to qualify for this exemption, a family member must be subject to a formal separation or divorce settlement agreement established through arbitration, mediation, or court order.

Foreclosure or Bankruptcy

Assets are not considered disposed of for less than fair market value when the disposition is the result of a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale.

Family Declaration

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Families must sign a declaration form at initial certification and each annual recertification identifying all assets that have been disposed of for less than fair market value or declaring that no assets have been disposed of for less than fair market value. The AHA may verify the value of the assets disposed of if other information available to the AHA does not appear to agree with the information reported by the family.

Types of Assets

Checking and Savings Accounts

For regular checking accounts and savings accounts, *cash value* has the same meaning as *market value*. If a checking account does not bear interest, the anticipated income from the account is zero.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In determining the value of a checking account, the AHA will use the average monthly balance for the last six months.

In determining the value of a savings account, the AHA will use the current balance.

In determining the anticipated income from an interest-bearing checking or savings account, the AHA will multiply the value of the account by the current rate of interest paid on the account.

Investment Accounts Such as Stocks, Bonds, Saving Certificates, and Money Market Funds

Interest or dividends earned by investment accounts are counted as actual income from assets even when the earnings are reinvested. The cash value of such an asset is determined by deducting from the market value any broker fees, penalties for early withdrawal, or other costs of converting the asset to cash.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In determining the market value of an investment account, the AHA will use the value of the account on the most recent investment report.

How anticipated income from an investment account will be calculated depends on whether the rate of return is known. For assets that are held in an investment account with a known rate of return (e.g., savings certificates), asset income will be calculated based on that known rate (market value multiplied by rate of earnings). When the anticipated rate of return is not known (e.g., stocks), the AHA will calculate asset income based on the earnings for the most recent reporting period.

Equity in Real Property or Other Capital Investments

Equity (cash value) in a property or other capital asset is the estimated current market value of the asset less the unpaid balance on all loans secured by the asset and reasonable costs (such as broker fees) that would be incurred in selling the asset [HCV GB, p. 5-25].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In determining the equity, the AHA will determine market value by examining recent sales of at least three properties in the surrounding or similar neighborhood that possess comparable factors that affect market value.

The AHA will first use the payoff amount for the loan (mortgage) as the unpaid balance to calculate equity. If the payoff amount is not available, the AHA will use the basic loan balance information to deduct from the market value in the equity calculation.

Equity in real property and other capital investments is considered in the calculation of asset income **except** for the following types of assets:

- Equity accounts in HUD homeownership programs [24 CFR 5.603(b)]
- The value of a home currently being purchased with assistance under the HCV program Homeownership Option for the first 10 years after the purchase date of the home [24 CFR 5.603(b), Notice PIH 2012-3]
- Equity in owner-occupied cooperatives and manufactured homes in which the family lives [HCV GB, p. 5-25]
- Equity in real property when a family member's main occupation is real estate [HCV GB, p. 5-25]. This real estate is considered a business asset, and income related to this asset will be calculated as described in section 6-I.F.
- Interests in Indian Trust lands [24 CFR 5.603(b)]
- Real property and capital assets that are part of an active business or farming operation [HCV GB, p. 5-25]

The AHA must also deduct from the equity the reasonable costs for converting the asset to cash. Using the formula for calculating equity specified above, the net cash value of real property is the market value of the loan (mortgage) minus the expenses to convert to cash [Notice PIH 2012-3].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For the purposes of calculating expenses to convert to cash for real property, the AHA will use ten percent (10%) of the market value of the home.

A family may have real property as an asset in two ways: (1) owning the property itself and (2) holding a mortgage or deed of trust on the property. In the case of a property owned by a family member, the anticipated asset income generally will be in the form of rent or other payment for the use of the property. If the property generates no income, actual anticipated income from the asset will be zero.

In the case of a mortgage or deed of trust held by a family member, the outstanding balance (unpaid principal) is the cash value of the asset. The interest portion only of payments made to the family in accordance with the terms of the mortgage or deed of trust is counted as anticipated asset income.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In the case of capital investments owned jointly with others not living in a family's unit, a prorated share of the property's cash value will be counted as an asset unless the AHA determines that the family receives no income from the property and is unable to sell or otherwise convert the asset to cash.

Trusts

A *trust* is a legal arrangement generally regulated by state law in which one party (the creator or grantor) transfers property to a second party (the trustee) who holds the property for the benefit of one or more third parties (the beneficiaries).

Revocable Trusts

If any member of a family has the right to withdraw the funds in a trust, the value of the trust is considered an asset [HCV GB, p. 5-25]. Any income earned as a result of investment of trust funds is counted as actual asset income, whether the income is paid to the family or deposited in the trust.

Nonrevocable Trusts

In cases where a trust is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of a family, the value of the trust fund is not considered an asset. However, any income distributed to the family from such a trust is counted as a periodic payment or a lump-sum receipt, as appropriate [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. (Periodic payments are covered in section 6-I.H. Lump-sum receipts are discussed earlier in this section.)

Retirement Accounts

Company Retirement/Pension Accounts

In order to correctly include or exclude as an asset any amount held in a company retirement or pension account by an employed person, the Augusta Housing Authority must know whether the money is accessible before retirement [HCV GB, p. 5-26].

While a family member is employed, only the amount the family member can withdraw without retiring or terminating employment is counted as an asset [HCV GB, p. 5-26].

After a family member retires or terminates employment, any amount distributed to the family member is counted as a periodic payment or a lump-sum receipt, as appropriate [HCV GB, p. 5-26], except to the extent that it represents funds invested in the account by the family member. (For more on periodic payments, see section 6-I.H.) The balance in the account is counted as an asset only if it remains accessible to the family member.

IRA, Keogh, and Similar Retirement Savings Accounts

IRA, Keogh, and similar retirement savings accounts are counted as assets even though early withdrawal would result in a penalty [HCV GB, p. 5-25].

Personal Property

Personal property held as an investment, such as gems, jewelry, coin collections, antique cars, etc., is considered an asset [HCV GB, p. 5-25].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In determining the value of personal property held as an investment, the AHA will use the family's estimate of the value. The AHA may obtain an appraisal to confirm the value of the asset if there is reason to believe that the family's estimated value is off by \$50 or more. The family must cooperate with the appraiser, but cannot be charged any costs related to the appraisal.

Generally, personal property held as an investment generates no income until it is disposed of. If regular income is generated (e.g., income from renting the personal property), the amount that is expected to be earned in the coming year is counted as actual income from the asset.

Necessary items of personal property are not considered assets [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Necessary personal property consists of only those items not held as an investment, and may include clothing, furniture, household furnishings, jewelry, and vehicles, including those specially equipped for persons with disabilities.

Life Insurance

The cash value of a life insurance policy available to a family member before death, such as a whole life or universal life policy is included in the calculation of the value of the family's assets [HCV GB 5-25]. The cash value is the surrender value. If such a policy earns dividends or interest that the family could elect to receive, the anticipated amount of dividends or interest is counted as income from the asset whether or not the family actually receives it.

6-I.H. PERIODIC PAYMENTS

Periodic payments are forms of income received on a regular basis. HUD regulations specify periodic payments that are and are not included in annual income.

Periodic Payments Included in Annual Income

- Periodic payments from sources such as social security, unemployment and welfare assistance, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, and pensions. However, periodic payments from retirement accounts, annuities, and similar forms of investments are counted only after they exceed the amount contributed by the family [24 CFR 5.609(b)(4) and (b)(3)].
- Disability or death benefits and lottery receipts paid periodically, rather than in a single lump sum [24 CFR 5.609(b)(4) and HCV, p. 5-14].

Lump-Sum Payments for the Delayed Start of a Periodic Payment

Most lump-sums received as a result of delays in processing periodic payments, such as unemployment or welfare assistance, are counted as income. However, lump-sum receipts for the delayed start of periodic social security or supplemental security income (SSI) payments are not counted as income. Additionally, any deferred disability benefits that are received in a lump-sum or in prospective monthly amounts from the Department of Veterans Affairs are to be excluded from annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(14)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When a delayed-start payment for incomes such as unemployment or welfare assistance is received and reported during the period in which the AHA is processing an annual reexamination, the AHA will adjust the family share and AHA subsidy retroactively for the period the payment was intended to cover. The family may pay in full any amount due or request to enter into a repayment agreement with the AHA.

Treatment of Overpayment Deductions from Social Security Benefits

The Augusta Housing Authority must make a special calculation of annual income when the Social Security Administration (SSA) overpays an individual, resulting in a withholding or deduction from his or her benefit amount until the overpayment is paid in full. The amount and duration of the withholding will vary depending on the amount of the overpayment and the percent of the benefit rate withheld. Regardless of the amount withheld or the length of the withholding period, the Augusta Housing Authority must use the reduced benefit amount after deducting only the amount of the overpayment withholding from the gross benefit amount [Notice PIH 2012-10].

Periodic Payments Excluded from Annual Income

- Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the assisted family, who are unable to live alone) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(2)]. Kinship guardianship assistance payments (Kin-GAP) and other similar guardianship payments are treated the same as foster care payments and are likewise excluded from annual income [Notice PIH 2012-1].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will exclude payments for the care of foster children and foster adults only if the care is provided through an official arrangement with a local welfare agency [HCV GB, p. 5-18].

- Amounts paid by a state agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home [24 CFR 5.609(c)(16)].
- Amounts received under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 1626(c)) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)].
- Amounts received under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858q) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)].
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refund payments (26 U.S.C. 32(j)) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17)].
Note: EITC may be paid periodically if the family elects to receive the amount due as part of payroll payments from an employer.
- Lump-sums received as a result of delays in processing Social Security and SSI payments (see section 6-I.H.) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(14)].
- Lump-sums or prospective monthly amounts received as deferred disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [24 CFR 5.609(c)(14)].

6-I.I. PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS

Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment and disability compensation, worker's compensation, and severance pay, are counted as income [24 CFR 5.609(b)(5)] if they are received either in the form of periodic payments or in the form of a lump-sum amount or prospective monthly amounts for the delayed start of a periodic payment. If they are received in a one-time lump sum (as a settlement, for instance), they are treated as lump-sum receipts [24 CFR 5.609(c)(3)]. (See also the discussion of periodic payments in section 6-I.H and the discussion of lump-sum receipts in section 6-I.G.)

6-I.J. WELFARE ASSISTANCE

Overview

Welfare assistance is counted in annual income. Welfare assistance includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and any payments to individuals or families based on need that are made under programs funded separately or jointly by federal, state, or local governments [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

Sanctions Resulting in the Reduction of Welfare Benefits [24 CFR 5.615]

The Augusta Housing Authority must make a special calculation of annual income when the welfare agency imposes certain sanctions on certain families. The full text of the regulation at 24 CFR 5.615 is provided as Exhibit 6-5. The requirements are summarized below. This rule applies only if a family was receiving HCV assistance at the time the sanction was imposed.

Covered Families

The families covered by 24 CFR 5.615 are those “who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance benefits (‘welfare benefits’) from a State or other public agency (‘welfare agency’) under a program for which Federal, State or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for such assistance” [24 CFR 5.615(b)]

Imputed Income

When a welfare agency imposes a sanction that reduces a family’s welfare income because the family commits fraud or fails to comply with the agency’s economic self-sufficiency program or work activities requirement, the Augusta Housing Authority must include in annual income “imputed” welfare income. The Augusta Housing Authority must request that the welfare agency provide the reason for the reduction of benefits and the amount of the reduction of benefits. The imputed welfare income is the amount that the benefits were reduced as a result of the sanction.

This requirement does not apply to reductions in welfare benefits: (1) at the expiration of the lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits, (2) if a family member is unable to find employment even though the family member has complied with the welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements, or (3) because a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements [24 CFR 5.615(b)(2)].

Offsets

The amount of the imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income the family begins to receive after the sanction is imposed. When the additional income equals or exceeds the imputed welfare income, the imputed income is reduced to zero [24 CFR 5.615(c)(4)].

6-I.K. PERIODIC AND DETERMINABLE ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 5.609(b)(7)]

Annual income includes periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from organizations or from persons not residing with an assisted family.

Alimony and Child Support

The Augusta Housing Authority must count alimony or child support payments awarded as part of a divorce or separation agreement.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will count court-awarded amounts for alimony and child support unless the AHA verifies that: (1) the payments are not being made, and (2) the family has made reasonable efforts to collect amounts due, including filing with courts or agencies responsible for enforcing payments [HCV GB, pp. 5-23 and 5-47].

The AHA will accept verification that the family is receiving an amount less than the award if the Augusta Housing Authority receives verification from the agency responsible for enforcement or collection. The AHA may average alimony and child support when the actual amounts received fluctuates from month to month.

Families who do not have court-awarded alimony and child support awards are not required to seek a court award and are not required to take independent legal action to obtain collection.

Regular Contributions or Gifts

The Augusta Housing Authority must count as income regular monetary and nonmonetary contributions or gifts from persons not residing with an assisted family [24 CFR 5.609(b)(7)]. Temporary, nonrecurring, or sporadic income and gifts are not counted [24 CFR 5.609(c)(9)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Examples of regular contributions include: (1) regular payment of a family's bills (e.g., utilities, telephone, rent, credit cards, and car payments), (2) cash or other liquid assets provided to any family member on a regular basis, and (3) "in-kind" contributions such as groceries and clothing provided to a family on a regular basis.

Nonmonetary contributions will be valued at the cost of purchasing the items, as determined by the AHA. For contributions that may vary from month to month (e.g., utility payments), the AHA will include an average amount based upon past history.

6-I.L. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9); Notice PIH 2015-21]

In 2005, Congress passed a law (for Section 8 programs only) requiring that certain student financial assistance be included in annual income. Prior to that, the full amount of student financial assistance was excluded. For some students, the full exclusion still applies.

Student Financial Assistance Included in Annual Income [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9); FR 4/10/06; Notice PIH 2015-21]

The regulation requiring the inclusion of certain student financial assistance applies only to students who satisfy all of the following conditions:

- They are enrolled in an institution of higher education, as defined under the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965.
- They are seeking or receiving Section 8 assistance on their own—that is, apart from their parents—through the HCV program, the project-based voucher program, or the moderate rehabilitation program.
- They are under 24 years of age **OR** they have no dependent children.

For students who satisfy these three conditions, any financial assistance in excess of tuition and any other required fees and charges received: (1) under the 1965 HEA, (2) from a private source, or (3) from an institution of higher education, as defined under the 1965 HEA, must be included in annual income.

To determine annual income in accordance with the above requirements, the Augusta Housing Authority will use the definitions of *dependent child*, *institution of higher education*, and *parents* in section 3-II.E, along with the following definitions [FR 4/10/06, pp. 18148-18150]:

- *Assistance under the Higher Education Act of 1965* includes Pell Grants, Federal Supplement Educational Opportunity Grants, Academic Achievement Incentive Scholarships, State Assistance under the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program, the Robert G. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program, and Federal Work Study programs.
- *Assistance from private sources* means assistance from nongovernmental sources, including parents, guardians, and other persons not residing with the student in an HCV assisted unit.
- *Tuition and fees* are defined in the same manner in which the Department of Education defines *tuition and fees* [Notice PIH 2015-21].
 - This is the amount of tuition and required fees covering a full academic year most frequently charged to students.
 - The amount represents what a typical student would be charged and may not be the same for all students at an institution.
 - If tuition is charged on a per-credit-hour basis, the average full-time credit hour load for an academic year is used to estimate average tuition.
 - Required fees include all fixed-sum charges that are required of a large proportion of all students. Examples include, but are not limited to, writing and science lab fees and fees specific to the student's major or program (i.e., nursing program).

- Expenses related to attending an institution of higher education must **not** be included as tuition. Examples include, but are not limited to, room and board, books, supplies, meal plans, transportation and parking, student health insurance plans, and other non-fixed-sum charges.

Student Financial Assistance Excluded from Annual Income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(6)]

Any student financial assistance not subject to inclusion under 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9) is fully excluded from annual income under 24 CFR 5.609(c)(6), whether it is paid directly to the student or to the educational institution the student is attending. This includes any financial assistance received by:

- Students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving Section 8 assistance
- Students who are enrolled in an educational institution that does **not** meet the 1965 HEA definition of *institution of higher education*
- Students who are over 23 **AND** have at least one dependent child, as defined in section 3-II.E
- Students who are receiving financial assistance through a governmental program not authorized under the 1965 HEA.

6-I.M. ADDITIONAL EXCLUSIONS FROM ANNUAL INCOME

Other exclusions contained in 24 CFR 5.609(c) that have not been discussed earlier in this chapter include the following:

- Reimbursement of medical expenses [24 CFR 5.609(c)(4)]
- Amounts received by participants in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program [24 CFR 5.609(c)(8)(iii)]
- Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS) [(24 CFR 5.609(c)(8)(ii)]
- Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era [24 CFR 5.609(c)(10)]
- Adoption assistance payments in excess of \$480 per adopted child [24 CFR 5.609(c)(12)]
- Refunds or rebates on property taxes paid on the dwelling unit [24 CFR 5.609(c)(15)]
- Amounts paid by a state agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home [24 CFR 5.609(c)(16)]
- Amounts specifically excluded by any other federal statute [24 CFR 5.609(c)(17), FR Notice 5/20/14]. HUD publishes an updated list of these exclusions periodically. It includes:
 - (a) The value of the allotment provided to an eligible household under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2017 (b))
 - (b) Benefits under Section 1780 of the School Lunch Act and Child Nutrition Act of 1966, including WIC
 - (c) Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5044(g), 5058)
 - (d) Payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(c))
 - (e) Income derived from certain submarginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes (25 U.S.C. 459e)
 - (f) Payments or allowances made under the Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 8624(f))
 - (g) Payments received under programs funded in whole or in part under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2931)
 - (h) Deferred disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, whether received as a lump sum or in monthly prospective amounts
 - (i) Income derived from the disposition of funds to the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians (Pub. L. 94-540, 90 Stat. 2503-04)

- (j) Payments, funds, or distributions authorized, established, or directed by the Seneca Nation Settlement Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 1774f(b))
- (k) A lump sum or periodic payment received by an individual Indian pursuant to the Class Action Settlement Agreement in the United States District Court case entitled *Elouise Cobell et al. v. Ken Salazar et al.*, for a period of one year from the time of receipt of that payment as provided in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010
- (l) The first \$2,000 of per capita shares received from judgment funds awarded by the Indian Claims Commission or the U. S. Claims Court, the interests of individual Indians in trust or restricted lands, including the first \$2,000 per year of income received by individual Indians from funds derived from interests held in such trust or restricted lands (25 U.S.C. 1407-1408)
- (m) Benefits under the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act of 2010 (only applies to Native American housing programs)
- (n) Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1985 (42 U.S.C. 3056(f))
- (o) Payments received on or after January 1, 1989, from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in *In Re Agent Orange* product liability litigation, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.)
- (p) Payments received under 38 U.S.C. 1833(c) to children of Vietnam veterans born with spinal bifida, children of women Vietnam veterans born with certain birth defects, and children of certain Korean service veterans born with spinal bifida
- (q) Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (25 U.S.C. 1721)
- (r) The value of any child care provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858q)
- (s) Earned income tax credit (EITC) refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991 (26 U.S.C. 32(j))
- (t) Payments by the Indian Claims Commission to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakima Indian Nation or the Apache Tribe of Mescalero Reservation (Pub. L. 95-433)
- (u) Amounts of scholarships funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965j, including awards under federal work-study programs or under the Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs (20 U.S.C. 1087uu). For Section 8 programs, the exception found in § 237 of Public Law 109-249 applies and requires that the amount of financial assistance in excess of tuition and mandatory fees shall be considered income in accordance with the provisions codified at 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9), except for those persons with disabilities as defined by 42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)(3)(E) (Pub. L. 109-249) (See Section 6-I.L. for exceptions.)
- (v) Allowances, earnings and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12637(d))

- (w) Any amount of crime victim compensation (under the Victims of Crime Act) received through crime victim assistance (or payment or reimbursement of the cost of such assistance) as determined under the Victims of Crime Act because of the commission of a crime against the applicant under the Victims of Crime Act (42 U.S.C. 10602)
- (x) Any amounts in an "individual development account" as provided by the Assets for Independence Act, as amended in 2002
- (y) Payments made from the proceeds of Indian tribal trust cases as described in Notice PIH 2013-30, "Exclusion from Income of Payments under Recent Tribal Trust Settlements" (25 U.S.C. 117b(a))
- (z) Major disaster and emergency assistance received under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and comparable disaster assistance provided by states, local governments, and disaster assistance organizations

PART II: ADJUSTED INCOME

6-II.A. INTRODUCTION

Overview

HUD regulations require the Augusta Housing Authority to deduct from annual income any of five mandatory deductions for which a family qualifies. The resulting amount is the family's adjusted income. Mandatory deductions are found in 24 CFR 5.611.

5.611(a) Mandatory deductions. In determining adjusted income, the responsible entity [PHA] must deduct the following amounts from annual income:

- (1) \$480 for each dependent;
- (2) \$400 for any elderly family or disabled family;
- (3) The sum of the following, to the extent the sum exceeds three percent of annual income:
 - (i) Unreimbursed medical expenses of any elderly family or disabled family;
 - (ii) Unreimbursed reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expenses for each member of the family who is a person with disabilities, to the extent necessary to enable any member of the family (including the member who is a person with disabilities) to be employed. This deduction may not exceed the earned income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older and who are able to work because of such attendant care or auxiliary apparatus; and
- (4) Any reasonable child care expenses necessary to enable a member of the family to be employed or to further his or her education.

This part covers policies related to these mandatory deductions. Verification requirements related to these deductions are found in Chapter 7.

Anticipating Expenses

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Generally, the AHA will use current circumstances to anticipate expenses. When possible, for costs that are expected to fluctuate during the year (e.g., child care during school and non-school periods and cyclical medical expenses), the AHA will estimate costs based on historic data and known future costs.

If a family has an accumulated debt for medical or disability assistance expenses, the AHA will include as an eligible expense the portion of the debt that the family expects to pay during the period for which the income determination is being made. However, amounts previously deducted will not be allowed even if the amounts were not paid as expected in a preceding period. The AHA may require the family to provide documentation of payments made in the preceding year.

6-II.B. DEPENDENT DEDUCTION

An allowance of \$480 is deducted from annual income for each dependent [24 CFR 5.611(a)(1)]. *Dependent* is defined as any family member other than the head, spouse, or cohead who is under the age of 18 or who is 18 or older and is a person with disabilities or a full-time student. Foster children, foster adults, and live-in aides are never considered dependents [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

6-II.C. ELDERLY OR DISABLED FAMILY DEDUCTION

A single deduction of \$400 is taken for any elderly or disabled family [24 CFR 5.611(a)(2)]. An *elderly family* is a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is 62 years of age or older, and a *disabled family* is a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person with disabilities [24 CFR 5.403].

6-II.D. MEDICAL EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(i)]

Unreimbursed medical expenses may be deducted to the extent that, in combination with any disability assistance expenses, they exceed three percent of annual income.

The medical expense deduction is permitted only for families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is at least 62 or is a person with disabilities. If a family is eligible for a medical expense deduction, the medical expenses of all family members are counted [VG, p. 28].

Definition of *Medical Expenses*

HUD regulations define *medical expenses* at 24 CFR 5.603(b) to mean “medical expenses, including medical insurance premiums, that are anticipated during the period for which annual income is computed, and that are not covered by insurance.”

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The most current IRS Publication 502, *Medical and Dental Expenses*, will be used as a reference to determine the costs that qualify as medical expenses.

Summary of Allowable Medical Expenses from IRS Publication 502	
Services of medical professionals	Substance abuse treatment programs
Surgery and medical procedures that are necessary, legal, non-cosmetic	Psychiatric treatment
Services of medical facilities	Ambulance services and some costs of transportation related to medical expenses
Hospitalization, long-term care, and in-home nursing services	The cost and care of necessary equipment related to a medical condition (e.g., eyeglasses/lenses, hearing aids, crutches, and artificial teeth)
Prescription medicines and insulin, but <u>not</u> nonprescription medicines even if recommended by a doctor	Cost and continuing care of necessary service animals
Improvements to housing directly related to medical needs (e.g., ramps for a wheel chair, handrails)	Medical insurance premiums or the cost of a health maintenance organization (HMO)
Note: This chart provides a summary of eligible medical expenses only. Detailed information is provided in IRS Publication 502. Medical expenses are considered only to the extent they are not reimbursed by insurance or some other source.	

Families That Qualify for Both Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

This policy applies only to families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 or older or is a person with disabilities.

When expenses anticipated by a family could be defined as either medical or disability assistance expenses, the AHA will consider them medical expenses unless it is clear that the expenses are incurred exclusively to enable a person with disabilities to work.

6-II.E. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.603(b) and 24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(ii)]

Reasonable expenses for attendant care and auxiliary apparatus for a disabled family member may be deducted if they: (1) are necessary to enable a family member 18 years or older to work, (2) are not paid to a family member or reimbursed by an outside source, (3) in combination with any medical expenses, exceed three percent of annual income, and (4) do not exceed the earned income received by the family member who is enabled to work.

Earned Income Limit on the Disability Assistance Expense Deduction

A family can qualify for the disability assistance expense deduction only if at least one family member (who may be the person with disabilities) is enabled to work [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

The disability expense deduction is capped by the amount of “earned income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older and who are able to work” because of the expense [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(ii)]. The earned income used for this purpose is the amount verified before any earned income disallowances or income exclusions are applied.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must identify the family members enabled to work as a result of the disability assistance expenses. In evaluating the family’s request, the AHA will consider factors such as how the work schedule of the relevant family members relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the relationship of the family members to the person with disabilities, and any special needs of the person with disabilities that might determine which family members are enabled to work.

When the AHA determines that the disability assistance expenses enable more than one family member to work, the expenses will be capped by the sum of the family members’ incomes.

Eligible Disability Expenses

Examples of auxiliary apparatus are provided in the *HCV Guidebook* as follows: “Auxiliary apparatus are items such as wheelchairs, ramps, adaptations to vehicles, or special equipment to enable a blind person to read or type, but only if these items are directly related to permitting the disabled person or other family member to work” [HCV GB, p. 5-30].

HUD advises the Augusta Housing Authority to further define and describe auxiliary apparatus [VG, p. 30].

Eligible Auxiliary Apparatus

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Expenses incurred for maintaining or repairing an auxiliary apparatus are eligible. In the case of an apparatus that is specially adapted to accommodate a person with disabilities (e.g., a vehicle or computer), the cost to maintain the special adaptations (but not maintenance of the apparatus itself) is an eligible expense. The cost of service animals trained to give assistance to persons with disabilities, including the cost of acquiring the animal, veterinary care, food, grooming, and other continuing costs of care, will be included.

Eligible Attendant Care

The family determines the type of attendant care that is appropriate for the person with disabilities.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Attendant care includes, but is not limited to, reasonable costs for home medical care, nursing services, in-home or center-based care services, interpreters for persons with hearing impairments, and readers for persons with visual disabilities.

Attendant care expenses will be included for the period that the person enabled to work is employed plus reasonable transportation time. The cost of general housekeeping and personal services is not an eligible attendant care expense. However, if the person enabled to work is the person with disabilities, personal services necessary to enable the person with disabilities to work are eligible.

If the care attendant also provides other services to the family, the AHA will prorate the cost and allow only that portion of the expenses attributable to attendant care that enables a family member to work. For example, if the care provider also cares for a child who is not the person with disabilities, the cost of care must be prorated. Unless otherwise specified by the care provider, the calculation will be based upon the number of hours spent in each activity and/or the number of persons under care.

Payments to Family Members

No disability assistance expenses may be deducted for payments to a member of an assisted family [24 CFR 5.603(b)]. However, expenses paid to a relative who is not a member of the assisted family may be deducted if they are not reimbursed by an outside source.

Necessary and Reasonable Expenses

The family determines the type of care or auxiliary apparatus to be provided and must describe how the expenses enable a family member to work. The family must certify that the disability assistance expenses are necessary and are not paid or reimbursed by any other source.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA determines the reasonableness of the expenses based on typical costs of care or apparatus in the locality. To establish typical costs, the AHA will collect information from organizations that provide services and support to persons with disabilities. A family may present, and the AHA will consider, the family's justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area.

Families That Qualify for Both Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

This policy applies only to families in which the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 or older or is a person with disabilities.

When expenses anticipated by a family could be defined as either medical or disability assistance expenses, the AHA will consider them medical expenses unless it is clear that the expenses are incurred exclusively to enable a person with disabilities to work.

6-II.F. CHILD CARE EXPENSE DEDUCTION

HUD defines *child care expenses* at 24 CFR 5.603(b) as “amounts anticipated to be paid by the family for the care of children under 13 years of age during the period for which annual income is computed, but only where such care is necessary to enable a family member to actively seek employment, be gainfully employed, or to further his or her education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. The amount deducted shall reflect reasonable charges for child care. In the case of child care necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.”

Clarifying the Meaning of *Child* for This Deduction

Child care expenses do not include child support payments made to another on behalf of a minor who is not living in an assisted family’s household [VG, p. 26]. However, child care expenses for foster children that are living in the assisted family’s household are included when determining the family’s child care expenses [HCV GB, p. 5-29].

Qualifying for the Deduction

Determining Who Is Enabled to Pursue an Eligible Activity

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must identify the family member(s) enabled to pursue an eligible activity. The term *eligible activity* in this section means any of the activities that may make the family eligible for a child care deduction (seeking work, pursuing an education, or being gainfully employed).

In evaluating the family’s request, the AHA will consider factors such as how the schedule for the claimed activity relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the relationship of the family member(s) to the child, and any special needs of the child that might help determine which family member is enabled to pursue an eligible activity.

Seeking Work

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to seek employment, the family must provide evidence of the family member’s efforts to obtain employment at each reexamination. The deduction may be reduced or denied if the family member’s job search efforts are not commensurate with the child care expense being allowed by the AHA.

Furthering Education

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to further his or her education, the member must be enrolled in school (academic or vocational) or participating in a formal training program. The family member is not required to be a full-time student, but the time spent in educational activities must be commensurate with the child care claimed.

Being Gainfully Employed

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to be gainfully employed, the family must provide evidence of the family member's employment during the time that child care is being provided. Gainful employment is any legal work activity (full- or part-time) for which a family member is compensated.

Earned Income Limit on Child Care Expense Deduction

When a family member looks for work or furthers his or her education, there is no cap on the amount that may be deducted for child care – although the care must still be necessary and reasonable. However, when child care enables a family member to work, the deduction is capped by “the amount of employment income that is included in annual income” [24 CFR 5.603(b)].

The earned income used for this purpose is the amount of earned income verified after any earned income disallowances or income exclusions are applied.

When the person who is enabled to work is a person with disabilities who receives the earned income disallowance (EID) or a full-time student whose earned income above \$480 is excluded, child care costs related to enabling a family member to work may not exceed the portion of the person's earned income that actually is included in annual income. For example, if a family member who qualifies for the EID makes \$15,000 but because of the EID only \$5,000 is included in annual income, child care expenses are limited to \$5,000.

The PHA must not limit the deduction to the least expensive type of child care. If the care allows the family to pursue more than one eligible activity, including work, the cap is calculated in proportion to the amount of time spent working [HCV GB, p. 5-30].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When the child care expense being claimed is to enable a family member to work, only one family member's income will be considered for a given period of time. When more than one family member works during a given period, the AHA generally will limit allowable child care expenses to the earned income of the lowest-paid member. The family may provide information that supports a request to designate another family member as the person enabled to work.

Eligible Child Care Expenses

The type of care to be provided is determined by the assisted family. The Augusta Housing Authority may not refuse to give a family the child care expense deduction because there is an adult family member in the household that may be available to provide child care [VG, p. 26].

Allowable Child Care Activities

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For school-age children, costs attributable to public or private school activities during standard school hours are not considered. Expenses incurred for supervised activities after school or during school holidays (e.g., summer day camp, after-school sports league) are allowable forms of child care.

The costs of general housekeeping and personal services are not eligible. Likewise, child care expenses paid to a family member who lives in the family's unit are not eligible; however, payments for child care to relatives who do not live in the unit are eligible.

If a child care provider also renders other services to a family or child care is used to enable a family member to conduct activities that are not eligible for consideration, the AHA will prorate the costs and allow only that portion of the expenses that is attributable to child care for eligible activities. For example, if the care provider also cares for a child with disabilities who is 13 or older, the cost of care will be prorated. Unless otherwise specified by the child care provider, the calculation will be based upon the number of hours spent in each activity and/or the number of persons under care.

Necessary and Reasonable Costs

Child care expenses will be considered necessary if: (1) a family adequately explains how the care enables a family member to work, actively seek employment, or further his or her education, and (2) the family certifies, and the child care provider verifies, that the expenses are not paid or reimbursed by any other source.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Child care expenses will be considered for the time required for the eligible activity plus reasonable transportation time. For child care that enables a family member to go to school, the time allowed may include not more than one study hour for each hour spent in class.

To establish the reasonableness of child care costs, the AHA will use the schedule of child care costs from the local welfare agency. Families may present, and the AHA will consider, justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area.

PART III: CALCULATING FAMILY SHARE AND PHA SUBSIDY

6-III.A. OVERVIEW OF RENT AND SUBSIDY CALCULATIONS

TTP Formula [24 CFR 5.628]

HUD regulations specify the formula for calculating the total tenant payment (TTP) for an assisted family. TTP is the highest of the following amounts, rounded to the nearest dollar:

- 30 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income (adjusted income is defined in Part II)
- 10 percent of the family's monthly gross income (annual income, as defined in Part I, divided by 12)
- The welfare rent (in as-paid states only)
- A minimum rent between \$0 and \$50 that is established by the PHA

The Augusta Housing Authority has authority to suspend and exempt families from minimum rent when a financial hardship exists, as defined in section 6-III.B.

The amount that a family pays for rent and utilities (the family share) will never be less than the family's TTP but may be greater than the TTP depending on the rent charged for the unit the family selects.

Welfare Rent [24 CFR 5.628]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy Welfare rent does not apply in this locality.

Minimum Rent [24 CFR 5.630]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The minimum rent for this locality is \$50.

Family Share [24 CFR 982.305(a)(5)]

If a family chooses a unit with a gross rent (rent to owner plus an allowance for tenant-paid utilities) that exceeds the Augusta Housing Authority's applicable payment standard: (1) the family will pay more than the TTP, and (2) at initial occupancy the Augusta Housing Authority may not approve the tenancy if it would require the family share to exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income. The income used for this determination must have been verified no earlier than 60 days before the family's voucher was issued. (For a discussion of the application of payment standards, see section 6-III.C.)

PHA Subsidy [24 CFR 982.505(b)]

The Augusta Housing Authority will pay a monthly housing assistance payment (HAP) for a family that is equal to the lower of (1) the applicable payment standard for the family minus the family's TTP or (2) the gross rent for the family's unit minus the TTP. (For a discussion of the application of payment standards, see section 6-III.C.)

Utility Reimbursement [24 CFR 982.514(b); 982.514(c)]

When the Augusta Housing Authority subsidy for a family exceeds the rent to owner, the family is due a utility reimbursement. HUD permits the Augusta Housing Authority to pay the reimbursement to the family or directly to the utility provider.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will make utility reimbursements to the family.

The PHA may make all utility reimbursement payments to qualifying families on a monthly basis or may make quarterly payments when the monthly reimbursement amount is \$15.00 or less. Reimbursements must be made once per calendar-year quarter and must be prorated if the family leaves the program in advance of its next quarterly reimbursement. The AHA must also adopt hardship policies for families for whom receiving quarterly reimbursement would create a financial hardship.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will issue all utility reimbursements monthly. The payments will be in the form of a debit card.

6-III.B. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AFFECTING MINIMUM RENT [24 CFR 5.630]

Overview

If the PHA establishes a minimum rent greater than zero, the PHA must grant an exemption from the minimum rent if a family is unable to pay the minimum rent because of financial hardship.

The financial hardship exemption applies only to families required to pay the minimum rent. If a family's TTP is higher than the minimum rent, the family is not eligible for a hardship exemption. If the PHA determines that a hardship exists, the family share is the highest of the remaining components of the family's calculated TTP.

HUD-Defined Financial Hardship

Financial hardship includes the following situations:

- (1) The family has lost eligibility for or is awaiting an eligibility determination for a federal, state, or local assistance program. This includes a family member who is a noncitizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act who would be entitled to public benefits but for Title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A hardship will be considered to exist only if the loss of eligibility has an impact on the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.

For a family waiting for a determination of eligibility, the hardship period will end as of the first of the month following: (1) implementation of assistance, if approved, or (2) the decision to deny assistance. A family whose request for assistance is denied may request a hardship exemption based upon one of the other allowable hardship circumstances.

- (2) The family would be evicted because it is unable to pay the minimum rent.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For a family to qualify under this provision, the cause of the potential eviction must be the family's failure to pay rent to the owner or tenant-paid utilities.

- (3) Family income has decreased because of changed family circumstances, including the loss of employment.

- (4) A death has occurred in the family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In order to qualify under this provision, a family must describe how the death has created a financial hardship (e.g., because of funeral-related expenses or the loss of the family member's income).

- (5) The family has experienced other circumstances determined by the PHA.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA has not established any additional hardship criteria.

Implementation of Hardship Exemption

Determination of Hardship

When a family requests a financial hardship exemption, the PHA must suspend the minimum rent requirement beginning the first of the month following the family's request.

The PHA then determines whether the financial hardship exists and whether the hardship is temporary or long-term.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA defines temporary hardship as a hardship expected to last 90 days or less.

Long-term hardship is defined as a hardship expected to last more than 90 days.

When the minimum rent is suspended, the family share reverts to the highest of the remaining components of the calculated TTP. The example below demonstrates the effect of the minimum rent exemption.

Example: Impact of Minimum Rent Exemption	
Assume the PHA has established a minimum rent of \$35.	
Family Share – No Hardship	Family Share – With Hardship
\$0 30% of monthly adjusted income	\$0 30% of monthly adjusted income
\$15 10% of monthly gross income	\$15 10% of monthly gross income
N/A Welfare rent	N/A Welfare rent
\$35 Minimum rent	\$35 Minimum rent
Minimum rent applies. TTP = \$35	Hardship exemption granted. TTP = \$15

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

To qualify for a hardship exemption, a family must submit a request for a hardship exemption in writing. The request must explain the nature of the hardship and how the hardship has affected the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.

The AHA will make the determination of hardship within 30 calendar days.

No Financial Hardship

If the PHA determines there is no financial hardship, the PHA will reinstate the minimum rent and require the family to repay the amounts suspended.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will require the family to repay the suspended amount within 30 calendar days of the AHA's notice that a hardship exemption has not been granted.

Temporary Hardship

If the PHA determines that a qualifying financial hardship is temporary, the PHA must suspend the minimum rent for the 90-day period beginning the first of the month following the date of the family's request for a hardship exemption.

At the end of the 90-day suspension period, the family must resume payment of the minimum rent and must repay the PHA the amounts suspended. HUD requires the PHA to offer a reasonable repayment agreement, on terms and conditions established by the PHA. The PHA also may determine that circumstances have changed and the hardship is now a long-term hardship.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with the procedures found in Chapter 16 of this plan.

Long-Term Hardship

If the PHA determines that the financial hardship is long-term, the PHA must exempt the family from the minimum rent requirement for so long as the hardship continues. The exemption will apply from the first of the month following the family's request until the end of the qualifying hardship. When the financial hardship has been determined to be long-term, the family is not required to repay the minimum rent.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The hardship period ends when any of the following circumstances apply:

- (1) At an interim or annual reexamination, the family's calculated TTP is greater than the minimum rent.
- (2) For hardship conditions based on loss of income, the hardship condition will continue to be recognized until new sources of income are received that are at least equal to the amount lost. For example, if a hardship is approved because a family no longer receives a \$60/month child support payment, the hardship will continue to exist until the family receives at least \$60/month in income from another source or once again begins to receive the child support.
- (3) For hardship conditions based upon hardship-related expenses, the minimum rent exemption will continue to be recognized until the cumulative amount exempted is equal to the expense incurred.

6-III.C. APPLYING PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.505; 982.503(b)]

Overview

The PHA's schedule of payment standards is used to calculate housing assistance payments for HCV families. This section covers the application of the Augusta Housing Authority's payment standards. The establishment and revision of the Augusta Housing Authority's payment standard schedule are covered in Chapter 16.

Payment standard is defined as "the maximum monthly assistance payment for a family assisted in the voucher program (before deducting the total tenant payment by the family)" [24 CFR 982.4(b)].

The payment standard for a family is the lower of (1) the payment standard for the family unit size, which is defined as the appropriate number of bedrooms for the family under the PHA's subsidy standards [24 CFR 982.4(b)], or (2) the payment standard for the size of the dwelling unit rented by the family.

If the PHA has established an exception payment standard for a designated part of a zip code area or FMR area and a family's unit is located in the exception area, the PHA must use the appropriate payment standard for the exception area.

The PHA is required to pay a monthly housing assistance payment (HAP) for a family that is the lower of (1) the payment standard for the family minus the family's TTP or (2) the gross rent for the family's unit minus the TTP.

If during the term of the HAP contract for a family's unit, the owner lowers the rent, the PHA will recalculate the HAP using the lower of the initial payment standard or the gross rent for the unit [HCV GB, p. 7-8].

Changes in Payment Standards

When the Augusta Housing Authority revises its payment standards during the term of the HAP contract for a family's unit, it will apply the new payment standards in accordance with HUD regulations.

Decreases

If the Augusta Housing Authority changes its payment standard schedule, resulting in a lower payment standard amount, during the term of a HAP contract, the Augusta Housing Authority is not required to reduce the payment standard used to calculate subsidy for families under HAP contract as long as the HAP contract remains in effect [FR Notice 11/16/16].

However, if the Augusta Housing Authority does choose to reduce the payment standard for families currently under HAP contract, the initial reduction to the payment standard may not be applied any earlier than the effective date of the family's second regular reexamination following the effective date of the decrease in the payment standard amount. At that point, the AHA may either reduce the payment standard to the current amount in effect on the AHA's payment standard schedule, or may reduce the payment standard to another amount that is higher than the normally applicable amount on the schedule. The AHA may also establish different policies for designated areas within their jurisdiction (e.g., different zip code areas).

In any case, the AHA must provide the family with at least 12 months' notice that the payment standard is being reduced before the effective date of the change. The AHA's policy on decreases in the payment standard during the term of the HAP contract apply to all families under HAP contract at the time of the effective date of the decrease in the payment standard within the designated area.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the AHA changes its payment standard schedule resulting in a lower payment standard amount, during the term of a HAP contract, the AHA will not reduce the payment standard used to calculate subsidy for families under HAP contract as long as the HAP contract remains in effect.

The AHA will not establish different policies for decreases in the payment standard for designated areas within their jurisdiction.

Increases

If the payment standard is increased during the term of the HAP contract, the increased payment standard will be used to calculate the monthly housing assistance payment for the family beginning on the effective date of the family's first regular reexamination on or after the effective date of the increase in the payment standard.

Families requiring or requesting interim reexaminations will not have their HAP payments calculated using the higher payment standard until their next annual reexamination [HCV GB, p. 7-8].

Changes in Family Unit Size

Irrespective of any increase or decrease in the payment standard, if the family unit size increases or decreases during the HAP contract term, the new family unit size must be used to determine the payment standard for the family beginning at the family's first regular reexamination following the change in family unit size.

Reasonable Accommodation

If a family requires a higher payment standard as a reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities, the Augusta Housing Authority is allowed to establish a higher payment standard for the family of not more than 120 percent of the published FMR.

6-III.D. APPLYING UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517]

Overview

A PHA-established utility allowance schedule is used in determining family share and PHA subsidy. A family's utility allowance is determined by the size of dwelling unit leased by a family or the voucher unit size for which the family qualifies using PHA subsidy standards, whichever is the lowest of the two. See Chapter 5 for information on the Augusta Housing Authority's subsidy standards.

For policies on establishing and updating utility allowances, see Chapter 16.

Reasonable Accommodation

HCV program regulations require a PHA to approve a utility allowance amount higher than shown on the PHA's schedule if a higher allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. For example, if a family member with a disability requires such an accommodation, the PHA will approve an allowance for air-conditioning, even if the PHA has determined that an allowance for air-conditioning generally is not needed.

The family must request the higher allowance and provide the PHA with an explanation of the need for the reasonable accommodation and information about the amount of additional allowance required [HCV GB, p. 18-8].

Utility Allowance Revisions

At reexamination, the PHA must use the PHA current utility allowance schedule [24 CFR 982.517(d)(2)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Revised utility allowances will be applied to a family's rent and subsidy calculations at the first annual reexamination that is effective after the allowance is adopted.

6-III.E. PRORATED ASSISTANCE FOR MIXED FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.520]

HUD regulations prohibit assistance to ineligible family members. A *mixed family* is one that includes at least one U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible family members. The PHA must prorate the assistance provided to a mixed family. The PHA will first determine assistance as if all family members were eligible and then prorate the assistance based upon the percentage of family members that actually are eligible. For example, if the PHA subsidy for a family is calculated at \$500 and two of four family members are ineligible, the PHA subsidy would be reduced to \$250.

EXHIBIT 6-1: ANNUAL INCOME INCLUSIONS

24 CFR 5.609

(a) Annual income means all amounts, monetary or not, which:

- (1) Go to, or on behalf of, the family head or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other family member; or
- (2) Are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date; and
- (3) Which are not specifically excluded in paragraph (c) of this section.
- (4) Annual income also means amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access.

(b) Annual income includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services;
- (2) The net income from the operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family;

(3) Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property. Expenditures for amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation is permitted only as authorized in paragraph (b)(2) of this section. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from an investment will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested by the family. Where the family has net family assets in excess of \$5,000, annual income shall include the greater of the actual income derived from all net family assets or a percentage of the value of such assets based on the current passbook savings rate, as determined by HUD;

(4) The full amount of periodic amounts received from Social Security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, disability or death benefits, and other similar types of periodic receipts, including a lump-sum amount or prospective monthly amounts for the delayed start of a periodic amount (except as provided in paragraph (c)(14) of this section);

(5) Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment and disability compensation, worker's compensation and severance pay (except as provided in paragraph (c)(3) of this section);

(6) Welfare assistance payments.

(i) Welfare assistance payments made under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program are included in annual income only to the extent such payments:

(A) Qualify as assistance under the TANF program definition at 45 CFR 260.31¹; and

(B) Are not otherwise excluded under paragraph (c) of this section.

(ii) If the welfare assistance payment includes an amount specifically designated for shelter and utilities that is subject to adjustment by the welfare assistance agency in accordance with the actual cost of shelter and utilities, the amount of welfare assistance income to be included as income shall consist of:

(A) The amount of the allowance or grant exclusive of the amount specifically designated for shelter or utilities; plus

(B) The maximum amount that the welfare assistance agency could in fact allow the family for shelter and utilities. If the family's welfare assistance is ratably reduced from the standard of need by applying a percentage, the amount calculated under this paragraph shall be the amount resulting from one application of the percentage.

(7) Periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from organizations or from persons not residing in the dwelling;

(8) All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces (except as provided in paragraph (c)(7) of this section)

(9) For section 8 programs only and as provided in 24 CFR 5.612, any financial assistance, in excess of amounts received for tuition, that an individual receives under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), from private sources, or from an institution of higher education (as defined under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)), shall be considered income to that individual, except that financial assistance described in this paragraph is not considered annual income for persons over the age of 23 with dependent children. For purposes of this paragraph, "financial assistance" does not include loan proceeds for the purpose of determining income.

HHS DEFINITION OF "ASSISTANCE"

45 CFR: GENERAL TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

260.31 What does the term "assistance" mean?

(a)(1) The term "assistance" includes cash, payments, vouchers, and other forms of benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs (i.e., for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses).

(2) It includes such benefits even when they are:

(i) Provided in the form of payments by a TANF agency, or other agency on its behalf, to individual recipients; and

(ii) Conditioned on participation in work experience or community service (or any other work activity under 261.30 of this chapter).

¹ Text of 45 CFR 260.31 follows.

(3) Except where excluded under paragraph (b) of this section, it also includes supportive services such as transportation and child care provided to families who are not employed.

(b) [The definition of “assistance”] excludes: (1) Nonrecurrent, short-term benefits that:

(i) Are designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need;

(ii) Are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; and

(iii) Will not extend beyond four months.

(2) Work subsidies (i.e., payments to employers or third parties to help cover the costs of employee wages, benefits, supervision, and training);

(3) Supportive services such as child care and transportation provided to families who are employed;

(4) Refundable earned income tax credits;

(5) Contributions to, and distributions from, Individual Development Accounts;

(6) Services such as counseling, case management, peer support, child care information and referral, transitional services, job retention, job advancement, and other employment-related services that do not provide basic income support; and

(7) Transportation benefits provided under a Job Access or Reverse Commute project, pursuant to section 404(k) of [the Social Security] Act, to an individual who is not otherwise receiving assistance.

EXHIBIT 6-2: ANNUAL INCOME EXCLUSIONS

24 CFR 5.609

(c) Annual income does not include the following:

- (1) Income from employment of children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years;
- (2) Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone);
- (3) Lump-sum additions to family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance and worker's compensation), capital gains and settlement for personal or property losses (except as provided in paragraph (b)(5) of this section);
- (4) Amounts received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of medical expenses for any family member;
- (5) Income of a live-in aide, as defined in Sec. 5.403;
- (6) Subject to paragraph (b)(9) of this section, the full amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution;
- (7) The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire;
- (8) (i) Amounts received under training programs funded by HUD;
(ii) Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS);
- (iii) Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred (special equipment, clothing, transportation, child care, etc.) and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program;
- (iv) Amounts received under a resident service stipend. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed \$200 per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, resident initiatives coordination, and serving as a member of the PHA's governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time;
- (v) Incremental earnings and benefits resulting to any family member from participation in qualifying State or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives, and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the employment training program;
- (9) Temporary, nonrecurring or sporadic income (including gifts);
- (10) Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era;

(11) Earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (excluding the head of household and spouse);

(12) Adoption assistance payments in excess of \$480 per adopted child;

(13) [Reserved]

(14) Deferred periodic amounts from supplemental security income and social security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts, or any deferred Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or prospective monthly amounts.

(15) Amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under State or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling unit;

(16) Amounts paid by a State agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home; or

(17) Amounts specifically excluded by any other Federal statute from consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under any program to which the exclusions set forth in 24 CFR 5.609(c) apply. A notice will be published in the Federal Register and distributed to PHAs and housing owners identifying the benefits that qualify for this exclusion. Updates will be published and distributed when necessary. [See Section 6-I.M. for a list of benefits that qualify for this exclusion.]

EXHIBIT 6-3: TREATMENT OF FAMILY ASSETS

24 CFR 5.603(b) Net Family Assets

(1) Net cash value after deducting reasonable costs that would be incurred in disposing of real property, savings, stocks, bonds, and other forms of capital investment, excluding interests in Indian trust land and excluding equity accounts in HUD homeownership programs. The value of necessary items of personal property such as furniture and automobiles shall be excluded.

(2) In cases where a trust fund has been established and the trust is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household, the value of the trust fund will not be considered an asset so long as the fund continues to be held in trust. Any income distributed from the trust fund shall be counted when determining annual income under Sec. 5.609.

(3) In determining net family assets, PHAs or owners, as applicable, shall include the value of any business or family assets disposed of by an applicant or tenant for less than fair market value (including a disposition in trust, but not in a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale) during the two years preceding the date of application for the program or reexamination, as applicable, in excess of the consideration received therefor.

In the case of a disposition as part of a separation or divorce settlement, the disposition will not be considered to be for less than fair market value if the applicant or tenant receives important consideration not measurable in dollar terms.

(4) For purposes of determining annual income under Sec. 5.609, the term "net family assets" does not include the value of a home currently being purchased with assistance under part 982, subpart M of this title. This exclusion is limited to the first 10 years after the purchase date of the home.

EXHIBIT 6-4: EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

24 CFR 5.617 Self-sufficiency incentives for persons with disabilities—Disallowance of increase in annual income.

(a) Applicable programs. The disallowance of earned income provided by this section is applicable only to the following programs: HOME Investment Partnerships Program (24

CFR part 92); Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (24 CFR part 574); Supportive Housing Program (24 CFR part 583); and the Housing Choice Voucher Program (24 CFR part 982).

(b) Definitions. The following definitions apply for purposes of this section.

Baseline income. The annual income immediately prior to implementation of the disallowance described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section of a person with disabilities (who is a member of a qualified family).

Disallowance. Exclusion from annual income.

Previously unemployed includes a person with disabilities who has earned, in the twelve months previous to employment, no more than would be received for 10 hours of work per week for 50 weeks at the established minimum wage.

Qualified family. A family residing in housing assisted under one of the programs listed in paragraph (a) of this section or receiving tenant-based rental assistance under one of the programs listed in paragraph (a) of this section.

(1) Whose annual income increases as a result of employment of a family member who is a person with disabilities and who was previously unemployed for one or more years prior to employment;

(2) Whose annual income increases as a result of increased earnings by a family member who is a person with disabilities during participation in any economic self-sufficiency or other job training program; or

(3) Whose annual income increases, as a result of new employment or increased earnings of a family member who is a person with disabilities, during or within six months after receiving assistance, benefits or services under any state program for temporary assistance for needy families funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, as determined by the responsible entity in consultation with the local agencies administering temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) and Welfare-to-Work (WTW) programs. The TANF program is not limited to monthly income maintenance, but also includes such benefits and services as one-time payments, wage subsidies and transportation assistance-- provided that the total amount over a six-month period is at least \$500.

(c) Disallowance of increase in annual income—

(1) *Initial twelve-month exclusion.* During the 12-month period beginning on the date a member who is a person with disabilities of a qualified family is first employed or the family first experiences an increase in annual income attributable to employment, the responsible entity must exclude from annual income (as defined in the regulations governing the applicable program listed in paragraph (a) of this section) of a qualified family any increase in income of the family member who is a person with disabilities as a result of employment over prior income of that family member.

(2) *Second twelve month exclusion and phase-in.* Upon expiration of the 12-month period defined in paragraph (c)(1) of this section and for the subsequent 12-month period, the responsible entity must exclude from annual income of a qualified family at least 50 percent of any increase in income of such family member as a result of employment over the family member's baseline income.

(3) *Maximum 2-year disallowance.* The disallowance of increased income of an

individual family member who is a person with disabilities as provided in paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this section is limited to a lifetime 24-month period. The disallowance applies for a maximum of 12 months for disallowance under paragraph (c)(1) of this section and a maximum of 12 months for disallowance under paragraph (c)(2) of this section, during the 24-month period starting from the initial exclusion under paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

(4) *Effect of changes on currently participating families.* Families eligible for and participating in the disallowance of earned income under this section prior to *May 9, 2016* will continue to be governed by this section in effect as it existed immediately prior to that date (see 24 CFR parts 0 to 199, revised as of April 1, 2016).

(d) *Inapplicability to admission.* The disallowance of increases in income as a result of employment of persons with disabilities under this section does not apply for purposes of admission to the program (including the determination of income eligibility or any income targeting that may be applicable).

EXHIBIT 6-5: THE EFFECT OF WELFARE BENEFIT REDUCTION

24 CFR 5.615

Public housing program and Section 8 tenant-based assistance program: How welfare benefit reduction affects family income.

(a) Applicability. This section applies to covered families who reside in public housing (part 960 of this title) or receive Section 8 tenant-based assistance (part 982 of this title).

(b) Definitions. The following definitions apply for purposes of this section:

Covered families. Families who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance benefits ("welfare benefits") from a State or other public agency ("welfare agency") under a program for which Federal, State, or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for such assistance.

Economic self-sufficiency program. See definition at Sec. 5.603.

Imputed welfare income. The amount of annual income not actually received by a family, as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction, that is nonetheless included in the family's annual income for purposes of determining rent.

Specified welfare benefit reduction.

(1) A reduction of welfare benefits by the welfare agency, in whole or in part, for a family member, as determined by the welfare agency, because of fraud by a family member in connection with the welfare program; or because of welfare agency sanction against a family member for noncompliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

(2) "Specified welfare benefit reduction" does not include a reduction or termination of welfare benefits by the welfare agency:

(i) at expiration of a lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits;

(ii) because a family member is not able to obtain employment, even though the family member has complied with welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements; or

(iii) because a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements.

(c) Imputed welfare income.

(1) A family's annual income includes the amount of imputed welfare income (because of a specified welfare benefits reduction, as specified in notice to the PHA by the welfare agency), plus the total amount of other annual income as determined in accordance with Sec. 5.609.

(2) At the request of the PHA, the welfare agency will inform the PHA in writing of the amount and term of any specified welfare benefit reduction for a family member, and the reason for such reduction, and will also inform the PHA of any subsequent changes in the term or amount of such specified welfare benefit reduction. The PHA will use this information to determine the amount of imputed welfare income for a family.

(3) A family's annual income includes imputed welfare income in family annual income, as determined at the PHA's interim or regular reexamination of family income and composition, during the term of the welfare benefits reduction (as specified in information provided to the PHA by the welfare agency).

(4) The amount of the imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income a family receives that commences after the time the sanction was imposed. When such additional income from other sources is at least equal to the imputed

(5) The PHA may not include imputed welfare income in annual income if the family was not an assisted resident at the time of sanction.

(d) Review of PHA decision.

(1) Public housing. If a public housing tenant claims that the PHA has not correctly calculated the amount of imputed welfare income in accordance with HUD requirements, and if the PHA denies the family's request to modify such amount, the PHA shall give the tenant written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the basis for the PHA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income. The PHA notice shall also state that if the tenant does not agree with the PHA determination, the tenant may request a grievance hearing in accordance with part 966, subpart B of this title to review the PHA determination. The tenant is not required to pay an escrow deposit pursuant to Sec. 966.55(e) for the portion of tenant rent attributable to the imputed welfare income in order to obtain a grievance hearing on the PHA determination.

(2) Section 8 participant. A participant in the Section 8 tenant-based assistance program may request an informal hearing, in accordance with Sec. 982.555 of this title, to review the PHA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income that must be included in the family's annual income in accordance with this section. If the family claims that such amount is not correctly calculated in accordance with HUD requirements, and if the PHA denies the family's request to modify such amount, the PHA shall give the family written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the

basis for the PHA determination of the amount of imputed welfare income. Such notice shall also state that if the family does not agree with the PHA determination, the family may request an informal hearing on the determination under the PHA hearing procedure.

(e) PHA relation with welfare agency.

(1) The PHA must ask welfare agencies to inform the PHA of any specified welfare benefits reduction for a family member, the reason for such reduction, the term of any such reduction, and any subsequent welfare agency determination affecting the amount or term of a specified welfare benefits reduction. If the welfare agency determines a specified welfare benefits reduction for a family member, and gives the PHA written notice of such reduction, the family's annual incomes shall include the imputed welfare income because of the specified welfare benefits reduction.

(2) The PHA is responsible for determining the amount of imputed welfare income that is included in the family's annual income as a result of a specified welfare benefits reduction as determined by the welfare agency, and specified in the notice by the welfare agency to the PHA. However, the PHA is not responsible for determining whether a reduction of welfare benefits by the welfare agency was correctly determined by the welfare agency in accordance with welfare program requirements and procedures, nor for providing the opportunity for review or hearing on such welfare agency determinations.

(3) Such welfare agency determinations are the responsibility of the welfare agency, and the family may seek appeal of such determinations through the welfare agency's normal due process procedures. The PHA shall be entitled to rely on the welfare agency notice to the PHA of the welfare agency's determination of a specified welfare benefits reduction.

Chapter 7

VERIFICATION

[24 CFR 982.516, 24 CFR 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230, Notice PIH 2010-19]

INTRODUCTION

The Augusta Housing Authority must verify all information that is used to establish the family's eligibility and level of assistance and is required to obtain written authorization from the family in order to collect the information. Applicants and program participants must cooperate with the verification process as a condition of receiving assistance. The Augusta Housing Authority must not pass on the cost of verification to the family.

The Augusta Housing Authority will follow the verification guidance provided by HUD in Notice PIH 2010-19 and any subsequent guidance issued by HUD. This chapter summarizes those requirements and provides supplementary Augusta Housing Authority policies.

Part I describes the general verification process.

Part II provides more detailed requirements related to family information.

Part III provides information on income and assets.

Part IV covers mandatory deductions.

Verification policies, rules and procedures will be modified as needed to accommodate persons with disabilities. All information obtained through the verification process will be handled in accordance with the records management policies of the Augusta Housing Authority.

PART I: GENERAL VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

7-I.A. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 982.516 AND 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230]

The family must supply any information that the Augusta Housing Authority or HUD determines is necessary for the administration of the program and must consent to Augusta Housing Authority verification of that information [24 CFR 982.551].

Consent Forms

It is required that all adult applicants and participants sign form HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information. The purpose of form HUD-9886 is to facilitate automated data collection and computer matching from specific sources and provides the family's consent only for the specific purposes listed on the form. HUD and the Augusta Housing Authority may collect information from State Wage Information Collection Agencies (SWICAs) and current and former employers of adult family members. Only HUD is authorized to collect information directly from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). Adult family members must sign other consent forms as needed to collect information relevant to the family's eligibility and level of assistance.

Penalties for Failing to Consent [24 CFR 5.232]

If any family member who is required to sign a consent form fails to do so, the Augusta Housing Authority will deny admission to applicants and terminate assistance of participants. The family may request an informal review (applicants) or informal hearing (participants) in accordance with Augusta Housing Authority procedures.

7-I.B. OVERVIEW OF VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

HUD's Verification Hierarchy [Notice PIH 2010-19]

HUD mandates the use of the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system and offers administrative guidance on the use of other methods to verify family information and specifies the circumstances in which each method will be used. In general HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to use the most reliable form of verification that is available and to document the reasons when the Augusta Housing Authority uses a lesser form of verification.

In order of priority, the forms of verification that the Augusta Housing Authority will use are:

- Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system
- Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using a non-HUD system
- Written Third-Party Verification (may be provided by applicant or participant)
- Written Third-Party Verification Form
- Oral Third-Party Verification
- Self-Certification

Each of the verification methods is discussed in subsequent sections below.

Requirements for Acceptable Documents

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any documents used for verification must be the original (not photocopies) and generally must be dated within 60 days of the date they are provided to the AHA. The documents must not be damaged, altered or in any way illegible.

Print-outs from Web pages are considered original documents.

The AHA staff member who views the original document must make a photocopy, annotate the copy with the name of the person who provided the document and the date the original was viewed, and sign the copy.

Any family self-certifications must be made in a format acceptable to the AHA and must be signed in the presence of an AHA representative or AHA notary public.

File Documentation

The Augusta Housing Authority must document in the file how the figures used in income and rent calculations were determined. All verification attempts, information obtained, and decisions reached during the verification process will be recorded in the family's file in sufficient detail to demonstrate that the Augusta Housing Authority has followed all of the verification policies set forth in this plan. The record should be sufficient to enable a staff member or HUD reviewer to understand the process followed and conclusions reached.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will document, in the family file, the following:

- Reported family annual income

- Value of assets

- Expenses related to deductions from annual income

- Other factors influencing adjusted income

When the Augusta Housing Authority is unable to obtain third-party verification, the Augusta Housing Authority will document in the family file the reason that third-party verification was not available [24 CFR 982.516(a)(2); Notice PIH 2010-19].

7-I.C. UP-FRONT INCOME VERIFICATION (UIV)

Up-front income verification (UIV) refers to the Augusta Housing Authority's use of the verification tools available from independent sources that maintain computerized information about earnings and benefits. UIV will be used to the extent that these systems are available to the Augusta Housing Authority.

There may be legitimate differences between the information provided by the family and UIV-generated information. If the family disputes the accuracy of UIV data, no adverse action can be taken until the AHA has independently verified the UIV information and the family has been granted an opportunity to contest any adverse findings through the informal review/hearing process of the AHA.

See Chapter 6 for the AHA's policy on the use of UIV/EIV to project annual income.

Upfront Income Verification Using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System (Mandatory)

The Augusta Housing Authority must use HUD's EIV system in its entirety as a third-party source to verify tenant employment and income information during mandatory reexaminations or recertifications of family composition and income in accordance with 24 CFR 5.236 and administrative guidance issued by HUD. The EIV system contains data showing earned income, unemployment benefits, social security benefits, and SSI benefits for participant families. The following policies apply to the use of HUD's EIV system.

EIV Income Reports

The data shown on income reports is updated quarterly. Data may be between 3 and 6 months old at the time reports are generated.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will obtain income reports for annual reexaminations on a monthly basis. Reports will be generated as part of the regular reexamination process.

Income reports will be compared to family-provided information as part of the annual reexamination process. Income reports may be used in the calculation of annual income, as described in Chapter 6-I.C. Income reports may also be used to meet the regulatory requirement for third party verification, as described above. Policies for resolving discrepancies between income reports and family-provided information will be resolved as described in Chapter 6-I.C. and in this chapter.

Income reports will be used in interim reexaminations to identify any discrepancies between reported income and income shown in the EIV system, and as necessary to verify and calculate earned income, unemployment benefits, Social Security and/or SSI benefits. EIV will also be used to verify that families claiming zero income are not receiving income from any of these sources.

Income reports will be retained in participant files with the applicable annual or interim reexamination documents.

When the AHA determines through income reports and third-party verification that a family has concealed or under-reported income, corrective action will be taken pursuant to the policies in Chapter 14, Program Integrity.

EIV Identity Verification

The EIV system verifies tenant identities against SSA records. These records are compared to PIC data for a match on social security number, name, and date of birth.

The Augusta Housing Authority is required to use EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis to improve the availability of income information in EIV [Notice PIH 2012-10].

When identity verification for a participant fails, a message will be displayed within the EIV system and no income information will be displayed.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will identify participants whose identity verification has failed by reviewing EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis.

The AHA will attempt to resolve PIC/SSA discrepancies by obtaining appropriate documentation from the participant. When the AHA determines that discrepancies exist due to AHA errors such as spelling errors or incorrect birth dates, the errors will be corrected promptly.

Upfront Income Verification Using Non-HUD Systems (Optional)

In addition to mandatory use of the EIV system, HUD encourages PHAs to utilize other upfront verification sources.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will inform all applicants and participants of its use of the following UIV resources during the admission and reexamination process:

HUD's EIV system

Georgia Department of Labor

The Work Number

7-I.D. THIRD-PARTY WRITTEN AND ORAL VERIFICATION

HUD's current verification hierarchy defines two types of written third-party verification. The more preferable form, "written third-party verification," consists of an original document generated by a third-party source, which may be received directly from a third-party source or provided to the AHA by the family. If written third-party verification is not available, the PHA must attempt to obtain a "written third-party verification form." This is a standardized form used to collect information from a third party.

Written Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2010-19]

Written third-party verification documents must be original and authentic and may be supplied by the family or received from a third-party source.

Examples of acceptable tenant-provided documents include, but are not limited to: pay stubs, payroll summary reports, employer notice or letters of hire and termination, SSA benefit verification letters, bank statements, child support payment stubs, welfare benefit letters and/or printouts, and unemployment monetary benefit notices.

The AHA is required to obtain, at minimum, three (3) current and consecutive pay stubs for determining annual income from wages.

The AHA may reject documentation provided by the family if the document is not an original, if the document appears to be forged, or if the document is altered, mutilated, or illegible.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Third-party documents provided by the family must be dated within 60 days of the AHA request date.

If the AHA determines that third-party documents provided by the family are not acceptable, the PHA will explain the reason to the family and request additional documentation.

As verification of earned income, the AHA will require the family to provide the two most current, consecutive pay stubs.

Written Third-Party Verification Form

When upfront verification is not available and the family is unable to provide written third-party documents, the AHA must request a written third-party verification form. HUD's position is that this traditional third-party verification method presents administrative burdens and risks which may be reduced through the use of family-provided third-party documents.

A written third-party verification form is mandatory when there is an unreported source of income and there is no UIV or tenant-provided documentation to support the income discrepancy.

The Augusta Housing Authority may mail, fax, or e-mail third-party written verification form requests to third-party sources.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will send third-party verification forms directly to the third party.

Third-party verification forms will be sent when third-party verification documents are unavailable or are rejected by the AHA.

Oral Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2010-19]

For third-party oral verification, AHA contact sources, identified by UIV techniques or by the family, by telephone or in person.

Oral third-party verification is mandatory if neither form of written third-party verification is available.

Third-party oral verification may be used when requests for written third-party verification forms have not been returned within a reasonable time—e.g., 10 business days.

The Augusta Housing Authority should document in the file the date and time of the telephone call or visit, the name of the person contacted, the telephone number, as well as the information confirmed.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In collecting third-party oral verification, AHA staff will record in the family's file the name and title of the person contacted, the date and time of the conversation (or attempt), the telephone number used, and the facts provided.

When any source responds verbally to the initial written request for verification the AHA will accept the verbal response as oral verification but will also request that the source complete and return any verification forms that were provided.

When Third-Party Verification is Not Required [Notice PIH 2010-19]

Third-party verification may not be available in all situations. HUD has acknowledged that it may not be cost-effective or reasonable to obtain third-party verification of income, assets, or expenses when these items would have a minimal impact on the family's total tenant payment.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the family cannot provide original documents, the AHA will pay the service charge required to obtain third-party verification, unless it is not cost effective in which case a self-certification will be acceptable as the only means of verification. The cost of verification will not be passed on to the family.

The cost of postage and envelopes to obtain third-party verification of income, assets, and expenses is not an unreasonable cost [VG, p. 18].

Primary Documents

Third-party verification is not required when legal documents are the primary source, such as a birth certificate or other legal documentation of birth.

Imputed Assets

HUD permits PHAs to accept a self-certification from a family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will accept a self-certification from a family as verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value.

Value of Assets and Asset Income [24 CFR 982.516(a)]

A PHA must obtain third-party verification of all family assets upon admitting a family to the HCV Program and again at least every three (3) years thereafter. For families with net assets totaling \$5,000 or less, the PHA may accept the family's declaration of asset value and anticipated asset income. However, the PHA is required to obtain third-party verification of all assets regardless of the amount during the intake process and at least every three years thereafter.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For families with net assets totaling \$5,000 or less, the AHA will accept the family's self-certification of the value of family assets and anticipated asset income when applicable. The family's declaration must show each asset and the amount of income expected from that asset. The total amount of income expected from all assets must be less than or equal

to \$5,000. The total amount of the expected income from assets will be the family's final asset income and must be entered on the Form HUD-50058.

All family members 18 years of age and older must sign the family's declaration of total assets. The AHA will require families to submit a declaration of assets along with the consent forms that are required pursuant to 24 CFR 5.230. A family that knowingly submits false information is subject to a civil penalty, plus damages, under the False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. 3729).

Whenever a family member is added, the AHA must obtain third-party verification of that family member's assets and every three years thereafter. See Chapter 6 for additional requirements.

7-I.E. SELF-CERTIFICATION

When HUD requires third-party verification, self-certification or "tenant declaration," is used as a last resort when the PHA is unable to obtain third-party verification.

Self-certification, however, is an acceptable form of verification when:

- A source of income is fully excluded
- Net family assets total \$5,000 or less and the PHA has adopted a policy to accept self-certification at annual recertification, when applicable
- The PHA has adopted a policy to implement streamlined annual recertifications for fixed sources of income (See Chapter 11)

When the Augusta Housing Authority was required to obtain third-party verification but instead relies on a tenant declaration for verification of income, assets, or expenses, the family's file must be documented to explain why third-party verification was not available.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When information cannot be verified by a third party or by review of documents, family members will be required to submit self-certifications attesting to the accuracy of the information they have provided to the AHA.

The AHA may require a family to certify that a family member does not receive a particular type of income or benefit.

The self-certification must be made in a format acceptable to the AHA and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified. All self-certifications must be signed in the presence of a AHA representative or PHA notary public.

PART II: VERIFYING FAMILY INFORMATION

7-II.A. VERIFICATION OF LEGAL IDENTITY

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will require families to furnish verification of legal identity for each household member.

Verification of Legal Identity for Adults	Verification of Legal Identity for Children
Certificate of birth, naturalization papers Church issued baptismal certificate Current, valid driver's license or Department of Motor Vehicles identification card U.S. military discharge (DD 214) Current U.S. passport Current employer identification card	Certificate of birth Adoption papers Custody agreement Health and Human Services ID Certified school records

If a document submitted by a family is illegible for any reason or otherwise questionable, more than one of these documents may be required.

If none of these documents can be provided and at the AHA's discretion, a third party who knows the person may attest to the person's identity. The certification must be provided in a format acceptable to the AHA and be signed in the presence of a AHA representative or AHA notary public.

Legal identity will be verified for all applicants at the time of eligibility determination and in cases where the AHA has reason to doubt the identity of a person representing him or herself to be a participant.

7-II.B. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216, Notice PIH 2012-10]

The family must provide documentation of a valid social security number (SSN) for each member of the household, with the exception of individuals who do not contend eligible immigration status. Exemptions also include, existing program participants who were at least 62 years of age as of January 31, 2010, and had not previously disclosed an SSN.

Note that an individual who previously declared to have eligible immigration status may not change his or her declaration for the purpose of avoiding compliance with the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements or penalties associated with noncompliance with these requirements. Nor may the head of household opt to remove a household member from the family composition for this purpose.

The Augusta Housing Authority must accept the following documentation as acceptable evidence of the social security number:

- An original SSN card issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA)
- An original SSA-issued document, which contains the name and SSN of the individual
- An original document issued by a federal, state, or local government agency, which contains the name and SSN of the individual

The Augusta Housing Authority may only reject documentation of an SSN provided by an applicant or participant if the document is not an original document or if the original document has been altered, mutilated, is illegible, or appears to be forged.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will explain to the applicant or participant the reasons the document is not acceptable and request that the individual obtain and submit acceptable documentation of the SSN to the PHA within 90 days.

In the case of Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy (SRO) individuals, the required documentation must be provided within 90 calendar days from the date of admission into the program. The PHA must grant one additional 90-day extension if it determines that the applicant's failure to comply was due to circumstances that were beyond the applicant's control and could not have been reasonably foreseen.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the participant's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency. If the individual fails to comply with SSN disclosure and documentation requirements upon expiration of the provided time period, the AHA will follow the provisions of 24 CFR 5.218.

If an applicant family includes a child under 6 years of age who joined the household within the 6 months prior to the date of voucher issuance, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program and the family must provide documentation of the child's SSN within 90 days of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. A 90-day extension will be granted if the AHA determines that the participant's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the participant's control.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the applicant's control, such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency.

When a participant requests to add a new household member who is at least 6 years of age, or who is under the age of 6 and has an SSN, the participant must provide the complete and accurate SSN assigned to each new member at the time of reexamination or recertification, in addition to the documentation required to verify it. The AHA may not add the new household member until such documentation is provided.

When a participant requests to add a new household member who is under the age of 6 and has not been assigned an SSN, the participant must provide the SSN assigned to each new child and the required documentation within 90 calendar days of the child being added to the household. A 90-day extension will be granted if the AHA determines that the participant's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the participant's control. During the period, the AHA is awaiting documentation of the SSN, the child will be counted as part of the assisted household.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will grant one additional 90-day extension if needed for reasons beyond the participant's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency.

Social security numbers must be verified only once during continuously-assisted occupancy.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will verify each disclosed SSN by:

- Obtaining documentation from applicants and participants that is acceptable as evidence of social security numbers

- Making a copy of the original documentation submitted, returning it to the individual, and retaining a copy in the file folder

Once the individual's verification status is classified as "verified," the PHA may, at its discretion, remove and destroy copies of documentation accepted as evidence of social security numbers. The retention of the EIV Summary Report or Income Report is adequate documentation of an individual's SSN.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Once an individual's status is classified as "verified" in HUD's EIV system, the AHA will retain all copies of documentation accepted as evidence of social security numbers.

7-II.C. DOCUMENTATION OF AGE

A birth certificate or other official record of birth is the preferred form of age verification for all family members. For elderly family members, an original document that provides evidence of the receipt of social security retirement benefits is acceptable.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If an official record of birth or evidence of social security retirement benefits cannot be provided, the AHA will require the family to submit other documents that support the reported age of the family member (e.g., school records, driver's license if birth year is recorded) and to provide a self-certification.

Age must be verified only once during continuously-assisted occupancy.

7-II.D. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Applicants and program participants are required to identify the relationship of each household member to the head of household. Definitions of the primary household relationships are provided in the Eligibility chapter.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Family relationships are verified only to the extent necessary to determine a family's eligibility and level of assistance. Certification by the head of household normally is sufficient verification of family relationships.

Marriage

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If the AHA has reasonable doubts about a marital relationship, the AHA will require the family to document the marriage by providing a marriage certificate.

A marriage certificate generally is required to verify that a couple is married.

In the case of a common law marriage, the couple must demonstrate that they hold themselves to be married (e.g., by telling the community they are married, calling each other husband and wife, using the same last name, filing joint income tax returns). However, **Georgia** does not have a common law marriage.

Separation or Divorce

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If the AHA has reasonable doubts about a separation or divorce, the AHA will require the family to provide documentation of the divorce or separation.

A certified copy of a divorce decree, signed by a court officer, is required to document that a couple is divorced.

A copy of a court-ordered maintenance or other court record is required to document a separation.

If no court document is available, documentation from a community-based agency will be accepted.

Absence of Adult Member

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If an adult member who was formerly a member of the household is reported to be permanently absent, the family must provide evidence to support that the person is no longer a member of the family (e.g., documentation of another address at which the person resides such as a lease or utility bill).

Additional documentation:

- Husband or wife institutes divorce action.
- Husband or wife institutes legal separation.
- Order of protection/restraining order obtained by one family member against another.
- Proof of another home address, such as utility bills, canceled checks for rent, driver's license, or lease or rental agreement, if available.
- Statements from other agencies such as social services or a written statement from the landlord or manager that the adult family member is no longer living at that location.
- If the adult family member is incarcerated, a document from the Court or correctional facility should be obtained stating how long they will be incarcerated.

Foster Children and Foster Adults

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Third-party verification from the state or local government agency responsible for the placement of the individual with the family is required.

7-II.E. VERIFICATION OF STUDENT STATUS

General Requirements

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA requires families to provide information about the student status of all students who are 18 years of age or older. This information will be verified only if:

The family reports full-time student status for an adult other than the head, spouse, or cohead.

The family reports child care expenses to enable a family member to further his or her education.

The family includes a student enrolled in an *institution of higher education*.

Restrictions on Assistance to Students Enrolled in Institutions of Higher Education

This section applies only to students who are seeking assistance on their own, separately from their parents. It does not apply to students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In accordance with the verification hierarchy described in section 7-1.B, the AHA will determine whether the student is exempt from the restrictions in 24 CFR 5.612 by verifying any one of the following exemption criteria:

The student is enrolled at an educational institution that does not meet the definition of *institution of higher education* in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (see section Exhibit 3-2).

The student is at least 24 years old.

The student is a veteran, as defined in section 3-II.E.

The student is married.

The student has at least one dependent child, as defined in section 3-II.E.

The student is a person with disabilities, as defined in section 3-II.E, and was receiving assistance prior to November 30, 2005.

If the AHA cannot verify at least one of these exemption criteria, the AHA will conclude that the student is subject to the restrictions on assistance at 24 CFR 5.612. In addition to verifying the student's income eligibility, the AHA will then proceed to verify either the student's parents' income eligibility (see section 7-III.J) or the student's independence from his/her parents (see below).

Independent Student

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will verify a student's independence from his/her parents to determine that the student's parents' income is not relevant for determining the student's eligibility by doing all of the following:

Either reviewing and verifying previous address information to determine whether the student has established a household separate from his/her parents for at least one year, or reviewing and verifying documentation relevant to determining whether the student meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *independent student* (see section 3-II.E)

Reviewing the student's prior year income tax returns to verify the student is independent or verifying the student meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of *independent student* (see section 3-II.E)

Requesting and obtaining written certification directly from the student's parents identifying the amount of support they will be providing to the student, even if the amount of support is \$0, except in cases in which the AHA determines that the student is a *vulnerable youth* (see section 3-II.E)

7-II.F. DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY

The Augusta Housing Authority must verify the existence of a disability in order to allow certain income disallowances and deductions from income. The Augusta Housing Authority is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability [24 CFR 100.202(c)]. The Augusta Housing Authority may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If the Augusta Housing Authority receives a verification document that provides such information, the PHA will not place this information in the tenant file. Under no circumstances will the Augusta Housing Authority request a participant's medical record(s). For more information on health care privacy laws, see the Department of Health and Human Services' website at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/>.

The above cited regulation does not prohibit the following inquiries, provided these inquiries are made of all applicants, whether or not they are persons with disabilities [VG, p. 24]:

- Inquiry into an applicant's ability to meet the requirements of ownership or tenancy
- Inquiry to determine whether an applicant is qualified for a dwelling available only to persons with disabilities or to persons with a particular type of disability
- Inquiry to determine whether an applicant for a dwelling is qualified for a priority available to persons with disabilities or to persons with a particular type of disability
- Inquiring whether an applicant for a dwelling is a current illegal abuser or addict of a controlled substance
- Inquiring whether an applicant has been convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance

Family Members Receiving SSA Disability Benefits

Verification of the receipt of disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) is sufficient verification of disability for the purpose certain income disallowances and deductions [VG, p. 23].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For family members claiming disability who receive disability benefits from the SSA, the AHA will attempt to obtain information about disability benefits through the HUD Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system. If documentation from HUD's EIV System is not available, the AHA will request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member claiming disability status. If the family is unable to provide the document(s), the AHA will ask the family to request a benefit verification letter by either calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213, or by requesting it from www.ssa.gov. Once the applicant or participant receives the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to the AHA.

Family Members Not Receiving SSA Disability Benefits

Receipt of veteran's disability benefits, worker's compensation, or other non-SSA benefits based on the individual's claimed disability are not sufficient verification that the individual meets HUD's definition of disability in 24 CFR 5.403.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For family members claiming disability who do not receive SSI or other disability benefits from the SSA, a knowledgeable professional must provide third-party verification that the family member meets the HUD definition of disability. See the Eligibility chapter for the HUD definition of disability. The knowledgeable professional will verify whether the family member does or does not meet the HUD definition.

7-II.G. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5.508]

Overview

Housing assistance is not available to persons who are not citizens, nationals, or eligible immigrants. Prorated assistance is provided for "mixed families" containing both eligible and ineligible persons. A detailed discussion of eligibility requirements is in the Eligibility chapter. This verifications chapter discusses HUD and Augusta Housing Authority verification requirements related to citizenship status.

The family must provide a certification that identifies each family member as a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, an eligible noncitizen or an ineligible noncitizen and submit the documents discussed below for each family member. Once eligibility to receive assistance has been verified for an individual it need not be collected or verified again during continuously-assisted occupancy. [24 CFR 5.508(g)(5)]

U.S. Citizens and Nationals

HUD requires a declaration for each family member who claims to be a U.S. citizen or national. The declaration must be signed personally by any family member 18 or older and by a guardian for minors.

The Augusta Housing Authority will require verification of the declaration by requiring presentation of a United States birth certificate, United States passport, Resident alien/registration card, Social Security card or other appropriate documentation as determined by the Augusta Housing Authority.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Family members who provide verifiable U.S. citizenship or national status will not be required to provide additional documentation unless the AHA receives information indicating that an individual's declaration may not be accurate.

If an applicant or participant family member fails to sign required declarations and consent forms or provide documents, as required, they must be listed as an ineligible member. If the entire family fails to provide and sign as required, the family may be denied or terminated for failure to provide required information.

Eligible Immigrants

Documents Required

All family members claiming eligible immigration status must declare their status in the same manner as U.S. citizens and nationals.

The documentation required for eligible noncitizens varies depending upon factors such as the date the person entered the U.S., the conditions under which eligible immigration status has been granted, age, and the date on which the family began receiving HUD-funded assistance. Exhibit 7-1 at the end of this chapter summarizes documents family members must provide.

Augusta Housing Authority Verification [HCV GB, pp. 5-3 and 5-7]

For family members age 62 or older who claim to be eligible immigrants, proof of age is required in the manner described in 7-II.C. of this plan. No further verification of eligible immigration status is required.

For family members under the age of 62 who claim to be eligible immigrants, the AHA must verify immigration status with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The AHA will follow all USCIS protocols for verification of eligible immigration status.

7-II.H. VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCE STATUS

The Augusta Housing Authority must verify any preferences claimed by an applicant that determined placement on the waiting list.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA offers a preference for the following categories as described in 4-III.C.:

- Involuntarily displaced.
- Currently living in substandard housing (including homeless families).
- Currently paying more than 50% of their income for rent and utilities ("Rent Burden").

The AHA will also offer a preference to any family that has been terminated from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding. The AHA will verify this preference using the AHA's termination records.

PART III: VERIFYING INCOME AND ASSETS

Chapter 6, Part I of this plan describes in detail the types of income that are included and excluded and how assets and income from assets are handled. Any assets and income reported by the family must be verified. This part provides Augusta Housing Authority policies that supplement the general verification procedures specified in Part I of this chapter.

7-III.A. EARNED INCOME

Tips

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Unless tip income is included in a family member's W-2 by the employer, persons who work in industries where tips are standard will be required to sign a certified estimate of tips received for the prior year and tips anticipated to be received in the coming year.

Wages

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For wages other than tips, the family must provide originals of at least three (3) current, consecutive pay stubs dated within the last 60 days.

7-III.B. BUSINESS AND SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Business owners and self-employed persons will be required to provide:

Income tax statements signed by the family that includes all schedules completed for filing federal and local taxes in the preceding year.

An audited financial statement for the previous fiscal year must be submitted to the AHA. If an audit was not conducted, a statement of income and expenses must be submitted and the business owner or self-employed person must certify to its accuracy.

If accelerated depreciation was used on the tax return or financial statement, an accountant's calculation of depreciation expense, computed using straight-line depreciation rules.

The AHA will provide a format for any person who is unable to provide such a statement to record income and expenses for the coming year. The business owner/self-employed person will be required to submit the information requested and to certify to its accuracy at all future reexaminations.

At any reexamination, the AHA may request documents that support submitted financial statements such as manifests, appointment books, cash books, or bank statements.

If a family member has been self-employed less than three (3) months, the AHA will accept the family member's certified estimate of income and schedule an interim reexamination in three (3) months. If the family member has been self-employed for three (3) to twelve (12) months, the AHA will require the family to provide documentation of income and expenses for this period and use that information to project income.

7-III.C. PERIODIC PAYMENTS AND PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS

For policies governing streamlined income determinations for fixed sources of income, please see Chapter 11.

Social Security/SSI Benefits

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of applicants, the AHA will request a current (dated within the last 60 days) SSA benefit verification letter from each family member that receives social security benefits. If the family is unable to provide the document(s), the AHA will help the applicant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's Web site at www.ssa.gov or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Once the applicant has received the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to the AHA.

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of participants, the AHA will obtain information about social security/SSI benefits through the HUD EIV System, and confirm with the participant(s) that the current listed benefit amount is correct. If the participant disputes the EIV-reported benefit amount, or if benefit information is not available in HUD systems, the AHA will request a current SSA benefit verification letter from each family member that receives social security benefits. If the family is unable to provide the document(s), the AHA will help the participant request a benefit verification letter from SSA's Web site at www.ssa.gov or ask the family to request one by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Once the participant has received the benefit verification letter they will be required to provide it to the PHA.

7-III.D. ALIMONY OR CHILD SUPPORT

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The methods the AHA will use to verify alimony and child support payments differ depending on whether the family declares that it receives regular payments.

If the family declares that it ***receives regular payments***, verification will be obtained in the following order of priority:

Copies of the receipts and/or payment stubs for the 60 days prior to AHA request

Third-party verification form from the state or local child support enforcement agency

Third-party verification form from the person paying the support

Family's self-certification of amount received

If the family declares that it ***receives irregular or no payments***, in addition to the verification process listed above, the family must provide evidence that it has taken all reasonable efforts to collect amounts due. This may include:

A statement from an agency responsible for enforcing payment that shows the family has requested enforcement and is cooperating with all enforcement efforts

If the family has made independent efforts at collection, a written statement from the attorney or other collection entity that has assisted the family in these efforts

Note: Families are not required to undertake independent enforcement action.

7-III.E. ASSETS AND INCOME FROM ASSETS

Assets Disposed of for Less than Fair Market Value

The family must certify whether any assets have been disposed of for less than fair market value in the preceding two years. The Augusta Housing Authority needs to verify only those certifications that warrant documentation [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will verify the value of assets disposed of only if:

The AHA does not already have a reasonable estimation of its value from previously collected information, or

The amount reported by the family in the certification appears obviously in error.

Example 1: An elderly participant reported a \$10,000 certificate of deposit at the last annual reexamination and the PHA verified this amount. Now the person reports that she has given this \$10,000 to her son. The PHA has a reasonable estimate of the value of the asset; therefore, reverification of the value of the asset is not necessary.

Example 2: A family member has disposed of its 1/4 share of real property located in a desirable area and has valued her share at approximately \$5,000. Based upon market conditions, this declaration does not seem realistic. Therefore, the PHA will verify the value of this asset.

7-III.F. NET INCOME FROM RENTAL PROPERTY

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must provide:

IRS Form 1040 with Schedule E (Rental Income)

Copies of most current receipts, executed lease for the property that shows the rental amount or certification from the current tenant or other documentation of rental amount

A self-certification from the family members engaged in the rental of property providing an estimate of expenses for the coming year and the most recent IRS Form 1040 with Schedule E (Rental Income). If schedule E was not prepared, the AHA will require the family members involved in the rental of property to provide a self-certification of income and expenses for the previous year and may request documentation to support the statement including: tax statements, insurance invoices, bills for reasonable maintenance and utilities, and bank statements or amortization schedules showing monthly interest expense.

7-III.G. RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will accept written third-party documents supplied by the family as evidence of the status of retirement accounts.

The type of original document that will be accepted depends upon the family member's retirement status.

Before retirement, the AHA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account with a date that shows it is the most recently scheduled statement for the account but in no case earlier than 6 months from the effective date of the examination.

Upon retirement, the AHA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account that reflects any distributions of the account balance, any lump sums taken and any regular payments.

After retirement, the AHA will accept an original document from the entity holding the account dated no earlier than 12 months before that reflects any distributions of the account balance, any lump sums taken and any regular payments.

7-III.H. INCOME FROM EXCLUDED SOURCES

A detailed discussion of excluded income is provided in Chapter 6, Part I.

HUD guidance on verification of excluded income draws a distinction between income which is fully excluded and income which is only partially excluded.

For fully excluded income, the Augusta Housing Authority is **not** required to follow the verification hierarchy, document why third-party verification is not available, or report the income on the 50058. Fully excluded income is defined as income that is entirely excluded from the annual income determination (for example, food stamps, earned income of a minor, or foster care funds) [Notice PIH 2013-04].

The Augusta Housing Authority may accept a family's signed application or reexamination form as self-certification of fully excluded income. They do not have to require additional documentation. However, if there is any doubt that a source of income qualifies for full exclusion, the Augusta Housing Authority has the option of requiring additional verification.

For partially excluded income, the Augusta Housing Authority **is** required to follow the verification hierarchy and all applicable regulations, and to report the income on the 50058. Partially excluded income is defined as income where only a certain portion of what is reported by the family qualifies to be excluded and the remainder is included in annual income (for example, the income of an adult full-time student, or income excluded under the earned income disallowance).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will accept the family's self-certification as verification of fully excluded income. The AHA may request additional documentation if necessary to document the income source.

The AHA will verify the source and amount of partially excluded income as described in Part 1 of this chapter.

7-III.I. ZERO ANNUAL INCOME STATUS

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Families who report zero income are required to complete a written certification every 30 days. Families that report zero income will be required to provide information regarding their means of basic subsistence, such as food, utilities, transportation, etc. If the family's expenses exceed their known income, the AHA will make inquiry of the head of household as to the nature of the family's accessible resources.

The AHA will check UIV sources and/or request information from third-party sources to verify that certain forms of income such as unemployment benefits, TANF, SS, SSI, and earnings are not being received by families claiming to have zero annual income.

7-III.J. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Any financial assistance, in excess of amounts received for tuition, that a person attending an institution of higher education receives under the Higher Education Act of 1965, from private sources, or from an institution of higher education must be considered income unless the student is over the age of 23 with dependent children or is residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9) and FR 4/10/06].

For students over the age of 23 with dependent children or students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance, the full amount of student financial assistance is excluded from annual income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(6)]. The full amount of student financial assistance is also excluded for students attending schools that do not qualify as institutions of higher education (as defined in Exhibit 3-2). Excluded amounts are verified only if, without verification, the Augusta Housing Authority would not be able to determine whether or to what extent the income is to be excluded (see section 7-III.H).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For a student subject to having a portion of his/her student financial assistance included in annual income in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609(b)(9), the AHA will request written third-party verification of both the source and the amount. Family-provided documents from the educational institution attended by the student will be requested, as well as documents generated by any other person or entity providing such assistance, as reported by the student.

In addition, the AHA will request written verification of the student's tuition amount.

If the AHA is unable to obtain third-party written verification of the requested information, the AHA will pursue other forms of verification following the verification hierarchy in section 7-I.B.

7-III.K. PARENTAL INCOME OF STUDENTS SUBJECT TO ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have a dependent child, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the income of the student's parents must be considered when determining income eligibility, unless the student is determined independent from his or her parents or a *vulnerable youth* in accordance with Augusta Housing Authority policy [24 CFR 5.612, FR Notice 4/10/06, p. 18146, and FR Notice 9/21/16].

This provision does not apply to students residing with parents who are seeking or receiving HCV assistance. It is limited to students who are seeking or receiving assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the AHA is required to determine the income eligibility of a student's parents, the AHA will request an income declaration and certification of income from the appropriate parent(s) (as determined in section 3-II.E). The AHA will send the request directly to the parents, who will be required to certify to their income under penalty of perjury. The parents will be required to submit the information directly to the AHA. The required information must be submitted (postmarked) within 10 business days of the date of the AHA's request or within any extended timeframe approved by the AHA.

The AHA reserves the right to request and review supporting documentation at any time if it questions the declaration or certification. Supporting documentation may include, but is not limited to, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax returns, consecutive and original pay stubs, bank statements, pension benefit statements, benefit award letters, and other official and authentic documents from a federal, state, or local agency.

PART IV: VERIFYING MANDATORY DEDUCTIONS

7-IV.A. DEPENDENT AND ELDERLY/DISABLED HOUSEHOLD DEDUCTIONS

The dependent and elderly/disabled family deductions require only that the Augusta Housing Authority verify that the family members identified as dependents or elderly/disabled persons meet the statutory definitions. No further verifications are required.

Dependent Deduction

See Chapter 6 (6-II.B.) for a full discussion of this deduction. The Augusta Housing Authority must verify that:

- Any person under the age of 18 for whom the dependent deduction is claimed is not the head, spouse, or cohead of the family and is not a foster child
- Any person age 18 or older for whom the dependent deduction is claimed is not a foster adult or live-in aide, and is a person with a disability or a full-time student

Elderly/Disabled Family Deduction

See Eligibility chapter for a definition of elderly and disabled families and Chapter 6 (6-II.C.) for a discussion of the deduction. The Augusta Housing Authority must verify that the head, spouse, or cohead is 62 years of age or older or a person with disabilities.

7-IV.B. MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION

Policies related to medical expenses are found in 6-II.D. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I.

Amount of Expense

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Families who claim medical expenses will be required to submit a certification as to whether or not any expense payments have been, or will be, reimbursed by an outside source. All medical expense claims will be verified by one or more of the methods listed below:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as pharmacy printouts or receipts

Written verification by a doctor, hospital or clinic personnel, dentist, pharmacist, of (a) the anticipated medical costs to be incurred by the family and regular payments due on medical bills; and (b) extent to which those expenses will be reimbursed by insurance or a government agency

Written confirmation by the insurance company or employer of health insurance premiums to be paid by the family

Written confirmation from the Social Security Administration of Medicare premiums to be paid by the family over the next 12 months (A computer printout will be accepted.)

The AHA will make a best effort to determine what expenses from the past are likely to continue to occur in the future. The AHA will also accept evidence of monthly payments or total payments that will be due for medical expenses during the upcoming 12 months.

If third-party or document review is not possible, written family certification as to costs anticipated to be incurred during the upcoming 12 months.

In addition, the Augusta Housing Authority must verify that:

- The household is eligible for the deduction.
- The costs to be deducted are qualified medical expenses.
- The expenses are not paid for or reimbursed by any other source.
- Costs incurred in past years are counted only once.

Eligible Household

The medical expense deduction is permitted only for households in which the head, spouse, or cohead is at least 62, or a person with disabilities. The Augusta Housing Authority must verify that the family meets the definition of an elderly or disabled family provided in the Eligibility chapter and as described in Chapter 7 (7-IV.A.) of this plan.

Qualified Expenses

To be eligible for the medical expenses deduction, the costs must qualify as medical expenses. See Chapter 6 (6-II.D.) for the Augusta Housing Authority's policy on what counts as a medical expense.

Unreimbursed Expenses

To be eligible for the medical expenses deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family will be required to certify that the medical expenses are not paid or reimbursed to the family from any source. If expenses are verified through a third party, the third party must certify that the expenses are not paid or reimbursed from any other source.

Expenses Incurred in Past Years

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When anticipated costs are related to on-going payment of medical bills incurred in past years, the AHA will verify:

The anticipated repayment schedule;

The amounts paid in the past; and

Whether the amounts to be repaid have been deducted from the family's annual income in past years

7-IV.C. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES

Policies related to disability assistance expenses are found in 6-II.E. The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I.

Amount of Expense

Attendant Care

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For attendant care:

A reliable, knowledgeable professional's certification that the assistance of an attendant is necessary as a medical expense and a projection of the number of hours the care is needed for calculation purposes.

Attendant's written confirmation of hours of care provided and amount and frequency of payments received from the family or agency (or copies of canceled checks the family used to make those payments) or stubs from the agency providing the services.

In addition, the AHA will accept written third-party documents provided by the family.

If family-provided documents are not available, the AHA will provide a third-party verification form directly to the care provider requesting the needed information.

Expenses for attendant care will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as receipts or cancelled checks.

Third-party verification form signed by the provider, if family-provided documents are not available.

If third-party verification is not possible, written family certification as to costs anticipated to be incurred for the upcoming 12 months.

Auxiliary Apparatus

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Expenses for auxiliary apparatus will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as billing statements for purchase of auxiliary apparatus, or other evidence of monthly payments or total payments that will be due for the apparatus during the upcoming 12 months.

Third-party verification form signed by the provider, if family-provided documents are not available.

If third-party verification is not possible, written family certification of estimated apparatus costs for the upcoming 12 months.

In the case where the person with disabilities is employed, a statement from the employer that the auxiliary apparatus is necessary for employment.

In addition, the Augusta Housing Authority must verify that:

- The family member for whom the expense is incurred is a person with disabilities (as described in 7-II.F above).
- The expense permits a family member, or members, to work (as described in 6-II.E.).
- The expense is not reimbursed from another source (as described in 6-II.E.).

Family Member is a Person with Disabilities

To be eligible for the disability assistance expense deduction, the costs must be incurred for attendant care or auxiliary apparatus expense associated with a person with disabilities. The Augusta Housing Authority will verify that the expense is incurred for a person with disabilities (See 7-II.F.).

Family Member(s) Permitted to Work

The Augusta Housing Authority must verify that the expenses claimed actually enable a family member, or members, (including the person with disabilities) to work.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will request third-party verification from a rehabilitation agency or knowledgeable medical professional indicating that the person with disabilities requires attendant care or an auxiliary apparatus to be employed, or that the attendant care or auxiliary apparatus enables another family member, or members, to work (See 6-II.E.). This documentation may be provided by the family.

If third-party verification has been attempted and is either unavailable or proves unsuccessful, the family must certify that the disability assistance expense frees a family member, or members (possibly including the family member receiving the assistance), to work.

Unreimbursed Expenses

To be eligible for the disability expenses deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family will be required to certify that attendant care or auxiliary apparatus expenses are not paid by or reimbursed to the family from any source.

7-IV.D. CHILD CARE EXPENSES

Policies related to child care expenses are found in Chapter 6 (6-II.F). The amount of the deduction will be verified following the standard verification procedures described in Part I of this chapter. In addition, the Augusta Housing Authority must verify that:

- The child is eligible for care (12 or younger).
- The costs claimed are not reimbursed.
- The costs enable a family member to work, actively seek work, or further their education.
- The costs are for an allowable type of child care.
- The costs are reasonable.

Eligible Child

To be eligible for the child care deduction, the costs must be incurred for the care of a child under the age of 13. The Augusta Housing Authority will verify that the child being cared for (including foster children) is under the age of 13 (See 7-II.C.).

Unreimbursed Expense

To be eligible for the child care deduction, the costs must not be reimbursed by another source.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family (and the care provider) will be required to certify that the child care expenses are not paid or reimbursed to the family from any source.

Pursuing an Eligible Activity

The Augusta Housing Authority must verify that the family member(s) that the family has identified as being enabled to seek work, pursue education, or be gainfully employed, are actually pursuing those activities.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Information to be Gathered

The AHA will verify information about how the schedule for the claimed activity relates to the hours of care provided, the time required for transportation, the time required for study (for students), the relationship of the family member(s) to the child, and any special needs of the child that might help determine which family member is enabled to pursue an eligible activity.

Seeking Work

Whenever possible the AHA will use documentation from a state or local agency that monitors work-related requirements (e.g., welfare or unemployment). In such cases the AHA will request family-provided verification from the agency of the member's job seeking efforts to date, and require the family to submit to the AHA any reports provided to the other agency.

In the event third-party verification is not available, the AHA will provide the family with a form on which the family member must record job search efforts. The AHA will

review this information at each subsequent reexamination for which this deduction is claimed.

Furthering Education

The AHA will request third-party documentation to verify that the person permitted to further his or her education by the child care is enrolled and provide information about the timing of classes for which the person is registered. The documentation may be provided by the family.

Gainful Employment

The AHA will seek third-party verification of the work schedule of the person who is permitted to work by the child care. In cases in which two or more family members could be permitted to work, the work schedules for all relevant family members may be verified. The documentation may be provided by the family.

Allowable Type of Child Care

The type of care to be provided is determined by the family, but must fall within certain guidelines, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will verify that the type of child care selected by the family is allowable, as described in Chapter 6 (6-II.F).

The AHA will verify that the fees paid to the child care provider cover only child care costs (e.g., no housekeeping services or personal services) and are paid only for the care of an eligible child (e.g., prorate costs if some of the care is provided for ineligible family members).

The AHA will verify that the child care provider is not an assisted family member. Verification will be made through the head of household's declaration of family members who are expected to reside in the unit.

Reasonableness of Expenses

Only reasonable child care costs can be deducted.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The actual costs the family incurs will be compared with the AHA's established standards of reasonableness for the type of care in the locality to ensure that the costs are reasonable.

If the family presents a justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area, the AHA will request additional documentation, as required, to support a determination that the higher cost is appropriate.

EXHIBIT 7-1: SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NONCITIZENS [HCV GB, pp. 5-9 and 5-10]	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All noncitizens claiming eligible status must sign a declaration of eligible immigrant status on a form acceptable to the PHA. • Except for persons 62 or older, all noncitizens must sign a verification consent form • Additional documents are required based upon the person's status. 	
Elderly Noncitizens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person 62 years of age or older who claims eligible immigration status also must provide proof of age such as birth certificate, passport, or documents showing receipt of SS old-age benefits. 	
All other Noncitizens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noncitizens that claim eligible immigration status also must present the applicable USCIS document. Acceptable USCIS documents are listed below. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card (for permanent resident aliens) • Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record annotated with one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Admitted as a Refugee Pursuant to Section 207” • “Section 208” or “Asylum” • “Section 243(h)” or “Deportation stayed by Attorney General” • “Paroled Pursuant to Section 221 (d)(5) of the USCIS” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record with no annotation accompanied by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final court decision granting asylum (but only if no appeal is taken); • A letter from a USCIS asylum officer granting asylum (if application is filed on or after 10/1/90) or from a USCIS district director granting asylum (application filed before 10/1/90); • A court decision granting withholding of deportation; or • A letter from an asylum officer granting withholding or deportation (if application filed on or after 10/1/90).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-688 Temporary Resident Card annotated “Section 245A” or Section 210”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form I-688B Employment Authorization Card annotated “Provision of Law 274a. 12(11)” or “Provision of Law 274a.12”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A receipt issued by the USCIS indicating that an application for issuance of a replacement document in one of the above listed categories has been made and the applicant’s entitlement to the document has been verified; or • Other acceptable evidence. If other documents are determined by the USCIS to constitute acceptable evidence of eligible immigration status, they will be announced by notice published in the <i>Federal Register</i> 	

Chapter 8

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS AND RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS

[24 CFR 982 Subpart I and 24 CFR 982.507]

INTRODUCTION

HUD requires that all units occupied by families receiving Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance meet HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and permits the Augusta Housing Authority to establish additional requirements. The use of the term "HQS" in this plan refers to the combination of both HUD and Augusta Housing Authority established requirements.

All units must pass an HQS inspection prior to the approval of a lease and at least once every 24 months during the term of the contract, and at other times as needed, to determine that the unit meets HQS. HUD also requires the Augusta Housing Authority to determine that rents for units under the program are reasonable when compared to comparable unassisted units in the market area.

This chapter explains HUD and Augusta Housing Authority requirements related to housing quality and rent reasonableness as follows:

Part I. Physical Standards. This part discusses the physical standards required of units occupied by HCV-assisted families and identifies decisions about the acceptability of the unit that may be made by the family based upon the family's preference. It also identifies life-threatening conditions that must be addressed on an expedited basis.

Part II. The Inspection Process. This part describes the types of inspections the Augusta Housing Authority will make and the steps that will be taken when units do not meet HQS.

Part III. Rent Reasonableness Determinations. This part discusses the policies the Augusta Housing Authority will use to make rent reasonableness determinations.

Special HQS requirements for homeownership, manufactured homes, and other special housing types are discussed in Chapter 15 to the extent that they apply in this jurisdiction.

PART I: PHYSICAL STANDARDS

8-I.A. GENERAL HUD REQUIREMENTS

HUD Performance and Acceptability Standards

HUD's performance and acceptability standards for HCV-assisted housing are provided in 24 CFR 982.401. These standards cover the following areas:

- Sanitary facilities
- Food preparation and refuse disposal
- Space and Security
- Thermal Environment
- Illumination and electricity
- Structure and materials
- Interior Air Quality
- Water Supply
- Lead-based paint
- Access
- Site and neighborhood
- Sanitary condition
- Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

A summary of HUD performance criteria is provided in Exhibit 8-1. Additional guidance on these requirements is found in the following HUD resources:

- Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook, Chapter 10.
- HUD Housing Inspection Manual for Section 8 Housing
- HUD Inspection Form, form HUD-52580 (3/01) and Inspection Checklist, form HUD-52580-A (9/00)
- HUD Notice 2003-31, Accessibility Notice: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and the Fair Housing Act of 1988.

Tenant Preference Items

HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to enforce minimum HQS but also recognizes that certain judgments about the acceptability of the unit are left to the family. For example, the Augusta Housing Authority must ensure that the unit contains the required sanitary facilities, but the family decides whether the cosmetic appearance of the facilities is acceptable. Exhibit 8-2 summarizes those items that are considered tenant preferences.

Modifications to Provide Accessibility

Under the Fair Housing Act of 1988 an owner must not refuse the request of a family that contains a person with a disability to make necessary and reasonable modifications to the unit. Such modifications are at the family's expense. The owner may require restoration of the unit to its original condition if the modification would interfere with the owner or next occupant's full enjoyment of the premises. The owner may not increase a customarily required security deposit. However, the landlord may negotiate a restoration agreement that requires the family to restore the unit and, if necessary to ensure the likelihood of restoration, may require the tenant to pay a reasonable amount into an interest-bearing escrow account over a reasonable period of time. The interest in any such account accrues to the benefit of the tenant. The owner may also require reasonable assurances that the quality of the work will be acceptable and that any required building permits will be obtained. [24 CFR 100.203; Notice 2003-31].

Modifications to units to provide access for a person with a disability must meet all applicable HQS requirements and conform to the design, construction, or alteration of facilities contained in the UFAS and the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) [28 CFR 35.151(c) and Notice 2003-31] See Chapter 2 of this plan for additional information on reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any owner that intends to negotiate a restoration agreement or require an escrow account must submit the agreement(s) to the Augusta Housing Authority for review.

8-I.B. ADDITIONAL LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

The PHA may impose variations to the HQS as long as the additional criteria are not likely to adversely affect the health or safety of participant families or severely restrict housing choices for families. HUD approval is required for variations to the HQS. HUD approval is not required if the variations are clarifications of HUD's acceptability criteria or performance standards [24 CFR 982.401(a)(4)].

Thermal Environment [HCV GB p.10-7]

The Augusta Housing Authority must define a “healthy living environment” for the local climate. This may be done by establishing a temperature that the heating system must be capable of maintaining, that is appropriate for the local climate.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The heating system must be capable of maintaining an interior temperature of 65 degrees Fahrenheit between October 1 and May 1.

Clarifications of HUD Requirements

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

As permitted by HUD, the Augusta Housing Authority has adopted the following specific requirements that elaborate on HUD standards.

Walls

In areas where plaster or drywall is sagging, severely cracked, or otherwise damaged, it must be repaired or replaced.

Any exterior or interior surfaces with peeling or chipping paint must be prepared and painted

Windows

Window sashes must be in good condition, solid and intact, and properly fitted to the window frame. Damaged or deteriorated sashes must be replaced.

Windows must be weather-stripped as needed to ensure a weather-tight seal.

Window screens must be in good condition (applies only if screens are present).

Any room for sleeping must have a window.

Doors

All exterior doors must be weather-tight to avoid any air or water infiltration, be lockable, have no holes, have all trim intact, and have a threshold.

All interior doors must have no holes, have all trim intact, and be openable without the use of a key.

Floors

All wood floors must be sanded to a smooth surface and sealed. Any loose or warped boards must be secured and made level. If they cannot be leveled, they must be replaced.

All floors must be in a finished state. Raw wood or unsealed concrete is not permitted.

All floors should have some type of base shoe, trim, or sealing for a "finished look." Vinyl base shoe is permitted.

Sinks

All sinks and commode water lines must have shut off valves, unless faucets are wall mounted.

Toilets

All worn or cracked toilet seats and tank lids must be replaced and toilet tank lid must fit properly.

Security

If window security bars or security screens are present on emergency exit windows, they must be equipped with a quick release system. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the family is instructed on the use of the quick release system. Also, AHA will disapprove security bars on the windows if only one (1) window is located in the room. If there are two (2) or more windows in the room, at least one (1) window needs to be free from security bars.

Smoke detectors

The owner is responsible for providing and replacing batteries for battery powered smoke detectors. Tenants will be instructed not to tamper with smoke detectors or remove batteries.

Carbon Monoxide detectors

The owner is responsible for providing and replacing batteries for battery powered carbon monoxide detectors. Tenants will be instructed not to tamper with carbon monoxide detectors or remove batteries.

Bedrooms

Bedrooms in basements or attics are not allowed unless they meet local code requirements and must have adequate ventilation and emergency exit capability.

Minimum bedroom ceiling height is 7'6" or local code, whichever is greater. Sloping ceilings may not slope to lower than five feet in the 70-square foot area.

8-I.C. LIFE-THREATENING CONDITIONS [24 CFR 982.404(a); FR Notice 1/18/17]

HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to define life-threatening conditions and to notify the owner or the family (whichever is responsible) of the corrections required. The responsible party must correct life-threatening conditions within 24 hours of Augusta Housing Authority notification. Other emergency conditions must be corrected within 72 hours of the Augusta Housing Authority notification.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The following are considered life-threatening conditions:

Any condition that jeopardizes the security of the unit

Major plumbing leaks or flooding, waterlogged ceiling or floor in imminent danger of falling

Natural or LP gas or fuel oil leaks or fumes

Any electrical problem or condition that could result in shock or fire

Inoperable or missing smoke detectors or carbon monoxide detectors

Broken glass where someone could be injured

Conditions that present the imminent possibility of injury

Obstacles that prevent safe entrance or exit from the unit

Absence of a functioning toilet in the unit if there is only 1 bathroom

In those cases where there is leaking gas or potential of fire or other threat to public safety, and the responsible party cannot be notified or it is impossible to make the repair, proper authorities will be notified by the Augusta Housing Authority.

If an owner fails to correct life-threatening conditions as required by the Augusta Housing Authority, the Augusta Housing Authority will enforce the HQS in accordance with HUD requirements. See 8-II-G.

If a family fails to correct a family-caused life-threatening condition as required by the Augusta Housing Authority, the Augusta Housing Authority will enforce the family obligations. See 8-II.H.

The owner will be required to repair an inoperable smoke detector or carbon monoxide detector unless the Augusta Housing Authority determines that the family has intentionally disconnected it (by removing batteries or other means). In this case, the family will be required to repair the smoke detector or carbon monoxide detector within 24 hours.

The owner and tenant shall have three (3) calendar days to correct the following items.

Absence of a working heating system when outside temperature is below 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

Utilities not in service, including no gas in the unit, no electricity in the unit, and no running hot water

Deteriorating paint as defined at 24 CFR 35.110 in a unit built before 1978 that is to be occupied by a family with a child under six years of age if it would prevent the family from moving into the unit

In cases where utilities have been disconnected, the AHA shall send a separate letter to the family and owner informing them of the deficiency. The letter will require the responsible party based on information from the RFTA to provide documentation that the utility has been reinstated. Failure to provide the documentation may lead to the cancellation of the contract with the owner or termination of assistance for the family.

8-I.D. OWNER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.404]

Family Responsibilities

The family is responsible for correcting the following HQS deficiencies:

- Tenant-paid utilities not in service
- Failure to provide or maintain appliances owned by the family
- Damage to the unit or premises caused by a household member or guest beyond normal wear and tear that result in a breach of the HQS. "Normal wear and tear" is defined as items which could not be charged against the tenant's security deposit under state law or court practice.

Owner Responsibilities

The owner is responsible for all HQS violations not listed as a family responsibility above, even

if the violation is caused by the family's living habits (e.g., vermin infestation). However, if the family's actions constitute a serious or repeated lease violation the owner may take legal action to evict the family.

8-I.E. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL [24 CFR 35.1225; FR Notice 1/13/17]

If the Augusta Housing Authority is notified by a public health department or other medical health care provider, or verifies information from a source other than a public health department or medical health care provider, that a child of less than 6 years of age, living in an HCV-assisted unit has been identified as having an environmental intervention blood lead level, the Augusta Housing Authority must complete a risk assessment of the dwelling unit within 15 calendar days after being notified by a public health department or other medical health care provider. The risk assessment must be completed in accordance with program requirements, and the result of the risk assessment must be immediately provided to the owner of the dwelling unit. In cases where the public health department has already completed an evaluation of the unit, this information must be provided to the owner.

Within 30 days after receiving the risk assessment report from the Augusta Housing Authority, or the evaluation from the public health department, the owner is required to complete the reduction of identified lead-based paint hazards in accordance with the lead-based paint regulations [24 CFR 35.1325 and 35.1330]. If the owner does not complete the “hazard reduction” as required, the dwelling unit is in violation of HQS and the Augusta Housing Authority will take action in accordance with Section 8-II.G.

Augusta Housing Authority reporting requirements, and data collection and record keeping responsibilities related to children with an environmental intervention blood lead level are discussed in Chapter 16.

8-I.F. VIOLATION OF HQS SPACE STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.401, 24 CFR 982.403]

A dwelling unit must:

- Provide adequate space and security for the family
- Have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons

A unit that does not meet these HQS space standards is defined as *overcrowded*.

A living room may be used as sleeping (bedroom) space, but no more than two persons may occupy the space [HCV GB p. 10-6]. A bedroom or living/sleeping room must have at least:

- One window
- Two electrical outlets in proper operating condition (permanent overhead or wall-mounted light fixtures may count as one of the required electrical outlets)

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines that a unit is overcrowded because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition, the Augusta Housing Authority must issue the family a new voucher, and the family must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, the Augusta Housing Authority must terminate the HAP contract for the assisted unit in accordance with its terms.

PART II: THE INSPECTION PROCESS

8-II.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.405]

Types of Inspections

The Augusta Housing Authority conducts the following types of inspections as needed. Each type of inspection is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

- *Initial Inspections.* The Augusta Housing Authority conducts initial inspections in response to a request from the family to approve a unit for participation in the HCV program.
- *Annual/Biennial Inspections.* HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to inspect each unit under lease at every 24 months to confirm that the unit still meets HQS. The inspection may be conducted in conjunction with the family's annual reexamination but also may be conducted separately.
- *Special Inspections.* A special inspection may be requested by the owner, the family, or a third party as a result of problems identified with a unit between biennial inspections.
- *Quality Control Inspections.* HUD requires that a sample of units be inspected by a supervisor or other qualified individual to evaluate the work of the inspector(s) and to ensure that inspections are performed in compliance with the HQS.

Inspection of PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must obtain the services of an independent entity to perform all HQS inspections in cases where an HCV family is receiving assistance in a PHA-owned unit. A PHA-owned unit is defined as a unit that is owned by the PHA that administers the assistance under the consolidated ACC (including a unit owned by an entity substantially controlled by the PHA). The independent agency must communicate the results of each inspection to the family and the Augusta Housing Authority. The independent agency must be approved by HUD, and may be the unit of general local government for the Augusta Housing Authority jurisdiction (unless the PHA is itself the unit of general local government or an agency of such government).

Inspection Costs [Notice PIH 2016-05]

The Augusta Housing Authority may not charge the family for unit inspections or reinspections [24 CFR 982.405(e)]. In the case of inspections of PHA-owned units, the Augusta Housing Authority may compensate the independent agency from ongoing administrative fee for inspections performed. The Augusta Housing Authority and the independent agency may not charge the family any fee or charge for the inspection [24 CFR.982.352(b)].

The Augusta Housing Authority may not charge the owner for the inspection of the unit prior to the initial term of the lease or for a first inspection during assisted occupancy of the unit. However, the PHAs may charge a reasonable fee to owners for reinspections in two situations: when the owner notifies the PHA that a repair has been made but the deficiency has not been corrected, and when the time for repairs has elapsed and the deficiency has not been corrected. Fees may not be imposed for tenant-caused damages, for cases in which the inspector could not gain access to the unit, or for new deficiencies discovered during a reinspection.

The owner may not pass the cost of a reinspection fee to the family. Reinspection fees must be added to the PHA's administrative fee reserves and may only be used for activities related to the provision of tenant-based assistance.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not charge a fee for failed reinspections.

Notice and Scheduling

The family must allow the Augusta Housing Authority to inspect the unit at reasonable times with reasonable notice [24 CFR 982.551(d)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Both the family and the owner will be given reasonable notice in writing or by phone of all inspections. Except in the case of a life-threatening emergency, reasonable notice is considered to be not less than 48 hours. Inspections may be scheduled between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Generally, inspections will be conducted on business days only. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, the Augusta Housing Authority will give as much notice as possible, given the nature of the emergency.

Owner and Family Inspection Attendance

HUD permits the Augusta Housing Authority to set policy regarding family and owner presence at the time of inspection [HCV GB p. 10-27].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When a family occupies the unit at the time of inspection, an adult family member must be present for the inspection. The presence of the owner or the owner's representative is encouraged but is not required.

At initial inspection of a vacant unit, the Augusta Housing Authority will inspect the unit in the presence of the owner or owner's representative. The presence of a family representative is permitted, but is not required.

8-II.B. INITIAL HQS INSPECTION [24 CFR 982.401(a)]

Initial Inspections [FR Notice 1/18/17]

The PHA may, but is not required to, approve assisted tenancy and start HAP if the unit fails HQS inspection, but only if the deficiencies identified are non-life-threatening. Further, the PHA may, but is not required to, authorize occupancy if a unit passed an alternative inspection in the last 24 months.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The unit must pass the HQS inspection on or before the effective date of the HAP contract.

For Initial Inspections, the Augusta Housing Authority will not rely on alternative inspections and will conduct an HQS inspection for each unit prior to executing a HAP contract with the owner.

Timing of Initial Inspections

HUD requires PHAs with fewer than 1,250 budgeted units to complete the initial inspection, determine whether the unit satisfies HQS, and notify the owner and the family of the determination within 15 days of submission of the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA). For PHAs with 1,250 or more budgeted units, to the extent practicable such inspection and determination must be completed within 15 days. The 15-day period is suspended for any period during which the unit is not available for inspection [982.305(b)(2)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will complete the initial inspection, determine whether the unit satisfies HQS, and notify the owner and the family of the determination within 15 days of submission of the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA).

Inspection Results and Reinspections

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If any HQS violations are identified, the owner will be notified of the deficiencies. The owner must correct the deficiencies in a reasonable time. Within 5 business days of the date the owner notifies the Augusta Housing Authority that the required corrections have been made, the Augusta Housing Authority will reinspect the unit. Depending on the amount and complexity of the work to be completed, the owner or family may decide to withdraw the RFTA.

If the unit fails HQS at the time of the reinspection, the Augusta Housing Authority will notify the owner and the family that the unit has been rejected and that the family must search for another unit. The Augusta Housing Authority may agree to conduct a second reinspection, for good cause, at the request of the family and owner.

Following a failed reinspection, the family may submit a new RFTA after the owner has made repairs, if they are unable to locate another suitable unit.

Utilities

At initial lease-up, the owner is responsible for demonstrating that all utilities are in working order including those utilities that the family will be responsible for paying.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

All utilities must be in service prior to the inspection. If utility service is not available for testing at the time of the initial inspection, the AHA will not complete the inspection. AHA will notify the owner to have the utilities turned on temporary. The owner must contact the AHA to schedule an inspection of the unit.

Appliances [Form HUD-52580]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

All appliances must be in the unit prior to the inspection. If the appliances have not be placed in the unit at the time of the inspection, the AHA will not complete the inspection. AHA will notify the owner to place clean and operable appliances in the unit. Once the appliances have been placed in the unit, the owner must contact AHA to schedule an inspection of the unit.

8-II.C. ANNUAL/BIENNIAL HQS INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405 and 982.406; Notice PIH 2016-05]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA conducts inspections of units under HAP contract at least biennially, and no later than 24 months after the last full HQS inspection to determine continuing compliance with HQS.

The AHA may rely on alternative inspection standards for units that have failed the annual/biennial reinspection. The alternative standards will be a self-certification of non-emergency HQS failed items. The certification(s) must be in writing and submitted by the owner and client prior to approval by AHA.

Scheduling the Inspection

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If an adult family member cannot be present on the scheduled date, the family should request that the AHA reschedule the inspection. The AHA and family will agree on a new inspection date that generally should take place within 15 business days of the originally-scheduled date. The AHA may schedule an inspection more than 15 business days after the original date for good cause.

If the family misses the first scheduled appointment without requesting a new inspection date, the AHA will automatically schedule a second inspection. If the family misses two scheduled inspections without AHA approval, the AHA will consider the family to have violated its obligation to make the unit available for inspection. This may result in termination of the family's assistance in accordance with Chapter 12.

8-II.D. SPECIAL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(g)]

If a participant or government official reports a life-threatening condition which the owner would be required to repair within 24 hours, the PHA must inspect the unit within 24 hours of notification. If the reported condition is not life-threatening, the PHA must inspect the unit within 15 days of notification.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

During a special inspection, the AHA generally will inspect only those deficiencies that were reported. However, the inspector will record any additional HQS deficiencies that are observed and will require the responsible party to make the necessary repairs.

8-II.E. QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(b); HCV GB, p. 10-32]

HUD requires an Augusta Housing Authority supervisor or other qualified person to conduct quality control inspections of a sample of units to ensure that each inspector is conducting accurate and complete inspections and that there is consistency in the application of the HQS.

The unit sample must include only units that have been inspected within the preceding 3 months. The selected sample will include (1) each type of inspection (initial, annual/biennial, and special), (2) inspections completed by each inspector, and (3) units from a cross-section of neighborhoods.

8-II.F. INSPECTION RESULTS AND REINSPECTIONS FOR UNITS UNDER HAP CONTRACT

Notification of Corrective Actions

The owner and the family will be notified in writing of the results of all inspections. When an inspection identifies HQS failures, the Augusta Housing Authority will determine (1) whether or not the failure is a life-threatening condition and (2) whether the family or owner is responsible.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When life-threatening conditions are identified, the AHA will immediately notify both parties by telephone, facsimile, or email. The notice will specify who is responsible for correcting the violation. The corrective actions must be taken within 24 hours of the AHA's notice.

When failures that are not life-threatening are identified, the AHA will send the owner and the family a written notification of the inspection results within two (2) business days of the inspection. The written notice will specify who is responsible for correcting the violation, and the time frame within which the failure must be corrected. Generally, not more than 30 days will be allowed for the correction.

The notice of inspection results will inform the owner that if life-threatening conditions are not corrected within 24 hours, and non-life-threatening conditions are not corrected within the specified time frame (or any AHA-approved extension), the owner's HAP will be abated in accordance with AHA policy (see 8-II.G.). Likewise, in the case of family caused deficiencies, the notice will inform the family that if corrections are not made within the specified time frame (or any AHA-approved extension, if applicable) the family's assistance will be terminated in accordance with AHA policy (see Chapter 12).

Extensions

For conditions that are life-threatening, the Augusta Housing Authority cannot grant an extension to the 24-hour corrective action period. For conditions that are not life-threatening, the Augusta Housing Authority may grant an exception to the required time frames for correcting the violation, if the PHA determines that an extension is appropriate [24 CFR 982.404].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Extensions will be granted in cases where the AHA has determined that the owner has made a good faith effort to correct the deficiencies and is unable to complete the repairs for reasons beyond the owner's control. Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

Repairs cannot be completed because required parts or services are not available.

Repairs cannot be completed because of weather conditions.

Repairs are expensive and the owner needs time to obtain the funds

Repairs are extensive (several major items must be corrected)

Circumstances beyond the owners control such as death, serious illness or medical emergency

A reasonable accommodation is needed because the family includes a person with disabilities.

The length of the extension will be determined on a case by case basis, but will not exceed 45 days, except in the case of delays caused by weather conditions. In the case of weather conditions, extensions may be continued until the weather has improved sufficiently to make repairs possible. The necessary repairs must be made within 15 calendar days, once the weather conditions have subsided.

Reinspections

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will conduct a reinspection immediately following the end of the corrective period, or any AHA approved extension.

The family and owner will be given written notice of the reinspection appointment. If the deficiencies have not been corrected by the time of the reinspection, the AHA will send a notice of abatement to the owner, or in the case of family caused violations, a notice of termination to the family, in accordance with AHA policies. If the family is not at home for the annual/biennial failed reinspection appointment, a card will be left at the unit and AHA will consider the family to have violated its obligation to make the unit available for inspection. The owner or tenant will be required to contact AHA to reschedule the appointment. If no one contacts the Augusta Housing Authority to reschedule the reinspection, or if the family miss two (2) reinspection appointments, the Augusta Housing Authority will consider the family to have violated a Family Obligation and their assistance may be terminated in accordance with the termination procedures in the Plan (Chapter 12).

8-II.G. ENFORCING OWNER COMPLIANCE

If the owner fails to maintain the dwelling unit in accordance with HQS, the Augusta Housing Authority must take prompt and vigorous action to enforce the owner obligations.

HAP Abatement

If an owner fails to correct HQS deficiencies by the time specified by the Augusta Housing Authority, HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to abate housing assistance payments no later than the first of the month following the specified correction period (including any approved extension) [24 CFR 985.3(f)]. No retroactive payments will be made to the owner for the period of time the rent was abated. Owner rents are not abated as a result of HQS failures that are the family's responsibility.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will make all HAP abatements effective from the day after the date of the failed re-inspection and no later than the first of the month following the expiration of the AHA specified correction period (including any extension).

The AHA will inspect abated units within 5 business days of the owner's notification that the work has been completed. Payment will resume effective on the day the unit passes inspection.

If the owner submits a written statement outlining the reason for the delayed pass HQS and appropriate documentation of completion of the work, the AHA may consider rescinding the abatement. The documents submitted by the owner must be verified prior to rescinding the abatement.

During any abatement period, the family continues to be responsible for its share of the rent. The owner must not seek payment from the family for abated amounts and may not use the abatement as cause for eviction.

HAP Contract Termination

The PHA must decide how long any abatement period will continue before the HAP contract will be terminated. The PHA should not terminate the contract until the family finds another unit, provided the family does so in a reasonable time [HCV GB p. 10-29] and must give the owner reasonable notice of the termination. The PHA will issue a voucher to permit the family to move to another unit as described in Chapter 10.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The maximum length of time that HAP may be abated is 60 days. However, if the owner completes corrections and notifies the AHA before the termination date of the HAP contract, the AHA may rescind the termination notice if (1) the family still resides in the unit and wishes to remain in the unit and (2) the unit passes inspection.

Reasonable notice of HAP contract termination by the AHA is 30 days.

8-II.H. ENFORCING FAMILY COMPLIANCE WITH HQS [24 CFR 982.404(b)]

Families are responsible for correcting any HQS violations listed in paragraph 8.I.D. If the family fails to correct a violation within the period allowed by the Augusta Housing Authority (and any extensions), the Augusta Housing Authority will terminate the family's assistance, according to the policies described in Chapter 12.

If the owner carries out a repair for which the family is responsible under the lease, the owner may bill the family for the cost of the repair.

PART III: RENT REASONABLENESS [24 CFR 982.507]

8-III.A. OVERVIEW

Except in the case of certain LIHTC- and HOME-assisted units, no HAP contract can be approved until the PHA has determined that the rent for the unit is reasonable. The purpose of the rent reasonableness test is to ensure that a fair rent is paid for each unit rented under the HCV program.

HUD regulations define a reasonable rent as one that does not exceed the rent charged for comparable, unassisted units in the same market area. HUD also requires that owners not charge more for assisted units than for comparable units on the premises. This part explains the method used to determine whether a unit's rent is reasonable.

PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)]

In cases where an HCV family is receiving assistance in a PHA-owned unit, the PHA must obtain the services of an independent entity to determine rent reasonableness in accordance with program requirements, and to assist the family in negotiating the contract rent when the family requests assistance. A PHA-owned unit is defined as a unit that is owned by the PHA that administers the assistance under the consolidated ACC (including a unit owned by an entity substantially controlled by the PHA). The independent agency must communicate the results of the rent reasonableness determination to the family and the PHA. The independent agency must be approved by HUD, and may be the unit of general local government for the PHA jurisdiction (unless the PHA is itself the unit of general local government or an agency of such government).

8-III.B. WHEN RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS ARE REQUIRED

Owner-Initiated Rent Determinations

The Augusta Housing Authority must make a rent reasonableness determination at initial occupancy and whenever the owner requests a rent adjustment.

The owner and family first negotiate the rent for a unit. The Augusta Housing Authority (or independent agency in the case of PHA-owned units) will assist the family with the negotiations upon request. At initial occupancy, the Augusta Housing Authority must determine whether the proposed rent is reasonable before a HAP Contract is signed. The owner must not change the rent during the initial lease term. Subsequent requests for rent adjustments must be consistent with the lease between the owner and the family. Rent increases will not be approved unless any failed items identified by the most recent HQS inspection have been corrected.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

After the initial occupancy period, the owner may request a rent adjustment in accordance with the owner's lease. For rent increase requests after initial lease-up, the AHA may request owners to provide information about the rents charged for other units on the premises, if the premises include more than 4 units. In evaluating the proposed rents in comparison to other units on the premises the AHA will consider unit size and length of tenancy in the other units.

The AHA will determine whether the requested increase is reasonable within 30 business days of receiving the written request from the owner. The owner will be notified of the determination in writing.

All rents adjustments will be effective on the first of the month commencing on or after the anniversary date subject to the assisted unit passing the HQS Inspection.

PHA- and HUD-Initiated Rent Reasonableness Determinations

HUD requires the PHA to make a determination of rent reasonableness (even if the owner has not requested a change) if there is a 10 percent decrease in the fair market rent that goes into effect at least 60 days before the contract anniversary date. HUD also may direct the PHA to make a determination at any other time. The PHA may decide that a new determination of rent reasonableness is needed at any time.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In addition to the instances described above, the AHA will make a determination of rent reasonableness at any time after the initial occupancy period if: (1) the AHA determines that the initial rent reasonableness determination was in error or (2) the AHA determines that the information provided by the owner about the unit or other units on the same premises was incorrect.

LIHTC- and HOME-Assisted Units [24 CFR 982.507(c)]

For units receiving low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs) or units assisted under HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, a rent comparison with unassisted units is not required if the voucher rent does not exceed the rent for other LIHTC- or HOME-assisted units in the project that are not occupied by families with tenant-based assistance.

For LIHTCs, if the rent requested by the owner does exceed the LIHTC rents for non-voucher families, the Augusta Housing Authority must perform a rent comparability study in accordance with program regulations. In such cases, the rent shall not exceed the lesser of: (1) the reasonable rent as determined from the rent comparability study; or (2) the payment standard established by the Augusta Housing Authority for the unit size involved.

8-III.C. HOW COMPARABILITY IS ESTABLISHED

Factors to Consider

HUD requires PHAs to take into consideration the factors listed below when determining rent comparability. The Augusta Housing Authority may use these factors to make upward or downward adjustments to the rents of comparison units when the units are not identical to the HCV-assisted unit.

- Location and age
- Unit size including the number of rooms and square footage of rooms
- The type of unit including construction type (e.g., single family, duplex, garden, low-rise, high-rise)
- The quality of the units including the quality of the original construction, maintenance and improvements made
- Amenities, services, and utilities included in the rent

Units that Must Not Be Used as Comparables

Comparable units must represent unrestricted market rents. Therefore, units that receive some form of federal, state, or local assistance that imposes rent restrictions cannot be considered comparable units. These include units assisted by HUD through any of the following programs: Section 8 project-based assistance, Section 236 and Section 221(d)(3) Below Market Interest Rate (BMIR) projects, HOME or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program-assisted units in which the rents are subsidized; units subsidized through federal, state, or local tax credits; units subsidized by the Department of Agriculture rural housing programs, and units that are rent-controlled by local ordinance.

Note: Notice PIH 2011-46, issued August 17, 2011, provides further guidance on the issue of what constitutes an assisted unit.

Rents Charged for Other Units on the Premises

The Request for Tenancy Approval (HUD-52517) requires owners to provide information, on the form itself, about the rent charged for other unassisted comparable units on the premises if the premises include more than 4 units.

By accepting the Augusta Housing Authority payment each month, the owner certifies that the rent is not more than the rent charged for comparable unassisted units on the premises. If asked to do so, the owner must give the Augusta Housing Authority information regarding rents charged for other units on the premises.

8-III.D. PHA RENT REASONABLENESS METHODOLOGY

How Market Data Is Collected

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will contract with Affordable Housing Network, LLC to allow AHA to access their GoSection8.com software. This website provides AHA an opportunity to view current comparable rental data to complete the rent reasonableness analysis for the assisted units.

How Rents Are Determined

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The rent for a unit proposed for HCV assistance will be compared to the rent charged for comparable units in the same market area. The AHA will develop a range of prices for comparable units by bedroom size within defined market areas. Units proposed for HCV assistance will be compared to the units within this rent range. Because units may be similar, but not exactly like the unit proposed for HCV assistance, the AHA may make adjustments to the range of prices to account for these differences.

The adjustment must reflect the local market. Not all differences in units require adjustments (e.g., the presence or absence of a garbage disposal may not affect the rent in some market areas).

Adjustments may vary by unit type (e.g., a second bathroom may be more valuable in a three-bedroom unit than in a two-bedroom).

The adjustment must reflect the rental value of the difference—not its construction costs (e.g., it might cost \$20,000 to put on a new roof, but the new roof might not make any difference in what a tenant would be willing to pay because rental units are presumed to have functioning roofs).

The AHA will notify the owner of the rent the AHA can approve based upon its analysis of rents for comparable units. The owner may submit information about other comparable units in the market area. The AHA will confirm the accuracy of the information provided and consider this additional information when making rent determinations. The owner must submit any additional information within 5 business days of the AHA's request for information or the owner's request to submit information.

EXHIBIT 8-1: OVERVIEW OF HUD HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

Note: This document provides an overview of HQS. For more detailed information see the following documents:

- 24 CFR 982.401, Housing Quality Standards (HQS)
- Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook, Chapter 10.
- HUD Housing Inspection Manual for Section 8 Housing
- HUD Inspection Form, form HUD-52580 (3/01) and Inspection Checklist, form HUD-52580-A (9/00)

Sanitary Facilities

The dwelling unit must include sanitary facilities within the unit. The sanitary facilities must be usable in privacy and must be in proper operating condition and adequate for personal cleanliness and disposal of human waste.

Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal

The dwelling unit must have space and equipment suitable for the family to store, prepare, and serve food in a sanitary manner.

Space and Security

The dwelling unit must provide adequate space and security for the family. This includes having at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.

Thermal Environment

The unit must have a safe system for heating the dwelling unit. Air conditioning is not required but if provided must be in proper operating condition. The dwelling unit must not contain unvented room heaters that burn gas, oil, or kerosene. Portable electric room heaters or kitchen stoves with built-in heating units are not acceptable as a primary source of heat for units located in climatic areas where permanent heat systems are required.

Illumination and Electricity

Each room must have adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and to support the health and safety of occupants. The dwelling unit must have sufficient electrical sources so occupants can use essential electrical appliances. Minimum standards are set for different types of rooms. Once the minimum standards are met, the number, type and location of electrical sources are a matter of tenant preference.

Structure and Materials

The dwelling unit must be structurally sound. Handrails are required when four or more steps (risers) are present, and protective railings are required when porches, balconies, and stoops are thirty inches or more off the ground. The elevator servicing the unit must be working [if there is one]. Manufactured homes must have proper tie-down devices capable of surviving wind loads common to the area.

Interior Air Quality

The dwelling unit must be free of air pollutant levels that threaten the occupants' health. There must be adequate air circulation in the dwelling unit. Bathroom areas must have one openable window or other adequate ventilation. Any sleeping room must have at least one window. If a window was designed to be opened, it must be in proper working order.

Water Supply

The dwelling unit must be served by an approved public or private water supply that is sanitary and free from contamination. Plumbing fixtures and pipes must be free of leaks and threats to health and safety.

Lead-Based Paint

Lead-based paint requirements apply to dwelling units built prior to 1978 that are occupied or can be occupied by families with children under six years of age, excluding zero bedroom dwellings. Owners must:

- Disclose known lead-based paint hazards to prospective tenants before the lease is signed,
- provide all prospective families with "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home",
- Stabilize deteriorated painted surfaces and conduct hazard reduction activities when identified by the PHA
- Notify tenants each time such an activity is performed
- Conduct all work in accordance with HUD safe practices
- As part of ongoing maintenance ask each family to report deteriorated paint.

For units occupied by environmental intervention blood lead level (lead poisoned) children under six years of age, a risk assessment must be conducted (paid for by the PHA). If lead hazards are identified during the risk assessment, the owner must complete hazard reduction activities.

See HCV GB p. 10-15 for a detailed description of these requirements. For additional information on lead-based paint requirements see 24 CFR 35, Subparts A, B, M, and R.

Access

Use and maintenance of the unit must be possible without unauthorized use of other private properties. The building must provide an alternate means of exit in case of fire.

Site and Neighborhood

The site and neighborhood must be reasonably free from disturbing noises and reverberations, excessive trash or vermin, or other dangers to the health, safety, and general welfare of the occupants.

Sanitary Condition

The dwelling unit and its equipment must be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation. The unit must have adequate barriers to prevent infestation.

Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors must be installed in accordance with and meet the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 74 (or its successor standards). If the dwelling unit is occupied by any person with a hearing impairment, smoke detectors must have an appropriate alarm system as specified in NFPA 74 (or successor standards).

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

In accordance with Notice PIH 2022-01, carbon monoxide alarms or detectors must be installed in dwelling unit(s) receiving tenant-based or project-based assistance. Housing Quality Standards (HQS) regulations require that at least one battery-operated, hard-wired, or hard-wired with a back-up battery carbon monoxide alarm or detector is installed. The carbon monoxide detector or alarm must be installed in the immediate vicinity of each sleeping area. During the HQS inspection, the inspector will check for the presence of operational carbon monoxide detectors.

Hazards and Health/Safety

The unit, interior and exterior common areas accessible to the family, the site, and the surrounding neighborhood must be free of hazards to the family's health and safety.

EXHIBIT 8-2: SUMMARY OF TENANT PREFERENCE AREAS RELATED TO HOUSING QUALITY

Note: This document provides an overview of unit and site characteristics and conditions for which the family determines acceptability. For more detailed information see the following documents:

- Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook, Chapter 10.
- HUD Housing Inspection Manual for Section 8 Housing
- HUD Inspection Form, form HUD-52580 (3/01) and Inspection Checklist, form HUD-52580-A (9/00)

Provided the minimum housing quality standards have been met, HUD permits the family to determine whether the unit is acceptable with regard to the following characteristics.

- *Sanitary Facilities.* The family may determine the adequacy of the cosmetic condition and quality of the sanitary facilities, including the size of the lavatory, tub, or shower; the location of the sanitary facilities within the unit; and the adequacy of the water heater.
- *Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal.* The family selects size and type of equipment it finds acceptable. When the family is responsible for supplying cooking appliances, the family may choose to use a microwave oven in place of a conventional oven, stove, or range. When the owner is responsible for providing cooking appliances, the owner may offer a microwave oven in place of an oven, stove, or range only if other subsidized and unsubsidized units on the premises are furnished with microwave ovens only. The adequacy of the amount and type of storage space, the cosmetic conditions of all equipment, and the size and location of the kitchen are all determined by the family.

- *Space and Security.* The family may determine the adequacy of room sizes and room locations. The family is also responsible for deciding the acceptability of the type of door and window locks.
- *Energy conservation items.* The family may determine whether the amount of insulation, presence of absence of storm doors and windows and other energy conservation items are acceptable.
- *Illumination and Electricity.* The family may determine whether the location and the number of outlets and fixtures (over and above those required to meet HQS standards) are acceptable or if the amount of electrical service is adequate for the use of appliances, computers, or stereo equipment.
- *Structure and Materials.* Families may determine whether minor defects, such as lack of paint, or worn flooring or carpeting will affect the livability of the unit.
- *Indoor Air.* Families may determine whether window and door screens, filters, fans, or other devices for proper ventilation are adequate to meet the family's needs. However, if screens are present they must be in good condition.
- *Sanitary Conditions.* The family determines whether the sanitary conditions in the unit, including minor infestations, are acceptable.
- *Neighborhood conditions.* Families may determine whether neighborhood conditions such as the presence of drug activity, commercial enterprises, and convenience to shopping will affect the livability of the unit.

Families have no discretion with respect to lead-based paint standards, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

<p style="text-align: center;">EXHIBIT 8-3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BED BUG POLICY</p>
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Introduction

Bed bugs are a growing problem on a national level, and as such, the Augusta Housing Authority has developed this policy for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The purpose of this policy is to establish roles and responsibilities for landlords, participants and AHA to minimize the potential for bed bugs and to provide guidance in cases where bed bugs are present to eliminate them as quickly as possible, and provide guidelines when a move is required.

The goal of the Augusta Housing Authority is to promote and provide safe, quality, housing to program participants. If bed bugs are present, it is the responsibility of the landlord, as stated in the HQS (CFR 982.401) to ensure that the dwelling unit and its equipment be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation. It is the responsibility of the tenant to cooperate with the landlord and/or extermination professional to ensure the elimination of bed bugs. It is imperative that all parties (tenant, landlord and extermination professional) work together toward a common goal— extermination and elimination. To assist the Authority in meeting this goal, please see the following information:

Following a report of bedbugs:

1. The HQS Inspectors will send out a failed inspection letter (giving 28 days) due to bed bug infestation and Director of Administration will send a copy of the attached bed bug letter.
2. The landlord shall have a third-party professional to inspect the dwelling unit to determine if bedbugs are present. Low level infestations may escape visual detection. For this reason, it is critical that inspections be conducted by trained third-party professionals.
 - a. The inspections shall occur within 3 business days of the resident's report when possible.
 - b. If the initial inspection denies the presence of bedbugs, the landlord will provide the Augusta Housing Authority with documentation from the licensed pest control company within 10 business days of the date of AHA's Bedbug letter.
 - c. If the initial inspection confirms the presence of bedbugs, the landlord will provide the Augusta Housing Authority with documentation from the licensed pest control company of the length, method and extent of the treatment depending on the severity and complexity of the infestation. Participants should be advised that treatment may take several weeks and possibly several applications.
3. If an infestation is suspected but cannot be verified, the HQS Inspectors will send out a second failed inspection letter due to bed bug infestation and payments will be abated.

4. If AHA receives written documentation (extermination professional) from the landlord confirming or denying the bedbugs AND after required treatment, another inspection will be scheduled to check the other items in the unit. HQS Inspectors will conduct the inspection and allow the landlord 28 days to make required repairs to the unit prior to the unit going into abatement.

Landlord Roles and Responsibilities

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract requires the landlord to maintain the contract unit and its premises in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS). If bed bugs are present, it is the responsibility of the landlord, as stated in the HQS (CFR 982.401) to ensure that the dwelling unit and its equipment be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation. In order to comply with the HQS, if the presence of bed bugs is suspected, the landlord must notify the Housing Authority (HA) immediately and it is strongly recommended that the landlord contact an extermination professional for an immediate inspection. If treatment is deemed necessary, a copy of the contract the landlord entered into with the extermination professional (including all treatment performed) must be provided to the HA by the landlord within 48 hours of initial determination that treatment is required. Failure to comply with the above requirements may result in abatement/termination of the housing assistance payments or termination of the HAP contract.

Tenant Roles and Responsibilities

The HAP contract requires the tenant to keep the unit and its premises free from damage. Therefore, if the presence of bed bugs is suspected, it is the tenant's responsibility to notify the landlord and the HA immediately in order to minimize any potential damage to the unit. In addition, it is the responsibility of the tenant to work cooperatively with the landlord and/or extermination professional to ensure the successful elimination of bed bugs. Tenant non-compliance may result in the loss of the Housing Choice Voucher.

If the tenant notifies the landlord of the presence of bed bugs and the landlord fails to take action within a reasonable period of time, the tenant should notify the HA.

AHA Roles and Responsibilities

The HA will ensure the landlord maintains the unit within HQS guidelines and provide guidance on the resolution of any potential bed bug problems. All program participants with exposure to bed bugs within the last 12-month period and opts to move, the HA will advise them of preventive measures to take in order to minimize the transfer of bed bugs to the new unit.

EXHIBIT 8-4

PREVENTION AND SAFE REMOVAL OF BEDBUGS

Bedbug infestations have become a serious problem in housing throughout the country. Public Housing properties are not immune to infestations, anyone or any home can get bedbugs. Bedbugs live on human and animal blood and typically hide and live in cracks and crevices in dark and undisturbed locations close to their hosts. They can live for long periods of time and although visible to the naked eye, they may be difficult to detect.

Bedbug Prevention Action Plan

- Inspect in and around sleeping and resting areas at home once a month.
- Look for signs of bedbug activity, active infestations will have fecal spotting, live or dead bedbugs, shed skins and bedbug eggs.
- Avoid used furniture and mattresses, especially discarded furniture and mattresses. Used furniture and refurbished mattresses may have bedbugs and bedbug eggs that are difficult to see.
- Inspect for the signs of bedbugs when traveling away from home. Look for live or dead bedbugs, shed bedbug skins or bedbug eggs and fecal spots on mattresses, clothing or dark cracks and crevices. Wood, metal or plastic furniture, sofas, chairs, tables and many other items may be infested with bedbugs.
- If contact with an active bedbug infestation is suspected away from home, segregate and isolate in sealed plastic bags any exposed luggage, clothing and personal effects until inspection and decontamination can be completed.
- Bedbugs prefer to live in cracks and crevices in areas like baseboards, moldings, window/door frames, and cracks/seams in walls and furniture, especially headboards and bed frames and screw holes.
- Seal baseboards, cracks, crevices, heat, plumbing and electrical services shared between apartments with pest-proofing sealants.
- Encase mattresses and box springs. Seal box springs in an appropriate zippered encasement to prevent bedbugs hiding inside from escaping; this location is commonly affected in bedbug infestations and yet difficult to inspect.
- Thoroughly vacuum apartment, furniture and all belongings and use crevice tools and other attachments where feasible. Place the contents of the vacuum in a tightly sealed disposable bag and remove.

EARLY DETECTION IS CRITICAL Early identification and reporting of infestations by residents to building management and neighbors limits the spread of bedbugs. As soon as possible contact Property Manager and/or pest management company. Report the suspected activity as soon as possible. The longer you wait the more likely the problem is to spread and the more difficult and costly it will be to control.

Bedbug Removal Action Plan

The following sequence of steps has been outlined by the Armed Forces Pest Management Board in order to facilitate control of bedbugs in housing.

- Using a vacuum cleaner (preferably HEPA-filtered), remove the bugs and their cast skins from all observed and suspected harborage sites during the initial inspection, and periodically afterward (once weekly is a suggested self-help action). The vacuum bag should be removed immediately afterward, sealed tightly inside a larger plastic bag, and that bag incinerated or placed in the next normal trash collection.
- Launder all infested cloth items in hot water, 120 degrees Fahrenheit or hotter for at least 10 minutes, with soap or detergent, then dry in a warm or hot dryer of at least 140 degrees for at least 20 minutes, or dry clean to kill all bedbug life stages present.
- Enclose each mattress and box spring in a sealed plastic cover, like those sold commercially. These types of encasements should be of high quality and bedbug puncture proof to limit exposure to house dust mites or bedbugs.
- Place and seal all recently laundered cloth items (*e.g.*, bed linens, clothing) inside new large plastic bags or tightly closed bins to prevent any bedbugs from re-infesting them.
- Seal shut all cracks, crevices, and entry points to wall voids, using a high-quality silicone based sealant, especially within a 20-foot radius of any spot where bedbug bites have been reported, or where the bugs have actually been collected.
- Additional or alternative physical control measures against bedbugs may include: heat, cold, steam, physical mashing and sticky insect monitors.
- A residual insecticide should be applied, according to label directions, to each infested site and preferably to a small area around each site. Such applications often involve treating cracks and crevices. When planning and conducting any such treatments, consider examining, if not treating, the opposite side of any involved wall, floor or ceiling.
- Electrical outlet boxes, and similar voids that cannot be readily sealed, should be treated with an appropriately labeled insecticidal dust.
- Consider including some type of insect growth regulator (IGR) as a concurrent or adjunctive treatment (*e.g.*, as a tank mix).
- Limited use of an aerosol or ULV pyrethroid may facilitate the detection of hidden bedbugs by causing them to move around more, and may also potentially increase their exposure to any previously applied residual insecticide. DO NOT use any over-the-counter “foggers.” They are not very effective and may cause bedbugs to scatter.
- Fumigation or heat (or cold) treatment of batches of furniture, clothing or other items within chambers may be warranted and affordable in specific cases, but whole-structure fumigation to control bedbugs is seldom practical or economically feasible. And such treatments provide no residual effects at all.

- Re-inspection of infested structures and sites should be done about 10-21 days after any initial treatment, and (if needed) again about 10-21 days later, to detect, and to precisely target the treatment (if needed) of any continued infestation.

Carefully reintroduce cleaned items. Isolate and contain items that have been properly cleaned, laundered or heat treated. Heavy duty plastic bags or air tight containers may be used for this purpose. Clear bags and containers are preferable.

NEVER USE THE FOLLOWING PRODUCTS FOR BEDBUG TREATMENT:

- **Insecticide “bombs”, total release foggers, camphor, kerosene, diesel, gasoline, alcohol or other similar products. These products can cause serious health problems. They are dangerous if misused and can cause fires and explosions. These products are not appropriate for bedbug management.**

Additional information about bedbug prevention and treatment may be found by accessing the following resources:

- **Armed Forces Pest Management Board: *Bedbugs - Importance, Biology and Control Strategies***
<http://www.afpmb.org/sites/default/files/pubs/techguides/tg44.pdf>
- **Environmental Protection Agency:**
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/bedbugs/>
- **Healthy Homes Training: *What’s Working for Bedbug Control in Multifamily Housing?: Reconciling best practices with research and the realities of implementation.***
http://www.healthyhomestraining.org/ipm/NCHH_Bed_Bug_Control_2-12-10.pdf.
- **National Pest Management Association Bedbug Hub:**
<http://pestworld.org/pest-world-blog/the-bed-bug-hub-one-stop-shop-for-bed-buginformation>
- **National Pest Management Association Best Practices Website:**
<http://www.bedbugbmps.org>
- **New York City Health Department:**
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/vector/bed-bug-guide.pdf>
- **Public Housing Environmental Conservation Clearinghouse (PHECC)**
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/phecc/pestmang.cfm>
- <http://www.stoppests.org>
- *Bedbug Handbook*. L.J. Pinto, R. Cooper, and S.K. Kraft
- *Bedbug Handbook: The Complete Guide to Bedbugs and Their Control* (Mechanicsville, MD: S.K. Pinto & Associates, 2007).

Chapter 9

GENERAL LEASING POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 9 covers the lease-up process from the family's submission of a Request for Tenancy Approval to execution of the Housing Assistance Payment contract.

In order for the Augusta Housing Authority to assist a family in a particular dwelling unit, or execute a Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract with the owner of a dwelling unit, the Augusta Housing Authority must determine that all the following program requirements are met:

- The unit itself must qualify as an eligible unit [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The unit must be inspected by the Augusta Housing Authority and meet the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The lease offered by the owner must be approvable and must include the required Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The rent to be charged by the owner for the unit must be reasonable [24 CFR 982.305(a)]
- The owner must be an eligible owner, approvable by the Augusta Housing Authority, with no conflicts of interest [24 CFR 982.306]
- For families initially leasing a unit only: Where the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the share of rent to be paid by the family cannot exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]

9-I.A. TENANT SCREENING

The Augusta Housing Authority has no liability or responsibility to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy [24 CFR 982.307(a)(1)].

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. At or before Augusta Housing Authority's approval of the tenancy, the Augusta Housing Authority must inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner [24 CFR 982.307(a)(2)]. The Augusta Housing Authority must also inform the owner or manager or his/her rights and obligations under the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(2)].

The AHA must provide the owner with the family's current and prior address (as shown in the AHA records) and the name and address (if known to the AHA) of the landlord at the family's current and prior address [24 CFR 982.307(b)(1)].

The AHA's policy on providing information to the owner must be included in the family's briefing packet [24 CFR 982.307(b)(3)].

The AHA may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided by the family in response to a AHA request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking except at the written request or with the written consent of the individual providing the documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy.

The AHA will not provide additional screening information to the owner.

9-I.B. REQUESTING TENANCY APPROVAL [Form HUD-52517]

After the family is issued a voucher, the family must locate an eligible unit, with an owner or landlord willing to participate in the voucher program. Once a family finds a suitable unit and the owner is willing to lease the unit under the program, the owner and the family must request the AHA to approve the assisted tenancy in the selected unit.

The owner and the family must submit two documents to the AHA:

- Completed Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) – Form HUD-52517
- Copy of the proposed lease, including the HUD-prescribed Tenancy Addendum – Form HUD-52641-A

The RFTA contains important information about the rental unit selected by the family, including the unit address, number of bedrooms, structure type, year constructed, utilities included in the rent, and the requested beginning date of the lease, necessary for the AHA to determine whether to approve the assisted tenancy in this unit.

Owners must certify to the most recent amount of rent charged for the unit and provide an explanation for any difference between the prior rent and the proposed rent.

Owners must certify that they are not the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless the AHA has granted a request for reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities who is a member of the tenant household.

For units constructed prior to 1978, owners must either 1) certify that the unit, common areas, and exterior have been found to be free of lead-based paint by a certified inspector; or 2) attach a lead-based paint disclosure statement.

Both the RFTA and the proposed lease must be submitted no later than the expiration date stated on the voucher. [HCV GB p.8-15].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The RFTA must be signed by both the family and the owner.

The owner may submit the RFTA on behalf of the family.

Completed RFTA (including the proposed dwelling lease) must be submitted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax.

The family may not submit, and the AHA will not process, more than one (1) RFTA at a time.

When the family submits the RFTA, the AHA will review the RFTA for completeness.

If the RFTA is incomplete (including lack of signature by family, owner, or both), or if the dwelling lease is not submitted with the RFTA, the AHA will notify the family and the owner of the deficiencies.

Missing information and/or missing documents will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax. The AHA will not accept missing information over the phone.

When the family submits the RFTA and proposed lease, the AHA will also review the terms of the RFTA for consistency with the terms of the proposed lease.

If the terms of the RFTA are not consistent with the terms of the proposed lease, the AHA will notify the family and the owner of the discrepancies.

Corrections to the terms of the RFTA and/or the proposed lease will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax. The AHA will not accept corrections by phone.

Because of the time sensitive nature of the tenancy approval process, the AHA will attempt to communicate with the owner and family by phone, fax, or email. The AHA will use mail when the parties cannot be reached by phone, fax, or email.

9-I.C. OWNER PARTICIPATION

The Augusta Housing Authority does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where the Augusta Housing Authority may deny approval of an assisted tenancy based on past owner behavior, conflict of interest, or other owner-related issues. There are also criteria for which the Augusta Housing Authority must disapprove an owner. No owner has a right to participate in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.306(e)]

See Chapter 13 for a full discussion of owner qualification to participate in the HCV program.

9-I.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS

There are a number of criteria that a dwelling unit must meet in order to be eligible for assistance under the voucher program. Generally, a voucher-holder family may choose any available rental dwelling unit on the market in the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction. This includes the dwelling unit they are currently occupying.

Ineligible Units [24 CFR 982.352(a)]

The Augusta Housing Authority may not assist a unit under the voucher program if the unit is a public housing or Indian housing unit; a unit receiving project-based assistance under section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f); nursing homes, board and care homes, or facilities providing continual psychiatric, medical, or nursing services; college or other school dormitories; units on the grounds of penal, reformatory, medical, mental, and similar public or private institutions; a unit occupied by its owner or by a person with any interest in the unit.

PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)]

Otherwise eligible units that are owned or substantially controlled by the public housing agency issuing the voucher may also be leased in the voucher program. In order for a PHA-owned unit to be leased under the voucher program, the unit must not be ineligible housing and the public housing agency must inform the family, both orally and in writing, that the family has the right to select any eligible unit available for lease and that the family is free to select a PHA-owned unit without any pressure or steering by the public housing agency.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA does have any eligible AHA-owned units available for leasing under the voucher program.

Special Housing Types [24 CFR 982 Subpart M]

HUD regulations permit, but do not generally require, the Augusta Housing Authority to permit families to use voucher assistance in a number of special housing types in accordance with the specific requirements applicable to those programs. These special housing types include single room occupancy (SRO) housing, congregate housing, group home, shared housing, manufactured home space (where the family owns the manufactured home and leases only the space), cooperative housing and homeownership option. See Chapter 15 for specific information and policies on any of these housing types that the Augusta Housing Authority has chosen to allow.

The regulations do require the Augusta Housing Authority to permit use of any special housing type if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

Duplicative Assistance [24 CFR 982.352(c)]

A family may not receive the benefit of HCV tenant-based assistance while receiving the benefit of any of the following forms of other housing subsidy, for the same unit or for a different unit:

- Public or Indian housing assistance;
- Other Section 8 assistance (including other tenant-based assistance);
- Assistance under former Section 23 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (before amendment by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974);
- Section 101 rent supplements;
- Section 236 rental assistance payments;
- Tenant-based assistance under the HOME Program;
- Rental assistance payments under Section 521 of the Housing Act of 1949 (a program of the Rural Development Administration);
- Any local or State rent subsidy;
- Section 202 supportive housing for the elderly;
- Section 811 supportive housing for persons with disabilities; (11) Section 202 projects for non-elderly persons with disabilities (Section 162 assistance); or
- Any other duplicative federal, State, or local housing subsidy, as determined by HUD. For this purpose, 'housing subsidy' does not include the housing component of a welfare payment, a social security payment received by the family, or a rent reduction because of a tax credit.

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) [24 CFR 982.305 and 24 CFR 982.401]

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must be in decent, safe, and sanitary condition. This determination is made using HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and/or equivalent state or local standards approved by HUD. See Chapter 8 for a full discussion of the HQS standards, as well as the process for HQS inspection at initial lease-up.

Unit Size

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must be appropriate for the number of persons in the household. A family must be allowed to lease an otherwise acceptable dwelling unit with fewer bedrooms than the number of bedrooms stated on the voucher issued to the family, provided the unit meets the applicable HQS space requirements [24 CFR 982.402(d)]. The family must be allowed to lease an otherwise acceptable dwelling unit with more bedrooms than the number of bedrooms stated on the voucher issued to the family. See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of subsidy standards.

Rent Reasonableness [24 CFR 982.305 and 24 CFR 982.507]

In order to be eligible, the dwelling unit must have a reasonable rent. The rent must be reasonable in relation to comparable unassisted units in the area and must not be in excess of rents charged by the owner for comparable, unassisted units on the premises. See Chapter 8 for a full discussion of rent reasonableness and the rent reasonableness determination process.

Rent Burden [24 CFR 982.508]

Where a family is initially leasing a unit and the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the family share cannot exceed 40 percent of the family's adjusted monthly income. The term "family share" refers to the amount the family pays toward rent and utilities. The gross rent for the unit minus the total housing assistance payment (HAP) for the unit equals the family share. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of calculation of gross rent, the use of payment standards, and calculation of family income, family share of rent and HAP.

9-I.E. LEASE AND TENANCY ADDENDUM

The family and the owner must execute a written dwelling lease agreement for the assisted unit. This written lease is a contract between the tenant family and the owner; the Augusta Housing Authority is not a party to this contract.

The tenant must have legal capacity to enter a lease under State and local law. 'Legal capacity' means that the tenant is bound by the terms of the lease and may enforce the terms of the lease against the owner [24 CFR 982.308(a)]

Lease Form and Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 982.308]

If the owner uses a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants in the locality or the premises, the lease must be in such standard form. If the owner does not use a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the owner may use another form of lease. The HAP contract prescribed by HUD contains the owner's certification that if the owner uses a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the lease for the assisted tenants is in such standard form.

All provisions in the HUD-required Tenancy Addendum must be added word-for-word to the owner's standard lease form. The Tenancy Addendum includes the HUD requirements for the tenancy. Because it is a part of the lease, the tenant shall have the right to enforce the Tenancy Addendum against the owner. If there is a conflict between the owner's lease and the Tenancy Addendum, the terms of the Tenancy Addendum shall prevail over any other provisions of the lease.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA does not provide a model or standard dwelling lease for owners to use in the

HCV program.

Lease Information [24 CFR 982.308(d)]

The assisted dwelling lease must contain all of the required information as listed below:

- The names of the owner and the tenant:
- The unit rented (address, apartment number, and any other information needed to identify the contract unit)
- The term of the lease (initial term and any provisions for renewal)
- The amount of the monthly rent to owner
- A specification of what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the owner, and what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the family

Term of Assisted Tenancy

The initial term of the assisted dwelling lease must be for at least one year [24 CFR 982.309]. The initial lease term is also stated in the HAP contract.

The HUD program regulations permit the PHA to approve a shorter initial lease term if certain conditions are met.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not approve an initial lease term of less than one (1) year.

During the initial term of the lease, the owner may not raise the rent to owner [24 CFR 982.309].

Any provisions for renewal of the dwelling lease will be stated in the dwelling lease [HCV Guidebook, pg. 8-22]. There are no HUD requirements regarding any renewal extension terms, except that they must be stated in the dwelling lease if they exist.

The Augusta Housing Authority may execute the HAP contract even if there is less than one year remaining from the beginning of the initial lease term to the end of the last expiring funding increment under the consolidated ACC. [24 CFR 982.309(b)].

Security Deposit [24 CFR 982.313 (a) and (b)]

The owner may collect a security deposit from the tenant. The Augusta Housing Authority may prohibit security deposits in excess of private market practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants. However, if the Augusta Housing Authority chooses to do so, language to this effect must be added to Part A of the HAP contract [Form HUD-52641].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will allow the owner to collect any security deposit amount the owner determines is appropriate. Therefore, no modifications to the HAP contract will be necessary.

Separate Non-Lease Agreements between Owner and Tenant

Owners may not demand or accept any rent payment from the family in excess of the rent to the owner as approved by the Augusta Housing Authority minus the Augusta Housing Authority's housing assistance payments to the owner [24 CFR 982.451(b)(4)].

The owner may not charge the tenant extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality, or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises [24 CFR 982.510(c)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA permits owners and families to execute separate, non-lease agreements for services, appliances (other than range and refrigerator) and other items that are not included in the lease.

Any items, appliances, or other services that are customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease with those families, or are permanently installed in the dwelling unit must be included in the dwelling lease for the assisted family. These items, appliances or services cannot be placed under a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and family. Side payments for additional rent, or for items, appliances or services customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease for those families, are prohibited.

Any items, appliances, or other services that are not customarily provided to unassisted families as part of the dwelling lease with those families, are not permanently installed in the dwelling unit and where the family has the sole option of not utilizing the item, appliance or service, may be included in a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family.

The family is not liable and cannot be held responsible under the terms of the assisted dwelling lease for any charges pursuant to a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family. Non-payment of any charges pursuant to a separate non-lease agreement between the owner and the family cannot be a cause for eviction or termination of tenancy under the terms of the assisted dwelling lease.

Separate non-lease agreements that involve additional items, appliances or other services may be considered amenities offered by the owner and may be taken into consideration when determining the reasonableness of the rent for the property.

PHA Review of Lease

The Augusta Housing Authority will review the dwelling lease for compliance with all applicable requirements.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the dwelling lease is incomplete or incorrect, the AHA will notify the family and the owner of the deficiencies. Missing and corrected lease information will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, by email, or by fax. The AHA will not accept missing and corrected information over the phone.

Because the initial leasing process is time-sensitive, the AHA will attempt to communicate with the owner and family by phone, fax, or email. The AHA will use mail when the parties cannot be reached by phone, fax, or email.

The PHA is permitted, but is not required, to review the lease to determine if the lease complies with State and local law and is permitted to decline to approve the tenancy if the PHA determines that the lease does not comply with State or local law [24 CFR 982.308(c)]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not review the owner's lease for compliance with state/local law.

9-I.F. TENANCY APPROVAL [24 CFR 982.305]

After receiving the family's Request for Tenancy Approval, with proposed dwelling lease, the Augusta Housing Authority must promptly notify the family and owner whether the assisted tenancy is approved.

Prior to approving the assisted tenancy and execution of a HAP contract, the Augusta Housing Authority must ensure that all required actions and determinations, discussed in Part I of this chapter have been completed.

These actions include ensuring that the unit is eligible; the unit has been inspected by the Augusta Housing Authority and meets the Housing Quality Standards (HQS); the lease offered by the owner is approvable and includes the required Tenancy Addendum; the rent to be charged by the owner for the unit must be reasonable; where the family is initially leasing a unit and the gross rent of the unit exceeds the applicable payment standard for the family, the share of rent to be paid by the family does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]; the owner is an eligible owner, not disapproved by the Augusta Housing Authority, with no conflicts of interest [24 CFR 982.306]; the family and the owner have executed the lease, including the Tenancy Addendum, and the lead-based paint disclosure information [24 CFR 982.305(b)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will complete its determination within 10 business days of receiving all required information.

If the terms of the RFTA/proposed lease are changed for any reason, including but not limited to negotiation with the AHA, the AHA will obtain corrected copies of the RFTA and proposed lease, signed by the family and the owner.

Corrections to the RFTA/proposed lease will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, or by fax. The AHA will not accept corrections over the phone.

If the AHA determines that the tenancy cannot be approved for any reason, the owner and the family will be notified in writing and given the opportunity to address any reasons for disapproval. The AHA will instruct the owner and family of the steps that are necessary to obtain approval of the tenancy.

Where the tenancy is not approvable because the unit is not approvable, the family must continue to search for eligible housing within the timeframe of the issued voucher.

If the tenancy is not approvable due to rent affordability or rent reasonableness, the AHA will attempt to negotiate the rent with the owner. If a new, approvable rent is negotiated, the tenancy will be approved. If the owner is not willing to negotiate an approvable rent, the family must continue to search for eligible housing within the timeframe of the issued voucher.

9-I.G. HAP CONTRACT EXECUTION [24 CFR 982.305]

The HAP contract is a written agreement between the Augusta Housing Authority and the owner of the dwelling unit. Under the HAP contract, the Augusta Housing Authority agrees to make housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of the family, and the owner agrees to comply with all program requirements as stated in the HAP contract.

The HAP contract form is prescribed by HUD.

If the Augusta Housing Authority has given approval for the family of the assisted tenancy, the owner and the Augusta Housing Authority must execute the HAP contract.

The term of the HAP contract must be the same as the term of the lease [24 CFR 982.451(a)(2)].

The Augusta Housing Authority is permitted to execute a HAP contract even if the funding currently available does not extend for the full term of the HAP contract.

The Augusta Housing Authority must make a best effort to ensure that the HAP contract is executed within 15 days of the beginning of the lease term. Regardless, the HAP contract must be executed no later than 60 calendar days from the beginning of the lease term.

The Augusta Housing Authority may not pay any housing assistance payment to the owner until the HAP contract has been executed. If the HAP contract is executed during the period of 60 calendar days from the beginning of the lease term, the Augusta Housing Authority will pay housing assistance payments after execution of the HAP contract (in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract), to cover the portion of the lease term before execution of the HAP contract (a maximum of 60 days).

Any HAP contract executed after the 60-day period is void, and the Augusta Housing Authority may not pay any housing assistance payment to the owner.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Owners who have not previously participated in the HCV program are strongly encouraged to attend a meeting with the AHA staff. In this meeting, AHA will discuss the terms of the Tenancy Addendum, HAP contract, and other requirements and responsibilities under the HCV program.

The owner and the assisted family will execute the dwelling lease and the owner must provide a copy to the AHA. The owner must also ensure that the assisted family receives a copy of the dwelling lease.

The owner and the AHA will execute the HAP contract. The AHA will not execute the HAP contract until the owner has submitted IRS form W-9. The AHA will ensure that the owner receives a copy of the executed HAP contract.

See Chapter 13 for a discussion of the HAP contract and contract provisions.

9-I.H. CHANGES IN LEASE OR RENT [24 CFR 982.308]

If the tenant and the owner agree to any changes in the lease, such changes must be in writing, and the owner must immediately give the Augusta Housing Authority a copy of such changes. The lease, including any changes, must remain in accordance with the requirements of this chapter.

Generally, PHA approval of tenancy and execution of a new HAP contract are not required for changes in the lease. However, under certain circumstances, the execution of a new lease and HAP contract are required. These circumstances include:

- Changes in lease requirements governing tenant or owner responsibilities for utilities or appliances
- Changes in lease provisions governing the term of the lease
- The family moves to a new unit, even if the unit is in the same building or complex

In these cases, if the HCV assistance is to continue, the family must submit a new Request for Tenancy Approval along with a new dwelling lease containing the proposed changes. A new tenancy must then be approved in accordance with this chapter.

Where the owner is changing the amount of the rent to owner, the owner must notify the Augusta Housing Authority and the assisted family at least 60 days prior to the annual anniversary date of the HAP contract [24 CFR 982.308(g)(4)]. The Augusta Housing Authority will consider such an increase only if the request was submitted in a timely manner and the amount of the rent to owner is considered reasonable according to the rent reasonableness standards discussed in Chapter 8. If the requested rent is not found to be reasonable, the owner must either reduce the requested rent increase, or terminate the tenancy in accordance with the terms of the lease.

No rent increase is permitted during the initial term of the lease [24 CFR 982.309(a)(3)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Where the owner is requesting a rent increase, the AHA will determine whether the requested increase is reasonable within 30 business days of receiving the written request from the owner. The owner will be notified of the determination in writing.

Rent increases will be effective on the first of the month commencing on or after the anniversary date subject to the assisted unit passing the HQS Inspection.

Chapter 10

MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE AND PORTABILITY

INTRODUCTION

Freedom of housing choice is a hallmark of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. In general, HUD regulations impose few restrictions on where families may live or move with HCV assistance. This chapter sets forth HUD regulations and Augusta Housing Authority policies governing moves within or outside the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction in two parts:

Part I: Moving with Continued Assistance. This part covers the general rules that apply to all moves by a family assisted under the Augusta Housing Authority's HCV program, whether the family moves to another unit within the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction or to a unit outside the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction under portability.

Part II: Portability. This part covers the special rules that apply to moves by a family under portability, whether the family moves out of or into the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction. This part also covers the special responsibilities that the Augusta Housing Authority has under portability regulations and procedures.

PART I: MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE

10-I.A. ALLOWABLE MOVES

HUD lists six regulatory conditions under which an assisted family is allowed to move to a new unit with continued assistance. Permission to move is subject to the restrictions set forth in section 10-I.B.

- The family has a right to terminate the lease on notice to the owner (for the owner's breach or otherwise) and has given a notice of termination to the owner in accordance with the lease [24 CFR 982.354(b)(3)]. If the family terminates the lease on notice to the owner, the family must give the AHA a copy of the notice at the same time [24 CFR 982.354(d)(1)].
- The lease for the family's unit has been terminated by mutual agreement of the owner and the family [24 CFR 982.354(b)(1)(ii)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the family and the owner mutually agree to terminate the lease for the family's unit, the family must give the Augusta Housing Authority a copy of the termination agreement.

- The owner has given the family a notice to vacate, has commenced an action to evict the family, or has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the family [24 CFR 982.354(b)(2)]. The family must give the AHA a copy of any owner eviction notice [24 CFR 982.551(g)].
- The family or a member of the family is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and the move is needed to protect the health or safety of the family or family member [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4)]. This condition applies even when the family has moved out of its unit in violation of the lease, with or without prior notification to the AHA, if the family or family member who is the victim reasonably believed that he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4), 24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The AHA must adopt an emergency transfer plan as required by regulations at 24 CFR 5.2007(e).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a family requests permission to move with continued assistance based on a claim that the move is necessary to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the AHA will request documentation in accordance with section 16-IX.D of this plan.

The AHA reserves the right to waive the documentation requirement if it determines that a statement or other corroborating evidence from the family or family member will suffice. In such cases the AHA will document the waiver in the family's file.

The AHA has adopted an emergency transfer plan, which is included as Exhibit 16-3 to this plan.

- The AHA has terminated the HAP contract for the family's unit for the owner's breach [24 CFR 982.354(b)(1)(i)].
- The AHA determines that the family's current unit does not meet the HQS space standards because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition. In such cases, the

AHA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and AHA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for the family, the AHA must terminate the HAP contract for the family's old unit in accordance with the HAP contract terms and must notify both the family and the owner of the termination. The HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which the AHA gives notice to the owner. [24 CFR 982.403(a) and (c)]

10-I.B. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVES

A family's right to move is generally contingent upon the family's compliance with program requirements [24 CFR 982.1(b)(2)]. HUD specifies two conditions under which the AHA may deny a family permission to move and two ways in which the AHA may restrict moves by a family.

Denial of Moves

HUD regulations permit the Augusta Housing Authority to deny a family permission to move under the following conditions:

Insufficient Funding

The AHA may deny a family permission to move either within or outside the AHA's jurisdiction if the AHA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance [24 CFR 982.354(e)(1)]. However, Notice PIH 2016-09 significantly restricts the ability of PHAs to deny permission to move due to insufficient funding and places further requirements on PHAs regarding moves denied due to lack of funding. The requirements found in this notice are mandatory.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will deny a family permission to move on grounds that the AHA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance if (a) the move is initiated by the family, not the owner or the AHA; (b) the AHA can demonstrate that the move will, in fact, result in higher subsidy costs; (c) the AHA can demonstrate, in accordance with the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16, that it does not have sufficient funding in its annual budget to accommodate the higher subsidy costs; and (d) for portability moves, the receiving PHA is not absorbing the voucher.

If the AHA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance, but the family must move from their unit (e.g., the unit failed HQS), the family may move to a higher cost unit if the move is within the AHA's jurisdiction. The AHA, however, will not allow the family to move under portability in this situation if the family wishes to move to a higher cost area.

For both moves within the AHA's jurisdiction and outside under portability, the AHA will not deny a move due to insufficient funding if the AHA previously approved the move and subsequently experienced a funding shortfall if the family cannot remain in their current unit. The AHA will rescind the voucher in this situation if the family will be allowed to remain in their current unit.

The AHA will create a list of families whose moves have been denied due to insufficient funding. The AHA will keep the family's request open indefinitely, and when funds become available, the families on this list will take precedence over families on the

waiting list. The AHA will use the same procedures for notifying families with open requests to move when funds become available as it uses for notifying families on the waiting list (see section 4-III.D).

The AHA will inform the family of its policy regarding moves denied due to insufficient funding in a letter to the family at the time the move is denied.

Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance

The AHA may deny a family permission to move if it has grounds for denying or terminating the family's assistance [24 CFR 982.354(e)(2)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the AHA has grounds for denying or terminating a family's assistance, the AHA will act on those grounds in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth in Chapters 3 and 12, respectively. In general, it will not deny a family permission to move for this reason; however, it retains the discretion to do so under special circumstances.

Restrictions on Elective Moves [24 CFR 982.354(c)]

HUD regulations permit the Augusta Housing Authority to prohibit any elective move by a participant family during the family's initial lease term. They also permit the Augusta Housing Authority to prohibit more than one elective move by a participant family during any 12-month period. However, such prohibitions, if adopted, do not apply when the family or a member of the family is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and the move is needed to protect the health or safety of the family or family member. (For the policy on documentation of abuse, see section 10-I.A.) In addition, the AHA may not establish a policy permitting moves only at reexamination [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will deny a family permission to make an elective move during the family's initial lease term (12 months). This policy applies to moves within the AHA's jurisdiction or outside it under portability.

The AHA will also deny a family permission to make more than one elective move during any 12-month period. This policy applies to all assisted families residing in the AHA's jurisdiction.

The AHA will deny a family permission to move when the family has violated a family obligation.

The AHA will deny a family permission to move when the family owes AHA money.

The AHA will deny a family permission to move when the family owes the owner money for rent and/or damages. The burden of prove shall be placed with the landlord. If the landlord provides a claim of rent and/or damages owed, the Augusta Housing Authority will allow the family thirty (30) days to resolve the claim prior to beginning termination proceedings. The landlord will be given thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the termination notice to submit a Clearance Letter to Augusta Housing Authority. If a statement is not provided within this time period, the Augusta Housing Authority will allow the family to move with continued assistance.

The AHA will consider exceptions to these policies for the following reasons: to protect the health or safety of a family member (e.g., lead-based paint hazards, domestic violence, witness protection programs), to accommodate a change in family circumstances (e.g., new employment, school attendance in a distant area), or to address an emergency situation over which a family has no control.

In addition, the AHA will allow exceptions to these policies for purposes of reasonable accommodation of a family member who is a person with disabilities (see Chapter 2).

10-I.C. MOVING PROCESS

Notification

If a family wishes to move to a new unit, the family must notify the Augusta Housing Authority and the owner before moving out of the old unit or terminating the lease on notice to the owner [24 CFR 982.354(d)(2)]. If the family wishes to move to a unit outside the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction under portability, the notice to the AHA must specify the area where the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.354(d)(2)]. The notices must be in writing [24 CFR 982.5].

Approval

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Upon receipt of a family's notification that it wishes to move, the AHA will determine whether the move is approvable in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth in sections 10-I.A and 10-I.B. The AHA will notify the family in writing of its determination within 10 business days following receipt of the family's notification.

Reexamination of Family Income and Composition

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For families approved to move to a new unit within the AHA's jurisdiction, the AHA will perform an "Other Change of Unit" reexamination in accordance with the policies set forth in Chapter 11 of this plan.

For families moving into or families approved to move out of the AHA's jurisdiction under portability, the AHA will follow the policies set forth in Part II of this chapter.

Voucher Issuance and Briefing

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For families approved to move to a new unit within the AHA's jurisdiction, the AHA will issue a new voucher within 10 business days of the AHA's written approval to move. No briefing is required for these families. The AHA will follow the policies set forth in Chapter 5 on voucher term, extension, and expiration. If a family does not locate a new unit within the term of the voucher and any extensions, the family may remain in its current unit with continued voucher assistance if the owner agrees and the AHA approves. Otherwise, the family will lose its assistance.

For families moving into or families approved to move out of the AHA's jurisdiction under portability, the AHA will follow the policies set forth in Part II of this chapter.

Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 982.311(d)]

When a family moves out of an assisted unit, the Augusta Housing Authority may not make any housing assistance payment to the owner for any month **after** the month the family moves out. The owner may keep the housing assistance payment for the month when the family moves out of the unit.

If a participant family moves from an assisted unit with continued tenant-based assistance, the term of the assisted lease for the new assisted unit may begin during the month the family moves out of the first assisted unit. Assistance will start on the new unit on the effective date of the lease and contract. Overlap of the last housing assistance payment (for the month when the family moves out of the old unit) and the first assistance payment for the new unit, is not considered to constitute a duplicative housing subsidy. Assistance payments may overlap for the month in which the family moves. The AHA will strive to minimize the overlap in housing assistance payment.

PART II: PORTABILITY

10-II.A. OVERVIEW

Within the limitations of the regulations and this plan, a participant family or an applicant family that has been issued a voucher has the right to use tenant-based voucher assistance to lease a unit anywhere in the United States providing that the unit is located within the jurisdiction of a PHA administering a tenant-based voucher program [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The process by which a family obtains a voucher from one PHA and uses it to lease a unit in the jurisdiction of another PHA is known as portability. The PHA that issues the voucher is called the **initial PHA**. The PHA that has jurisdiction in the area to which the family wants to move is called the **receiving PHA**.

The receiving PHA has the option of administering the family's voucher for the initial PHA or absorbing the family into its own program. Under the first option, the receiving PHA provides all housing services for the family and bills the initial PHA for the family's housing assistance payments and the fees for administering the family's voucher. Under the second option, the receiving PHA pays for the family's assistance with its own program funds, and the initial PHA has no further relationship with the family. The initial PHA must contact the receiving PHA via email or other confirmed delivery method to determine whether the receiving PHA will administer or absorb the initial PHA's voucher. Based on the receiving PHA's response, the initial PHA must determine whether they will approve or deny the portability request [Notice PIH 2016-09].

PHAs commonly act as both the initial and receiving PHA because families may move into or out of their jurisdiction under portability. Each role involves different responsibilities. The Augusta Housing Authority will follow the rules and policies in section 10-II.B when it is acting as the initial PHA for a family. It will follow the rules and policies in section 10-II.C when it is acting as the receiving PHA for a family.

In administering portability, the initial PHA and the receiving PHA must comply with financial procedures required by HUD, including the use of HUD-required forms [24 CFR 982.355(e)(5)].

PHAs must also comply with billing and payment deadlines. HUD may reduce an administrative fee to an initial or receiving PHA if the PHA does not comply with HUD portability requirements [24 CFR 982.355(e)(7)].

10-II.B. INITIAL PHA ROLE

Allowable Moves under Portability

A family may move with voucher assistance only to an area where there is at least one PHA administering a voucher program [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. If there is more than one PHA in the area, the initial PHA provides the family with the contact information for the receiving PHAs that serve the area, and the family selects the receiving PHA. The family must inform the initial PHA which PHA it has selected. If the family prefers not to select the receiving PHA, the initial PHA will select the receiving PHA on behalf of the family [24 CFR 982.255(b)].

Applicant families that have been issued vouchers as well as participant families may qualify to lease a unit outside the Augusta Housing Authority's jurisdiction under portability. HUD regulations and Augusta Housing Authority policy determine whether a family qualifies.

Applicant Families

Under HUD regulations, most applicant families qualify to lease a unit outside the PHA's jurisdiction under portability. However, HUD gives the Augusta Housing Authority discretion to deny a portability move by an applicant family for the same two reasons that it may deny any move by a participant family: insufficient funding and grounds for denial or termination of assistance. If a PHA intends to deny a family permission to move under portability due to insufficient funding, the AHA must notify HUD within 10 business days of the determination to deny the move [24 CFR 982.355(e)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In determining whether or not to deny an applicant family permission to move under portability because the AHA lacks sufficient funding or has grounds for denying assistance to the family, the initial PHA will follow the policies established in section 10-I.B of this chapter. If the AHA does deny the move due to insufficient funding, the AHA will notify HUD in writing within 10 business days of the AHA's determination to deny the move.

In addition, the PHA may establish a policy denying the right to portability to nonresident applicants during the first 12 months after they are admitted to the program [24 CFR 982.353(c)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If neither the head of household nor the spouse/cohead of an applicant family had a domicile (legal residence) in the AHA's jurisdiction at the time that the family's initial application for assistance was submitted, the family must lease a unit within the initial AHA's jurisdiction for at least 12 months before requesting portability.

The AHA will consider exceptions to this policy for purposes of reasonable accommodation (see Chapter 2) or reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Participant Families

The initial PHA must not provide portable assistance for a participant if a family has moved out of its assisted unit in violation of the lease [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) creates an exception to this prohibition for families who are otherwise in compliance with program obligations but have moved to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who reasonably believed he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.353(b)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

After the participant family has leased up in AHA's jurisdiction for the term of the lease (12 months), the family may request to exercise portability. The AHA will determine whether a participant family may move out of the AHA's jurisdiction with continued assistance in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth here and in sections 10-I.A and 10-I.B of this chapter. The AHA will notify the family of its determination in accordance with the approval policy set forth in section 10-I.C of this chapter.

Determining Income Eligibility

Applicant Families

An applicant family may lease a unit in a particular area under portability only if the family is income eligible for admission to the voucher program in that area [24 CFR 982.353(d)(1)]. The family must specify the area to which the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.355(c)(1)].

The initial PHA is responsible for determining whether the family is income eligible in the area to which the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.353(d)(1), 24 CFR 982.355(9)]. If the applicant family is not income eligible in that area, the PHA must inform the family that it may not move there and receive voucher assistance [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Participant Families

The income eligibility of a participant family is not redetermined if the family moves to a new jurisdiction under portability [24 CFR 982.353(d)(2)].

Reexamination of Family Income and Composition

No new reexamination of family income and composition is required for an applicant family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For a participant family approved to move out of its jurisdiction under portability, the AHA generally will not conduct a reexamination of family income and composition. It will be conducted only if the family's annual reexamination must be completed on or before the initial billing deadline specified on form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information.

The AHA will make any exceptions to this policy necessary to remain in compliance with HUD regulations.

Briefing

The regulations and policies on briefings set forth in Chapter 5 of this plan require the PHA to provide information on portability to all applicant families that qualify to lease a unit outside the PHA's jurisdiction under the portability procedures. Therefore, no special briefing is required for families porting out of the PHA's jurisdiction.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

No formal briefing will be required for a participant family wishing to move outside the AHA's jurisdiction under portability. However, the AHA will provide the family with the same oral and written explanation of portability that it provides to applicant families selected for admission to the program (see Chapter 5).

The family should provide the name, address, and contact number for the PHA in the jurisdiction to which they wish to move. If there is more than one PHA with jurisdiction over the area to which the family wishes to move, the AHA will advise the family that the family must select the receiving PHA. The AHA will further inform the family that if the family prefers not to select the receiving PHA, the AHA will select the receiving PHA on behalf of the family.

The AHA will advise the family that they will be under the RHA's policies and procedures, including screening, subsidy standards, voucher extension policies, and payment standards.

Voucher Issuance and Term

An applicant family has no right to portability until after the family has been issued a voucher [24 CFR 982.353(b)]. In issuing vouchers to applicant families, the PHA will follow the regulations and procedures set forth in Chapter 5.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For participating families approved to move under portability, the AHA will issue a new voucher within 10 business days of the AHA's written approval to move.

The initial term of the voucher will be 60 days.

Voucher Extensions and Expiration

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will approve **no** extensions to a voucher issued to an applicant or participant family porting out of the AHA's jurisdiction except under the following circumstances: (a) the initial term of the voucher will expire before the portable family will be issued a voucher by the receiving PHA, (b) the family decides to return to the initial PHA's jurisdiction and search for a unit there, or (c) the family decides to search for a unit in a third PHA's jurisdiction. In such cases, the policies on voucher extensions set forth in Chapter 5, section 5-II.E, of this plan will apply, including the requirement that the family apply for an extension in writing prior to the expiration of the initial voucher term.

To receive or continue receiving assistance under the initial AHA's voucher program, a family that moves to another PHA's jurisdiction under portability must be under HAP contract in the receiving PHA's jurisdiction within 90 days following the expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher term (including any extensions). (See below under "Initial Billing Deadline" for one exception to this policy.)

Preapproval Contact with the Receiving PHA

Prior to approving a family's request to move under portability, the initial PHA must contact the receiving PHA via e-mail or other confirmed delivery method to determine whether the receiving PHA will administer or absorb the family's voucher. Based on the receiving PHA's response, the initial PHA must determine whether it will approve or deny the move [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will use e-mail, when possible, to contact the receiving PHA regarding whether the receiving PHA will administer or absorb the family's voucher.

Initial Notification to the Receiving PHA

After approving a family's request to move under portability, the initial PHA must promptly notify the receiving PHA via email or other confirmed delivery method to expect the family [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3); 24 CFR 982.355(c)(7)]. The initial PHA must also advise the family how to contact and request assistance from the receiving PHA [24 CFR 982.355(c)(6)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Because the portability process is time-sensitive, the AHA will notify the receiving PHA by phone, fax, or e-mail to expect the family. The initial PHA will also ask the receiving PHA to provide any information the family may need upon arrival, including the name, fax, e-mail address, and telephone number of the staff person responsible for business with incoming portable families and procedures related to appointments for voucher issuance. The AHA will pass this information along to the family. The AHA will also ask for the name, address, telephone number, fax and e-mail of the person responsible for processing the billing information.

Sending Documentation to the Receiving PHA

The initial PHA is required to send the receiving PHA the following documents:

- Form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information, with Part I filled out [Notice PIH 2016-09]
- A copy of the family's voucher [Notice PIH 2016-09]
- A copy of the family's most recent form HUD-50058, Family Report, or, if necessary in the case of an applicant family, family and income information in a format similar to that of form HUD-50058 [24 CFR 982.355(c)(7), Notice PIH 2016-09]
- Copies of the income verifications backing up the form HUD-50058, including a copy of the family's current EIV data [24 CFR 982.355(c)(7), Notice PIH 2016-09]

PHA Policy

In addition to these documents, the AHA will provide the following information, if available, to the receiving PHA:

Copy of update Housing Choice Voucher

Copy of social security cards

Documentation of SSNs for all nonexempt household members whose SSNs have not been verified through the EIV system

Documentation of legal identity (birth certificate, etc.)

Documentation of citizenship or eligible immigration status

Documentation of participation in the earned income disallowance (EID) benefit

Documentation of participation in a family self-sufficiency (FSS) program

Copy of 30-day Notice

Copy of Landlord Clearance Letter

The AHA will notify the family in writing regarding any information provided to the receiving PHA [HCV GB, p. 13-3].

Initial Billing Deadline [Notice PIH 2016-09]

The deadline for submission of initial billing is 90 days following the expiration date of the voucher issued to the family by the initial PHA. In cases where suspension of the voucher delays the initial billing submission, the receiving PHA must notify the initial PHA of delayed billing before the billing deadline and document the delay is due to the suspension. In this case, the initial PHA must extend the billing deadline by 30 days.

If the initial PHA does not receive a billing notice by the deadline and does not intend to honor a late billing submission, it must notify the initial PHA in writing. The initial PHA may report to HUD the receiving PHA's failure to comply with the deadline.

If the initial PHA will honor the late billing, no action is required.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the AHA has not received an initial billing notice from the receiving PHA within the billing deadline, it will contact the receiving PHA to inform them that it will not honor a late billing submission and will return any subsequent billings that it receives on behalf of the family. The AHA will send the receiving PHA a written confirmation of its decision by mail.

The AHA will allow an exception to this policy if the family includes a person with disabilities and the late billing is a result of a reasonable accommodation granted to the family by the receiving PHA.

Monthly Billing Payments [24 CFR 982.355(e), Notice PIH 2016-09]

If the receiving PHA is administering the family's voucher, the receiving PHA bills the initial PHA for housing assistance payments and administrative fees. When reimbursing for administrative fees, the initial PHA must promptly reimburse the receiving PHA for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial PHA ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving PHA's ongoing administrative fee for each program unit under contract on the first day of the month for which the receiving PHA is billing the initial PHA under portability. If the administrative fees are prorated for the HCV program, the proration will apply to the amount of the administrative fee for which the receiving PHA may bill [24 CFR 982.355(e)(2)].

The initial PHA is responsible for making billing payments in a timely manner. The first billing amount is due within 30 calendar days after the initial PHA receives Part II of form HUD-52665 from the receiving PHA. Subsequent payments must be **received** by the receiving PHA no later than the fifth business day of each month. The payments must be provided in a form and manner that the receiving PHA is able and willing to accept.

The initial PHA may not terminate or delay making payments under existing portability billing arrangements as a result of over leasing or funding shortfalls. The PHA must manage its tenant-based program in a manner that ensures that it has the financial ability to provide assistance for families that move out of its jurisdiction under portability and are not absorbed by receiving PHAs as well as for families that remain within its jurisdiction.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The initial PHA will utilize direct deposit to ensure that the payment is received by the deadline unless the receiving PHA notifies the initial PHA that direct deposit is not acceptable to them. If the initial PHA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving PHA's voucher will expire 30 calendar days from the new expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher.

Annual Updates of Form HUD-50058

If the initial PHA is being billed on behalf of a portable family, it should receive an updated form HUD-50058 each year from the receiving PHA. If the initial PHA fails to receive an updated 50058 by the family's annual reexamination date, the initial PHA should contact the receiving PHA to verify the status of the family. The initial PHA must continue paying the receiving PHA based on the last form HUD-50058 received, unless instructed otherwise by HUD. The initial PHA may seek absorption of the vouchers by following steps outlined in Notice PIH 2016-09.

Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.355(c)(17)]

At any time, either the initial PHA or the receiving PHA may make a determination to deny or terminate assistance with the family in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552 and 24 CFR 982.553. (For AHA policies on denial and termination, see Chapters 3 and 12, respectively.)

10-II.C. RECEIVING PHA ROLE

If a family has a right to lease a unit in the receiving PHA's jurisdiction under portability, the receiving PHA must provide assistance for the family [24 CFR 982.355(10)]. HUD may determine in certain instances that a PHA is not required to accept incoming portable families, such as a PHA in a declared disaster area. However, the PHA must have approval in writing from HUD before refusing any incoming portable families [24 CFR 982.355(b)].

Administration of the voucher must be in accordance with the receiving PHA's policies. This requirement also applies to policies of Moving to Work agencies. The receiving PHA procedures and preferences for selection among eligible applicants do not apply to the family, and the receiving PHA waiting list is not used [24 CFR 982.355(c)(10)]. The family's unit, or voucher, size is determined in accordance with the subsidy standards of the receiving PHA [24 CFR 982.355(c)(12)], and the receiving PHA's policies on extensions of the voucher term apply [24 CFR 982.355(c)(14)].

Responding to Initial PHA's Request [24 CFR 982.355(c)]

The receiving PHA must respond via e-mail or other confirmed delivery method to the initial PHA's inquiry to determine whether the family's voucher will be billed or absorbed [24 CFR 982.355(c)(3)]. If the receiving PHA informs the initial PHA that it will be absorbing the voucher, the receiving PHA cannot reverse its decision at a later date without consent of the initial PHA (24 CFR 982.355(c)(4)).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will use e-mail, when possible, to notify the initial PHA whether it will administer or absorb the family's voucher.

Initial Contact with Family

When a family moves into the PHA's jurisdiction under portability, the family is responsible for promptly contacting the PHA and complying with the PHA's procedures for incoming portable families. The family's failure to comply may result in denial or termination of the receiving PHA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(8)].

If the voucher issued to the family by the initial PHA has expired, the receiving PHA must contact the initial PHA to determine if it will extend the voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. An informal hearing is not required when a voucher has expired without the family leasing a unit.

If for any reason the receiving PHA refuses to process or provide assistance to a family under the portability procedures, the family must be given the opportunity for an informal review or hearing [Notice PIH 2016-09]. (For more on this topic, see later under "Denial or Termination of Assistance.")

Briefing

HUD allows the receiving PHA to require a briefing for an incoming portable family as long as the requirement does not unduly delay the family's search [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not require the family to attend a briefing. The AHA will provide the family with a briefing packet (as described in Chapter 5) and, in an individual briefing, will orally inform the family about the AHA's payment and subsidy standards, procedures for requesting approval of a unit, the unit inspection process, and the leasing process.

Income Eligibility and Reexamination

The receiving PHA does not redetermine eligibility for a portable family that was already receiving assistance in the initial PHA's voucher program [24 CFR 982.355(c)(9)]. If the receiving PHA opts to conduct a new reexamination for a current participant family, the receiving PHA may not delay issuing the family a voucher or otherwise delay approval of a unit [24 CFR 982.355(c)(11)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For any family moving into its jurisdiction under portability, the AHA will conduct a new reexamination of family income and composition. However, the AHA will not delay issuing the family a voucher for this reason. Nor will the AHA delay approving a unit for the family until the reexamination process is complete unless the family is an applicant and the AHA cannot otherwise confirm that the family is income eligible for admission to the program in the area where the unit is located.

In conducting its own reexamination, the AHA will rely upon the verifications provided by the initial PHA to the extent that they (a) accurately reflect the family's current circumstances and (b) were obtained within the last 60 days. Any new information may be verified by documents provided by the family and adjusted, if necessary, when third party verification is received.

Voucher Issuance

When a family moves into its jurisdiction under portability, the receiving PHA is required to issue the family a voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. The family must submit a request for tenancy approval to the receiving PHA during the term of the receiving PHA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(15)].

Timing of Voucher Issuance

HUD expects the receiving PHA to issue the voucher within two weeks after receiving the family's paperwork from the initial PHA if the information is in order, the family has contacted the receiving PHA, and the family complies with the receiving PHA's procedures [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When a family ports into its jurisdiction, the AHA will issue the family a voucher based on the paperwork provided by the initial PHA unless the family's paperwork from the initial PHA is incomplete, the family's voucher from the initial PHA has expired or the family does not comply with the AHA's procedures. The AHA will update the family's information when verification has been completed.

Voucher Term

The term of the receiving PHA's voucher may not expire before 30 calendar days from the expiration of the initial PHA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(13)]. If the initial PHA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving PHA's voucher may not expire before 30 days from the new expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The receiving PHA's voucher will expire 30 calendar days from the expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher. If the initial PHA extends the term of the voucher, the receiving PHA's voucher will expire 30 calendar days from the new expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher.

Voucher Extensions [24 CFR 982.355(c)(14), Notice 2016-09]

Once the receiving PHA issues the portable family a voucher, the receiving PHA's policies on extensions of the voucher term apply. The receiving PHA must inform the initial PHA of any extension granted to the term of the voucher. It must also bear in mind the billing deadline provided by the initial PHA. Unless willing and able to absorb the family, the receiving PHA should ensure that any voucher expiration date would leave sufficient time to process a request for tenancy approval, execute a HAP contract, and deliver the initial billing to the initial PHA.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA generally will not extend the term of the voucher that it issues to an incoming portable family unless the AHA plans to absorb the family into its own program, in which case it will follow the policies on voucher extension set forth in section 5-II.E.

The AHA will consider an exception to this policy as a reasonable accommodation to a person with disabilities (see Chapter 2).

Voucher Suspensions [24 CFR 982.303, 24 CFR 982.355(c)(15)]

If the family submits a request for tenancy approval during the term of the receiving PHA's voucher, the AHA must suspend the term of that voucher. The term of the voucher stops from the date that the family submits a request for AHA approval of the tenancy until the date the AHA notifies the family in writing whether the request has been approved or denied [24 CFR 982.4(b)] (see Section 5-II.E).

Notifying the Initial PHA

The receiving PHA must promptly notify the initial PHA if the family has leased an eligible unit under the program or if the family fails to submit a request for tenancy approval for an eligible unit within the term of the receiving PHA's voucher [24 CFR 982.355(c)(16)]. The receiving PHA is required to use Part II of form HUD-52665, Family Portability Information, for this purpose [Notice PIH 2016-09]. (For more on this topic and the deadline for notification, see below under "Administering a Portable Family's Voucher.")

If an incoming portable family ultimately decides not to lease in the jurisdiction of the receiving PHA but instead wishes to return to the initial PHA's jurisdiction or to search in another jurisdiction, the receiving PHA must refer the family back to the initial PHA. In such a case, the voucher of record for the family is once again the voucher originally issued by the initial PHA. Any extension of search time provided by the receiving PHA's voucher is only valid for the family's search in the receiving PHA's jurisdiction [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Administering a Portable Family's Voucher

Portability Billing [24 CFR 982.355(e)]

To cover assistance for a portable family that was not absorbed, the receiving PHA bills the initial PHA for housing assistance payments and administrative fees. The amount of the housing assistance payment for a portable family in the receiving PHA's program is determined in the same manner as for other families in the receiving PHA's program.

The receiving PHA may bill the initial PHA for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial PHA's ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving PHA's ongoing administrative fee for each program unit under contract on the first day of the month for which the receiving PHA is billing the initial PHA under portability. If the administrative fees are prorated for the HCV program, the proration will apply to the amount of the administrative fee for which the receiving PHA may bill (i.e., the receiving PHA may bill for the lesser of 80 percent of the initial PHA's prorated ongoing administrative fee or 100 percent of the receiving PHA's ongoing administrative fee).

If both PHAs agree, the PHAs may negotiate a different amount of reimbursement.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Unless the AHA negotiates a different amount of reimbursement with the initial PHA, the AHA will bill the initial PHA the maximum amount of administrative fees allowed, ensuring any administrative fee proration has been properly applied.

Initial Billing Deadline

If a portable family's search for a unit is successful and the receiving PHA intends to administer the family's voucher, the receiving PHA must submit its initial billing notice (Part II of form HUD-52665) in time that the notice will be **received** no later than 90 days following the expiration date of the family's voucher issued by the initial PHA [Notice PIH 2016-09]. This deadline may be extended for 30 additional days if the delay is due to suspension of the voucher's term (see Initial Billing Section). A copy of the family's form HUD-50058, Family Report, completed by the receiving PHA must be attached to the initial billing notice. The receiving PHA may send these documents by mail, fax, or e-mail.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will send its initial billing notice by fax or e-mail, if necessary, to meet the billing deadline but will also send the notice by regular mail.

If the receiving PHA fails to send the initial billing by the deadline, it is required to absorb the family into its own program unless (a) the initial PHA is willing to accept the late submission or (b) HUD requires the initial PHA to honor the late submission (e.g., because the receiving PHA is over leased) [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Ongoing Notification Responsibilities [Notice PIH 2016-09, HUD-52665]

Annual Reexamination. The receiving PHA must send the initial PHA a copy of a portable family's updated form HUD-50058 after each annual reexamination for the duration of time the receiving PHA is billing the initial PHA on behalf of the family, regardless of whether there is a change in the billing amount.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will send a copy of the updated HUD-50058 by regular mail no later than 10 business days after the effective date of the reexamination.

Change in Billing Amount. The receiving PHA is required to notify the initial PHA, using form HUD-52665, of any change in the billing amount for the family as a result of:

- A change in the HAP amount (because of a reexamination, a change in the applicable payment standard, a move to another unit, etc.)
- An abatement or subsequent resumption of the HAP payments
- Termination of the HAP contract
- Payment of a damage/vacancy loss claim for the family
- Termination of the family from the program

The timing of the notice of the change in the billing amount should correspond with the notification to the owner and the family in order to provide the initial PHA with advance notice of the change. Under no circumstances should the notification be later than 10 business days following the effective date of the change in the billing amount. If the receiving PHA fails to send Form HUD-52665 within 10 days of effective date of billing changes, the initial PHA is not responsible for any increase prior to notification. If the change resulted in a decrease in the monthly billing amount, the initial PHA will offset future monthly payments until the difference is reconciled.

Late Payments [Notice PIH 2016-09]

If the initial PHA fails to make a monthly payment for a portable family by the fifth business day of the month, the receiving PHA must promptly notify the initial PHA in writing of the deficiency. The notice must identify the family, the amount of the billing payment, the date the billing payment was due, and the date the billing payment was received (if it arrived late). The receiving PHA must send a copy of the notification to the Office of Public Housing (OPH) in the HUD area office with jurisdiction over the receiving PHA. If the initial PHA fails to correct the problem by the second month following the notification, the receiving PHA may request by memorandum to the director of the OPH with jurisdiction over the receiving PHA that HUD transfer the unit in question. A copy of the initial notification and any subsequent correspondence between the PHAs on the matter must be attached. The receiving PHA must send a copy of the memorandum to the initial PHA. If the OPH decides to grant the transfer, the billing arrangement on behalf of the family ceases with the transfer, but the initial PHA is still responsible for any outstanding payments due to the receiving PHA.

Overpayments [Notice PIH 2016-09]

In all cases where the receiving PHA has received billing payments for billing arrangements no longer in effect, the receiving PHA is responsible for returning the full amount of the overpayment (including the portion provided for administrative fees) to the initial PHA.

In the event that HUD determines billing payments have continued for at least three months because the receiving PHA failed to notify the initial PHA that the billing arrangement was terminated, the receiving PHA must take the following steps:

- Return the full amount of the overpayment, including the portion provided for administrative fees, to the initial PHA.
- Once full payment has been returned, notify the Office of Public Housing in the HUD area office with jurisdiction over the receiving PHA of the date and the amount of reimbursement to the initial PHA.

At HUD's discretion, the receiving PHA will be subject to the sanctions spelled out in Notice PIH 2016-09.

Denial or Termination of Assistance

At any time, the receiving PHA may make a determination to deny or terminate assistance to a portable family for family action or inaction [24 CFR 982.355(c)(17)].

In the case of a termination, the PHA should provide adequate notice of the effective date to the initial PHA to avoid having to return a payment. In no event should the receiving PHA fail to notify the initial PHA later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement [HUD-52665; Notice PIH 2016-09].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the AHA elects to deny or terminate assistance for a portable family, the AHA will notify the initial PHA within 10 business days after the informal review or hearing if the denial or termination is upheld. The AHA will base its denial or termination decision on the policies set forth in Chapter 3 or Chapter 12, respectively. The informal review or hearing will be held in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16. The receiving PHA will furnish the initial PHA with a copy of the review or hearing decision.

Absorbing a Portable Family

The receiving PHA may absorb an incoming portable family into its own program when the PHA executes a HAP contract on behalf of the family or at any time thereafter providing that the PHA has funding available under its annual contributions contract (ACC) [24 CFR 982.355(d)(1), Notice PIH 2016-09].

If the receiving PHA absorbs a family from the point of admission, the admission will be counted against the income targeting obligation of the receiving PHA [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)(vii)].

If the receiving PHA absorbs a family after providing assistance for the family under a billing arrangement with the initial PHA, the receiving PHA must send an updated form HUD-52665 to the initial PHA no later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement. [Notice PIH 2016-09].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the AHA decides to absorb a portable family upon the execution of a HAP contract on behalf of the family, the AHA will notify the initial AHA by the initial billing deadline specified on form HUD-52665. The effective date of the HAP contract will be the effective date of the absorption.

If the AHA decides to absorb a family after that, it will provide the initial PHA with 30 days' advance notice, but no later than 10 business days following the effective date of the termination of the billing arrangement.

Following the absorption of an incoming portable family, the family is assisted with funds available under the consolidated ACC for the receiving PHA's voucher program [24 CFR 982.355(d)], and the receiving PHA becomes the initial PHA in any subsequent moves by the family under portability [24 CFR 982.355(e)(4)].

Chapter 11

REEXAMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The PHA is required to reexamine each family's income and composition at least annually, and to adjust the family's level of assistance accordingly. Interim reexaminations are also needed in certain situations. This chapter discusses both annual and interim reexaminations, and the recalculation of family share and subsidy that occurs as a result. HUD regulations and Augusta Housing Authority policies concerning reexaminations are presented in three parts:

Part I: Annual Reexaminations. This part discusses the process for conducting annual reexaminations.

Part II: Interim Reexaminations. This part details the requirements for families to report changes in family income and composition between annual reexaminations.

Part III: Recalculating Family Share and Subsidy Amount. This part discusses the recalculation of family share and subsidy amounts based on the results of annual and interim reexaminations.

Policies governing reasonable accommodation, family privacy, required family cooperation, and program abuse, as described elsewhere in this plan, apply to both annual and interim reexaminations.

PART I: ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516]

11-I.A. OVERVIEW

The Augusta Housing Authority must conduct a reexamination of family income and composition at least annually. This includes gathering and verifying current information about family composition, income, and expenses. Based on this updated information, the family's income and rent must be recalculated. This part discusses the schedule for annual reexaminations, the information to be collected and verified, and annual reexamination effective dates.

11-I.B STREAMLINED ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516(b)]

HUD permits PHAs to streamline the income determination process for family members with fixed sources of income. While third-party verification of all income sources must be obtained during the intake process and every three years thereafter, in the intervening years the PHA may determine income from fixed sources by applying a verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or rate of interest. The PHA may, however, obtain third-party verification of all income, regardless of the source. Further, upon request of the family, the PHA must perform third-party verification of all income sources.

Fixed sources of income include Social Security and SSI benefits, pensions, annuities, disability or death benefits, and other sources of income subject to a COLA or rate of interest. The determination of fixed income may be streamlined even if the family also receives income from other non-fixed sources.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will streamline the annual reexamination process by applying the verified COLA or interest rate to fixed-income sources. The AHA will document in the file how the determination that a source of income was fixed was made.

If a family member with a fixed source of income is added, the AHA will use third-party verification of all income amounts for that family member.

If verification of the COLA or rate of interest is not available, the AHA will obtain third-party verification of income amounts.

Third-party verification of fixed sources of income will be obtained during the intake process and at the annual reexamination period.

11-I.C. SCHEDULING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS

The PHA must establish a policy to ensure that the annual reexamination for each family is completed *within* a 12-month period, and may require reexaminations more frequently [HCV GB p. 12-1].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will begin the annual reexamination process 60-90 days in advance of its scheduled effective date. Generally, the AHA will schedule annual reexamination effective dates to coincide with the family's anniversary date.

Anniversary date is defined as 12 months from the effective date of the family's last annual reexamination or, during a family's first year in the program, from the effective date of the family's initial examination (admission).

If the family moves to a new unit, an annual recertification will be scheduled unless a recertification has occurred in the last 120 days and the anniversary date will coincide with the new lease-up date.

Notification of and Participation in the Annual Reexamination Process

The PHA is required to obtain the information needed to conduct annual reexaminations. How that information will be collected is left to the discretion of the PHA. However, PHAs should give tenants who were not provided the opportunity the option to complete Form HUD-92006 at this time [Notice PIH 2009-36].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Families are required to participate in an annual reexamination interview, which must be attended by the head of household, spouse/cohead, and family members 18 and older. If participation in an in-person or remote (phone, webcast, video call, and other electronic communications) interview poses a hardship because of a family member's disability, the family should contact the AHA to request a reasonable accommodation (see Chapter 2).

Notification of annual reexamination interviews will be sent by first-class mail and will contain the date and time of the interview. In addition, it will inform the family of the information and documentation that must be brought to the interview.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the AHA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. If a family does not attend the scheduled interview and has not rescheduled with AHA, the AHA will send a second notification with a new interview date and appointment time.

If a family fails to attend two scheduled interviews without AHA approval and fails to provide all documentation in a timely manner, the AHA will schedule a third and final appointment.

If the family fails to appear for the third appointment, fails to provide all documentation in a timely manner or if the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, a notice of termination (see Chapter 12) will be sent to the family's address of record, and to any alternate address provided in the family's file.

An advocate, interpreter, or other assistant may assist the family in the interview process. The family and the AHA must execute a certification attesting to the role and the assistance provided by any such third party.

11-I.D. CONDUCTING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS

As part of the annual reexamination process, families are required to provide updated information to the PHA regarding the family's income, expenses, and composition [24 CFR 982.551(b)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Families will be asked to bring all required information (as described in the reexamination notice) to the reexamination appointment.

The required information from the family includes

- Documentation of income for all family members (must be less than 60 days old)

- Documentation of liquid and non-liquid assets

- Documentation to substantiate deductions and allowances

- Any additional documentation as required by AHA

Family will be required to execute the AHA-designated reexamination form, an Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice, as well as supporting documents or forms related to the family's income, expenses, and family composition. This includes the AHA Personal Declaration form.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at the time of the interview must be provided within 10 business days of the interview. If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension.

If the family does not provide the required documents or information within the required time period (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of termination (See Chapter 12).

Additionally, HUD recommends that at annual reexaminations PHAs ask whether the tenant, or any member of the tenant's household, is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement in any state [Notice PIH 2012-28].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

At the annual reexamination, the AHA will ask whether the tenant, or any member of the tenant's household, is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement in any state. If a family member is subject to this registry, the AHA will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to verify the information provided by the tenant.

If the PHA proposes to terminate assistance based on lifetime sex offender registration information, the PHA must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy of the record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information prior to termination. [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)]. (See Chapter 12.)

The information provided by the family generally must be verified in accordance with the policies in Chapter 7. Unless the family reports a change, or the AHA has reason to believe a change has occurred in information previously reported by the family, certain types of information that are verified at admission typically do not need to be re-verified on an annual basis. These include:

- Legal identity
- Age
- Social security numbers
- A person's disability status
- Citizenship or immigration status

If adding a new family member to the unit causes overcrowding according to the housing quality standards (HQS) (see Chapter 8), the AHA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and AHA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, the AHA must terminate the HAP contract in accordance with its terms [24 CFR 982.403].

11-I.E. DETERMINING ONGOING ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN STUDENTS [24 CFR 982.552(b)(5)]

Section 327 of Public Law 109-115 established new restrictions on the ongoing eligibility of certain students (both part- and full-time) who are enrolled in institutions of higher education.

If a student enrolled in an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have a dependent child, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the student's eligibility must be reexamined along with the income eligibility of the student's parents on an annual basis. In these cases, both the student and the student's parents must be income eligible for the student to continue to receive HCV assistance. If, however, a student in these circumstances is determined independent from his or her parents or is considered a *vulnerable youth* in accordance with PHA policy, the income of the student's parents will not be considered in determining the student's ongoing eligibility.

Students who reside with parents in an HCV assisted unit are not subject to this provision. It is limited to students who are receiving assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

During the annual reexamination process, the AHA will determine the ongoing eligibility of each student who is subject to the eligibility restrictions in 24 CFR 5.612 by reviewing the student's individual income as well as the income of the student's parents. If the student has been determined "independent" from his/her parents or is considered a *vulnerable youth* based on the policies in Sections 3-II.E and 7-II.E, the parents' income will not be reviewed.

If the student is no longer income eligible based on his/her own income or the income of his/her parents, the student's assistance will be terminated in accordance with the policies in Section 12-I.D.

If the student continues to be income eligible based on his/her own income and the income of his/her parents (if applicable), the AHA will process a reexamination in accordance with the policies in this chapter.

11-I.F. EFFECTIVE DATES

The PHA must establish policies concerning the effective date of changes that result from an annual reexamination [24 CFR 982.516].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In general, an *increase* in the family share of the rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date, and the family will be notified at least 30 days in advance.

If less than 30 days remain before the scheduled effective date, the increase will take effect on the first of the month following the end of the 30-day notice period.

If a family moves to a new unit, the increase will take effect on the effective date of the new lease and HAP contract, and no 30-day notice is required.

If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination or the family misrepresents/omits relevant information, *increases* in the family share of the rent will be applied retroactively, to the scheduled effective date of the annual reexamination. The family will be responsible for any overpaid subsidy and may be offered a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.

In general, a *decrease* in the family share of the rent that results from an annual reexamination will take effect on the family's anniversary date.

If the family has a decrease resulting from a change in family composition, new source of family income or a hardship, the decrease will be effective the first day of the month following the month in which the change was reported in writing to the AHA. The family must report all changes in income and family composition within 10 days of their occurrence. The change will not be made until third party verification has been received.

If a family moves to a new unit, the decrease will take effect on the effective date of the new lease and HAP contract.

If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, *decreases* in the family share of the rent will be applied prospectively, from the first day of the month following completion of the reexamination processing.

Delays in reexamination processing are considered to be caused by the family if the family fails to provide information requested by the AHA by the date specified, and this delay prevents the AHA from completing the reexamination as scheduled.

PART II: INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516]

11-II.A. OVERVIEW

Family circumstances may change between annual reexaminations. HUD and PHA policies dictate what kinds of information about changes in family circumstances must be reported, and under what circumstances the PHA must process interim reexaminations to reflect those changes. HUD regulations also permit the PHA to conduct interim reexaminations of income or family composition at any time. When an interim reexamination is conducted, only those factors that have changed are verified and adjusted [HCV GB, p. 12-10].

In addition to specifying what information the family must report, HUD regulations permit the family to request an interim determination if other aspects of the family's income or composition changes. The PHA must complete the interim reexamination within a reasonable time after the family's request.

This part includes HUD and AHA policies describing what changes families are required to report, what changes families may choose to report, and how the PHA will process both PHA- and family-initiated interim reexaminations.

11-II.B. CHANGES IN FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

The family is required to report all changes in family composition. The PHA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in income and family composition. However, due to family obligations under the program, the PHA has limited discretion in this area.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will conduct interim reexaminations to account for any changes in household composition that occur between annual reexaminations.

New Family Members Not Requiring PHA Approval

The addition of a family member as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody does not require PHA approval. However, the family is required to promptly notify the PHA of the addition [24 CFR 982.551(h)(2)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must inform the AHA of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child within 10 business days.

New Family and Household Members Requiring Approval

With the exception of children who join the family as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, a family must request PHA approval to add a new family member [24 CFR 982.551(h)(2)] or other household member (live-in aide or foster child) [24 CFR 982.551(h)(4)].

When any new family member is added, the PHA must make appropriate adjustments in the family share of the rent and the HAP payment at the effective date of either the annual or interim reexamination [24 CFR 982.516(e)(2)].

If a change in family size causes a violation of Housing Quality Standards (HQS) space standards (see Chapter 8), the PHA must issue the family a new voucher, and the family and PHA must try to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible. If an acceptable unit is available for rental by the family, the PHA must terminate the family's HAP contract in accordance with its terms [24 CFR 982.403].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Families must request AHA approval to add a new family member, live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult. This includes any person not on the lease who is expected to stay in the unit for more than 14 consecutive days or a total of 30 cumulative days within a 12-month period and therefore no longer qualifies as a "guest." Requests must be made in writing and approved by the AHA prior to the individual moving into the unit.

The AHA will not approve the addition of a new family or household member unless the individual meets the AHA's eligibility criteria (see Chapter 3) and documentation requirements (see Chapter 7, Part II).

If the AHA determines an individual meets the AHA's eligibility criteria and documentation requirements, the AHA will provide written approval to the family. If the approval of a new family member or live-in aide will cause overcrowding according to HQS standards, the approval letter will explain that the family will be issued a voucher and will be required to move.

If the AHA determines that an individual does not meet the AHA's eligibility criteria or documentation requirements, the AHA will notify the family in writing of its decision to deny approval of the new family or household member and the reasons for the denial.

The AHA will make its determination within 10 business days of receiving all information required to verify the individual's eligibility.

Departure of a Family or Household Member

Families must promptly notify the PHA if any family member no longer lives in the unit [24 CFR 982.551(h)(3)]. Because household members are considered when determining the family unit (voucher) size [24 CFR 982.402], the PHA also needs to know when any live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult ceases to reside in the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a household member ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform the AHA within 10 business days. This requirement also applies to a family member who has been considered temporarily absent at the point that the family concludes the individual is permanently absent.

If a live-in aide, foster child, or foster adult ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform the AHA within 10 business days.

11-II.C. CHANGES AFFECTING INCOME OR EXPENSES

Interim reexaminations can be scheduled either because the PHA has reason to believe that changes in income or expenses may have occurred, or because the family reports a change. When a family reports a change, the PHA may take different actions depending on whether the family reported the change voluntarily, or because it was required to do so.

PHA-Initiated Interim Reexaminations

PHA-initiated interim reexaminations are those that are scheduled based on circumstances or criteria defined by the PHA. They are not scheduled because of changes reported by the family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will conduct interim reexaminations in each of the following instances:

For families receiving the Earned Income Disallowance (EID), the AHA will conduct an interim reexamination at the start and conclusion of the 24-month eligibility period.

If the family has reported zero income, the AHA will conduct an interim reexamination every 3 months as long as the family continues to report that they have no income.

If at the time of the annual reexamination, it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income for the next 12 months (e.g. seasonal or cyclic income), the AHA will schedule an interim reexamination to coincide with the end of the period for which it is feasible to project income.

If at the time of the annual reexamination, tenant declarations were used on a provisional basis due to the lack of third-party verification, and third-party verification becomes available, the AHA will conduct an interim reexamination.

The AHA may conduct an interim reexamination at any time in order to correct an error in a previous reexamination or to investigate a tenant fraud complaint.

Family-Initiated Interim Reexaminations

The PHA must adopt policies prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report changes in family income or expenses [24 CFR 982.516(c)]. In addition, HUD regulations require that the family be permitted to obtain an interim reexamination any time the family has experienced a change in circumstances since the last determination [24 CFR 982.516(b)(2)].

Required Reporting

HUD regulations give the PHA the freedom to determine the circumstances under which families will be required to report changes affecting income.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Families are required to report all increases in earned income, including new employment, within 10 business days of the date the change takes effect. An interim reexamination will be performed when a family has a new source of income and income increases of \$200 or more per month. The effective date will be the first day of the second month following the month in which the change actually occurred.

The AHA will only conduct interim reexaminations for families that qualify for the earned income disallowance (EID), and only when the EID family's share of rent will change as a result of the increase. In all other cases, the AHA will note the information in the tenant file, but will not conduct an interim reexamination.

Optional Reporting

The family may request an interim reexamination any time the family has experienced a change in circumstances since the last determination [24 CFR 982.516(b)(2)]. The PHA must process the request if the family reports a change that will result in a reduced family income [HCV GB, p. 12-9].

If a family reports a decrease in income from the loss of welfare benefits due to fraud or non-compliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program, the family's share of the rent will not be reduced [24 CFR 5.615]. For more information regarding the requirement to impute welfare income see Chapter 6.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a family reports a change that it was not required to report and that would result in an increase in the family share of the rent, the AHA will note the information in the tenant file, but will not conduct an interim reexamination.

If a family reports a change that it was not required to report and that would result in a decrease in the family share of rent, the AHA will conduct an interim reexamination. The effective date will be the first day of the month following the month in which the change was reported in writing to the AHA.

Families may report changes in income or expenses at any time.

11-II.D. PROCESSING THE INTERIM REEXAMINATION

Method of Reporting

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family may notify the AHA of changes either in writing only. If the family provides oral notice, the AHA must also require the family to submit the changes in writing.

Generally, the family will not be required to attend an interview for an interim reexamination. However, if the AHA determines that an interview is warranted, the family may be required to attend.

Based on the type of change reported, the AHA will determine the documentation the family will be required to submit. The family must submit any required information or documents within 10 business days of receiving a request from the AHA. This time frame may be extended for good cause with AHA approval. The AHA will accept required documentation by mail, fax, email, or in person.

Effective Dates

The PHA must establish the time frames in which any changes that result from an interim reexamination will take effect [24 CFR 982.516(d)]. The changes may be applied either retroactively or prospectively, depending on whether there is to be an increase or a decrease in the family share of the rent, and whether the family reported any required information within the required time frames [HCV GB, p. 12-10].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the family share of the rent is to *increase*:

The increase generally will be effective on the first of the month following 30 days' notice to the family.

If a family fails to report a change within the required time frames, or fails to provide all required information within the required time frames, the increase will be applied retroactively, to the date it would have been effective had the information been provided on a timely basis. The family will be responsible for any overpaid subsidy and may be offered a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.

If the family share of the rent is to *decrease*:

The decrease will be effective on the first day of the month following the month in which the change was reported and all required documentation was submitted. In cases where the change cannot be verified until after the date the change would have become effective, the change will be made retroactively.

PART III: RECALCULATING FAMILY SHARE AND SUBSIDY AMOUNT

11-III.A. OVERVIEW

After gathering and verifying required information for an annual or interim reexamination, the PHA must recalculate the family share of the rent and the subsidy amount, and notify the family and owner of the changes [24 CFR 982.516(d)(2), HCV 12-6 and 12-10]. While the basic policies that govern these calculations are provided in Chapter 6, this part lays out policies that affect these calculations during a reexamination.

11-III.B. CHANGES IN PAYMENT STANDARDS AND UTILITY ALLOWANCES

In order to calculate the family share of the rent and HAP amount correctly, changes in payment standards, subsidy standards, or utility allowances may need to be updated and included in the PHA's calculations.

Specific policies governing how subsidy standards, payment standards, and utility allowances are applied are discussed below.

Payment Standards [24 CFR 982.505]

The family share of the rent and HAP calculations must use the correct payment standard for the family, taking into consideration the family unit size, the size of unit, and the area in which the unit is located [HCV GB, p. 12-5]. See Chapter 6 for information on how to select the appropriate payment standard.

When the PHA changes its payment standards or the family's situation changes, new payment standards are applied at the following times:

- If the PHA's payment standard amount changes during the term of the HAP contract, the date on which the new standard is applied depends on whether the standard has increased or decreased:
 - If the payment standard amount has *increased*, the increased payment standard will be applied at the *first annual* reexamination following the effective date of the increase in the payment standard.
 - If the payment standard amount has *decreased*, during the term of a HAP contract, the PHA is not required to reduce the payment standard as the HAP contract remains in effect. At the family's *second annual* reexamination, the PHA may, but is not required to, apply the decreased payment standard or may gradually implement the reduced payment standard (See Chapter 6 for the PHA's policy on decreases in the payment standard).
- If the family moves to a new unit, or a new HAP contract is executed due to changes in the lease (even if the family remains in place) the current payment standard applicable to the family will be used when the new HAP contract is processed.

Subsidy Standards [24 CFR 982.505(c)(4)]

If there is a change in the family unit size that would apply to a family during the HAP contract term, either due to a change in family composition, or a change in the PHA's subsidy standards (see Chapter 5), the new family unit size must be used to determine the payment standard amount for the family at the family's *first annual* reexamination following the change in family unit size.

Utility Allowances [24 CFR 982.517(d)]

The family share of the rent and HAP calculations must reflect any changes in the family's utility arrangement with the owner, or in the PHA's utility allowance schedule [HCV GB, p. 12-5]. Chapter 16 discusses how utility allowance schedules are established.

When there are changes in the utility arrangement with the owner, the PHA must use the utility allowances in effect at the time the new lease and HAP contract are executed.

At reexamination, the PHA must use the PHA current utility allowance schedule [24 CFR 982.517(d)(2)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Revised utility allowances will be applied to a family's rent and subsidy calculations at the first annual reexamination after the allowance is adopted.

11-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF NEW FAMILY SHARE AND HAP AMOUNT

The PHA must notify the owner and family of any changes in the amount of the HAP payment [HUD-52641, HAP Contract]. The notice must include the following information [HCV GB, p. 12-6]:

- The amount and effective date of the new HAP payment
- The amount and effective date of the new family share of the rent
- The amount and effective date of the new tenant rent to owner

The family must be given an opportunity for an informal hearing regarding the PHA's determination of their annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment [24 CFR 982.555(a)(1)(i)] (see Chapter 16).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The notice to the family will include the effective date and amounts for the total contract rent, family share of the rent, housing assistance payment and utility reimbursement payment. The notice also will state the procedures for requesting an informal hearing.

11-III.D. DISCREPANCIES

During an annual or interim reexamination, the PHA may discover that information previously reported by the family was in error, or that the family intentionally misrepresented information. In addition, the PHA may discover errors made by the PHA. When errors resulting in the overpayment or underpayment of subsidy are discovered, corrections will be made in accordance with the policies in Chapter 13.

Chapter 12

TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE AND TENANCY

HUD regulations specify mandatory and optional grounds for which a PHA can terminate a family's assistance. They also specify the circumstances under which an owner may terminate the tenancy of an assisted family. This chapter describes the policies that govern mandatory and optional terminations of assistance, and termination of tenancy by the owner. It is presented in three parts:

Part I: Grounds for Termination of Assistance. This part describes the various circumstances under which assistance under the program can be terminated by the family or by the Augusta Housing Authority.

Part II: Approach to Termination of Assistance. This part describes the policies and the process that the Augusta Housing Authority will use in evaluating decisions on whether to terminate assistance due to actions or inactions of the family where termination is an option. It specifies the alternatives that the Augusta Housing Authority may consider in lieu of termination, the criteria the Augusta Housing Authority will use when deciding what action to take, and the steps the Augusta Housing Authority must take when terminating a family's assistance.

Part III: Termination of Tenancy by the Owner. This part describes the HUD policies that govern the owner's right to terminate an assisted tenancy.

PART I: GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

12-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to terminate assistance for certain actions and inactions of the family and when the family no longer requires assistance due to increases in family income. HUD permits the Augusta Housing Authority to terminate assistance for certain other actions or inactions of the family. In addition, a family may decide to withdraw from the program and terminate their HCV assistance at any time by notifying the Augusta Housing Authority.

12-I.B. FAMILY NO LONGER REQUIRES ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.455]

As a family's income increases, the amount of the housing assistance payment decreases. If the amount of assistance provided by the Augusta Housing Authority is reduced to zero, the family's assistance terminates automatically 180 days after the last HAP payment.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a participating family receiving zero assistance experiences a change in circumstances that would result in a HAP payment to the owner, the family must notify the AHA of the change and request an interim reexamination before the expiration of the 180-day period.

12-I.C. FAMILY CHOOSES TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE

The family may request that the housing authority terminate housing assistance payments on behalf of the family at any time.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The request to terminate assistance should be made in writing and signed by the head of household, and spouse or cohead if applicable. Before terminating the family's assistance, the AHA will follow the notice requirements in Section 12-II.F.

12-I.D. MANDATORY TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to terminate assistance in the following circumstances.

Eviction [24 CFR 982.552(b)(2), 24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)]

The housing authority must terminate assistance whenever a family is evicted from a unit assisted under the HCV program for a serious or repeated violation of the lease. As discussed further in section 12-II.E, incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking may not be construed as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of such violence or stalking.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A family will be considered *evicted* if the family moves after a legal eviction order has been issued, whether or not physical enforcement of the order was necessary.

If a family moves after the owner has given the family an eviction notice for serious or repeated lease violations but before a legal eviction order has been issued, termination of

assistance is not mandatory. In such cases the AHA will determine whether the family has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence and may terminate assistance or take any of the alternative measures described in section 12-II.C. In making its decision, the AHA will consider the factors described in sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such factors, the AHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

Serious and repeated lease violations will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises and criminal activity. Generally, the criterion to be used will be whether or not the reason for the eviction was the fault of the tenant or guests.

Failure to Provide Consent [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must terminate assistance if any family member fails to sign and submit any consent form they are required to sign for a regular or interim reexamination. See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of consent requirements.

Failure to Document Citizenship [24 CFR 982.552(b)(4) and [24 CFR 5.514(c)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must terminate assistance if (1) a family fails to submit required documentation within the required timeframe concerning any family member's citizenship or immigration status; (2) a family submits evidence of citizenship and eligible immigration status in a timely manner, but United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) primary and secondary verification does not verify eligible immigration status of the family; or (3) a family member, as determined by the AHA, has knowingly permitted another individual who is not eligible for assistance to reside (on a permanent basis) in the unit.

For (3) above, such termination must be for a period of at least 24 months. This does not apply to ineligible noncitizens already in the household where the family's assistance has been prorated. See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of documentation requirements.

Failure to Disclose and Document Social Security Numbers [24 CFR 5.218(c), Notice PIH 2012-10]

The Augusta Housing Authority must terminate assistance if a participant family fails to disclose the complete and accurate social security numbers of each household member and the documentation necessary to verify each social security number.

However, if the family is otherwise eligible for continued program assistance, and the housing authority determines that the family's failure to meet the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements was due to circumstances that could not have been foreseen and were outside of the family's control, the housing authority may defer the family's termination and provide the opportunity to comply with the requirement within a period not to exceed 90 calendar days from the date the housing authority determined the family to be noncompliant.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will defer the family's termination and provide the family with the opportunity to comply with the requirement for a period of 90 calendar days for circumstances beyond the participant's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency, if there is a reasonable likelihood that the participant will be able to disclose an SSN by the deadline.

Methamphetamine Manufacture or Production [24 CFR 982.553(b)(1)(ii)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must terminate assistance if any household member has ever been convicted of the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally-assisted housing.

Lifetime Registered Sex Offenders [Notice PIH 2012-28]

Should the Augusta Housing Authority discover that a member of an assisted household was subject to a lifetime registration requirement at admission and was erroneously admitted after June 25, 2001, the AHA must immediately terminate assistance for the household member.

In this situation, the Augusta Housing Authority must offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, the AHA must terminate assistance for the household.

Failure of Students to Meet Ongoing Eligibility Requirements [24 CFR 982.552(b)(5) and FR 4/10/06]

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education is under the age of 24, is not a veteran, is not married, does not have dependent children, is not residing with his/her parents in an HCV assisted household, and is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005, the housing authority must terminate the student's assistance if, at the time of reexamination, either the student's income or the income of the student's parents (if applicable) exceeds the applicable income limit.

If a participant household consists of both eligible and ineligible students, the eligible students shall not be terminated, but must be issued a voucher to move with continued assistance in accordance with program regulations and AHA policies, or must be given the opportunity to lease in place if the terminated ineligible student members elect to move out of the assisted unit.

Death of the Sole Family Member [24 CFR 982.311(d) and Notice PIH 2010-9]

The Augusta Housing Authority must immediately terminate program assistance for deceased single member households.

12-I.E. MANDATORY POLICIES AND OTHER AUTHORIZED TERMINATIONS

Mandatory Policies [24 CFR 982.553(b) and 982.551(l)]

HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to establish policies that permit the AHA to terminate assistance if the AHA determines that:

- Any household member is currently engaged in any illegal use of a drug, or has a pattern of illegal drug use that interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents

- Any household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- Any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in any drug-related criminal activity
- Any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in violent criminal activity

Use of Illegal Drugs and Alcohol Abuse

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will terminate a family's assistance if any household member is engaged in any illegal use of a drug, or has a pattern of illegal drug use that interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

The AHA will terminate assistance if any household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

The AHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests, convictions, or eviction of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate assistance, the AHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the AHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

Drug-Related and Violent Criminal Activity [24 CFR 5.100]

Drug means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802).

Drug-related criminal activity is defined by HUD as the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use the drug.

Violent criminal activity means any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will terminate a family's assistance if any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in any drug-related or violent criminal activity during participation in the HCV program.

The AHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests and/or convictions of household members related to drug-related or violent criminal activity, and any eviction or notice to evict based on drug-related or violent criminal activity.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate assistance, the AHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the AHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

Other Authorized Reasons for Termination of Assistance **[24 CFR 982.552(c), 24 CFR 5.2005(c)]**

HUD permits the housing authority to terminate assistance under a number of other circumstances. It is left to the discretion of the housing authority whether such circumstances in general warrant consideration for the termination of assistance. As discussed further in section 12-II.E, the Violence against Women Act of 2013 explicitly prohibits housing authority's from considering incidents of, or criminal activity directly related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking as reasons for terminating the assistance of a victim of such abuse.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA **will not** terminate a family's assistance because of the family's failure to meet its obligations under the Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

The AHA **will** terminate a family's assistance if:

The family has failed to comply with any family obligations under the program. See Exhibit 12-1 for a listing of family obligations and related AHA policies.

Any family member has been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last five years.

Any PHA has ever terminated assistance under the program for any member of the family.

Any family member has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

The family currently owes rent or other amounts to any PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

The family has not reimbursed any PHA for amounts the PHA paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease.

The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with the AHA.

A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward AHA personnel.

Abusive or violent behavior towards AHA personnel includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to intimidate may be considered abusive or violent behavior.

Threatening refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate intent to abuse or commit violence.

In making its decision to terminate assistance, the Augusta Housing Authority will consider alternatives as described in Section 12-II.C and other factors described in Sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the housing authority may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance.

Family Absence from the Unit [24 CFR 982.312]

The family may be absent from the unit for brief periods. The housing authority must establish a policy on how long the family may be absent from the assisted unit. Absence in this context means that no member of the family is residing in the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the family is absent from the unit for more than 30 consecutive calendar days, the family's assistance will be terminated. Notice of termination will be sent in accordance with Section 12-II.F.

The family must supply any information or certification requested by the Augusta Housing Authority to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any Augusta Housing Authority-requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with the Augusta Housing Authority for this purpose.

The family must promptly notify the Augusta Housing Authority when all family members will be absent from the unit for an extended period. An extended period is defined as any period greater than 30 calendar days. In such a case promptly means within 10 business days of the start of the extended absence.

Insufficient Funding [24 CFR 982.454]

The PHA may terminate HAP contracts if the PHA determines, in accordance with HUD requirements, that funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance for families in the program.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will determine whether there is sufficient funding to pay for currently assisted families according to the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16. If the AHA determines there is a shortage of funding, prior to terminating any HAP contracts, the AHA will determine if any other actions can be taken to reduce program costs.

In the event that the AHA decides to stop issuing vouchers as a result of a funding shortfall, and the AHA is not assisting the required number of special purpose vouchers (HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) families), when the AHA resumes issuing vouchers, the AHA will issue vouchers first to the special purpose voucher families on its waiting list until it has reached the required number of special purpose vouchers, when applicable.

If after implementing all reasonable cost cutting measures there is not enough funding available to provide continued assistance for current participants, the AHA will terminate HAP contracts as a last resort.

Prior to terminating any HAP contracts, the AHA will inform the local HUD field office. The AHA will terminate the minimum number needed in order to reduce HAP costs to a level within the AHA's annual budget authority.

If the AHA must terminate HAP contracts due to insufficient funding, the AHA will do so in accordance with the following criteria and instructions:

Families comprising the required number of special purpose vouchers, including HUD-Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) will be the last to be terminated.

The most recently executed HAP Contracts will be the first HAP Contracts to be considered for contract cancellations.

PART II: APPROACH TO TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

12-II.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA is required by regulation to terminate a family's assistance for certain actions or inactions of the family. For other types of actions or inactions of the family, the regulations give the PHA the authority to either terminate the family's assistance or to take another action. This part discusses the various actions the PHA may choose to take when it has discretion, and outlines the criteria the PHA will use to make its decision about whether or not to terminate assistance. It also specifies the requirements for the notification to the family of the PHA's intent to terminate assistance.

12-II.B. METHOD OF TERMINATION [24 CFR 982.552(a)(3)]

Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

- Terminating housing assistance payments under a current HAP contract,
- Refusing to enter into a new HAP contract or approve a lease, or
- Refusing to process a request for or to provide assistance under portability procedures.

12-II.C. ALTERNATIVES TO TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

Change in Household Composition

As a condition of continued assistance, the PHA may require that any household member who participated in or was responsible for an offense no longer resides in the unit [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(ii)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

As a condition of continued assistance, the head of household must certify that the culpable family member has vacated the unit and will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the assisted unit. The family must present evidence of the former family member's current address upon AHA request.

Repayment of Family Debts

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a family owes amounts to the AHA, as a condition of continued assistance, the AHA will require the family to repay the full amount or to enter into a repayment agreement, within 30 days of receiving notice from the AHA of the amount owed. See Chapter 16 for policies on repayment agreements.

12-II.D. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE

Evidence

For criminal activity, HUD permits the housing authority to terminate assistance if a *preponderance of the evidence* indicates that a household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted [24 CFR 982.553(c)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will use the concept of the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all termination decisions.

Preponderance of the evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.

Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence

Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(i)]

The housing authority is permitted, but not required, to consider all relevant circumstances when determining whether a family's assistance should be terminated.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will consider the following facts and circumstances when making its decision to terminate assistance:

- The seriousness of the case, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents' safety or property

- The effects that termination of assistance may have on other members of the family who were not involved in the action or failure to act

- The extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, including whether the culpable family member is a minor or a person with disabilities or (as discussed further in section 12-II.E) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking

- The length of time since the violation occurred, including the age of the individual at the time of the conduct, as well as the family's recent history and the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future

- While a record of arrest(s) will not be used as the basis for termination, an arrest may, however, trigger an investigation to determine whether the participant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, the AHA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. The AHA may also consider:

 - Any statements made by witnesses or the participant not included in the police report

 - Whether criminal charges were filed

Whether, if filed, criminal charges were abandoned, dismissed, not prosecuted, or ultimately resulted in an acquittal

Any other evidence relevant to determining whether or not the participant engaged in disqualifying activity

Evidence of criminal conduct will be considered if it indicates a demonstrable risk to safety and/or property

In the case of drug or alcohol abuse, whether the culpable household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully

The AHA will require the participant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in or successful completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully.

In the case of program abuse, the dollar amount of the overpaid assistance and whether or not a false certification was signed by the family

Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(iv)]

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the housing authority's decision to terminate the family's assistance is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for a proposed termination of assistance, the AHA will determine whether the behavior is related to the disability. If so, upon the family's request, the AHA will determine whether alternative measures are appropriate as a reasonable accommodation. The AHA will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed termination of assistance. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodation.

12-II.E. TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING

This section describes the protections against termination of assistance that the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. For general VAWA requirements, key VAWA definitions, and Augusta Housing Authority policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality, see section 16-IX of this plan.

VAWA Protections against Termination

VAWA provides four specific protections against termination of HCV assistance for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. (*Note:* The second, third, and fourth protections also apply to terminations of tenancy or occupancy by owners participating in the HCV program, as do the limitations discussed under the next heading.)

First, VAWA provides that the Augusta Housing Authority may not terminate assistance to a family that moves out of an assisted unit in violation of the lease, with or without prior notification to the AHA, if the move occurred to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking and who reasonably believed he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the unit [24 CFR 982.354(b)(4)].

Second, it provides that an incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed either as a serious or repeated lease violation by the victim or as good cause to terminate the assistance of the victim [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

Third, it provides that criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed as cause for terminating the assistance of a tenant if a member of the tenant's household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control is the one engaging in the criminal activity and the tenant or affiliated individual or other individual is the actual or threatened victim of the domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(2)].

Fourth, it gives the Augusta Housing Authority the authority to terminate assistance to any tenant or lawful occupant who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others without terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing, the victim of the violence [24 CFR 5.2009(a)].

Limitations on VAWA Protections [24 CFR 5.2005(d) and (e)]

VAWA does not limit the authority of the Augusta Housing Authority to terminate the assistance of a victim of abuse for reasons unrelated to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking so long as the AHA does not subject the victim to a more demanding standard than it applies to other program participants [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(1)].

Likewise, VAWA does not limit the authority of a Augusta Housing Authority to terminate the assistance of a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking if the AHA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the assisted property if the victim is not terminated from assistance [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2)].

HUD regulations define *actual and imminent threat* to mean words, gestures, actions, or other indicators of a physical threat that (a) is real, (b) would occur within an immediate time frame, and (c) could result in death or serious bodily harm [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2) and (e)]. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include:

- The duration of the risk
- The nature and severity of the potential harm
- The likelihood that the potential harm will occur
- The length of time before the potential harm would occur [24 CFR 5.2005(e)]

Even when a victim poses an actual and imminent threat, however, HUD regulations authorize a PHA to terminate the victim's assistance "only when there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In determining whether a program participant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to a property, the AHA will consider the following, and any other relevant, factors:

Whether the threat is toward an employee or tenant other than the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking

Whether the threat is a physical danger beyond a speculative threat

Whether the threat is likely to happen within a short period of time

Whether the threat to other tenants or employees can be eliminated in some other way, such as by helping the victim relocate to a confidential location or seeking a legal remedy to prevent the perpetrator from acting on the threat

If the participant wishes to contest the AHA's determination that he or she is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or employees, the participant may do so as part of the informal hearing.

Documentation of Abuse [24 CFR 5.2007]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When an individual facing termination of assistance for reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking claims protection under VAWA, the AHA will request that the individual provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with the policies in section 16-IX.D of this plan.

The AHA reserves the right to waive the documentation requirement if it determines that a statement or other corroborating evidence from the individual will suffice. In such cases the AHA will document the waiver in the individual's file.

Terminating the Assistance of a Domestic Violence Perpetrator

Although VAWA provides protection against termination of assistance for victims of domestic violence, it does not provide such protection for perpetrators. VAWA gives the PHA the explicit authority to "terminate assistance to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant and who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others" without terminating assistance to "or otherwise penalizing the victim of such violence who is also a tenant or lawful occupant" [24 CFR 5.2009(a)]. This authority is not dependent on a bifurcated lease or other eviction action by an owner against an individual family member. Further, this authority supersedes any local, state, or other federal law to the contrary. However, if the PHA chooses to exercise this authority, it must follow any procedures prescribed by HUD or by applicable local, state, or federal law regarding termination of assistance. This means that the PHA must follow the same rules when terminating assistance to an individual as it would when terminating the assistance of an entire family [3/16/07 *Federal Register* notice on the applicability of VAWA to HUD programs].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will terminate assistance to a family member if the AHA determines that the family member has committed criminal acts of physical violence against other family members or others. This action will not affect the assistance of the remaining, nonculpable family members.

In making its decision, the AHA will consider all credible evidence, including, but not limited to, a signed certification (form HUD-5382) or other documentation of abuse submitted to the AHA by the victim in accordance with this section and section 16-IX.D. The AHA will also consider the factors in section 12-II.D. Upon such consideration, the AHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the assistance of the culpable family member.

If the AHA does terminate the assistance of the culpable family member, it will do so in accordance with applicable law, HUD regulations, and the policies in this plan.

12-II.F. TERMINATION NOTICE

HUD regulations require PHAs to provide written notice of termination of assistance to a family only when the family is entitled to an informal hearing. However, since the family's HAP contract and lease will also terminate when the family's assistance terminates [form HUD-52641], it is a good business practice to provide written notification to both owner and family anytime assistance will be terminated, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Whenever a family's assistance will be terminated, the AHA will send a written notice of termination to the family and to the owner. The AHA will also send form HUD-5382 and a copy of the Informal Hearing Policy to the family with the termination notice. The termination notice will state the reason for the termination and allow the family to contest the reason by submitting a written request for an Informal Hearing. The written request must be submitted within 10 calendar days of the date of the termination notice. If a hearing is requested within a timely manner, the family has the right to obtain a lawyer or other representation to represent the family. The family and AHA will be given the opportunity to present evidence and ask questions of witness at the informal hearing.

If a family whose assistance is being terminated is entitled to an informal hearing, the notice of termination that the PHA sends to the family must meet the additional HUD and PHA notice requirements discussed in section 16-III.C of this plan. VAWA 2013 expands notification requirements to require PHAs to provide notice of VAWA rights and the HUD 5382 form when a PHA terminates a household's housing benefits.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Whenever the AHA decides to terminate a family's assistance because of the family's action or failure to act, the AHA will include in its termination notice the VAWA information described in section 16-IX.C of this plan and a form HUD-5382. Any family member wishing to claim protection under VAWA must notify the AHA within 10 calendar days of the termination notice.

Still other notice requirements apply in two situations:

- If a criminal record is the basis of a family's termination, the Augusta Housing Authority must provide a copy of the record to the subject of the record and the tenant so that they have an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the record [24 CFR 982.553(d)(2)].
- If immigration status is the basis of a family's termination, as discussed in section 12-I.D, the special notice requirements in section 16-III.D must be followed.

PART III: TERMINATION OF TENANCY BY THE OWNER

12-III.A. OVERVIEW

Termination of an assisted tenancy is a matter between the owner and the family; the Augusta Housing Authority is not directly involved. However, the owner is under some constraints when terminating an assisted tenancy. Termination of tenancy for certain reasons will also result in termination of assistance as discussed in this section.

12-III.B. GROUNDS FOR OWNER TERMINATION OF TENANCY [24 CFR 982.310, 24 CFR 5.2005(c), and Form HUD-52641-A, Tenancy Addendum]

During the term of the lease, the owner is not permitted to terminate the tenancy except for serious or repeated violations of the lease, certain violations of state or local law, or other good cause.

Serious or Repeated Lease Violations

The owner is permitted to terminate the family's tenancy for serious or repeated violations of the terms and conditions of the lease, except when the violations are related to incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking and the victim is protected from eviction by the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (see section 12-II.E). A serious lease violation includes failure to pay rent or other amounts due under the lease.

However, the housing authority's failure to make a HAP payment to the owner is not a violation of the lease between the family and the owner.

Violation of Federal, State, or Local Law

The owner is permitted to terminate the tenancy if a family member violates federal, state, or local law that imposes obligations in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises.

Criminal Activity or Alcohol Abuse

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any *covered person*—meaning any member of the household, a guest, or another person under the tenant's control—commits any of the following types of criminal activity (for applicable definitions see 24 CFR 5.100):

- Any criminal activity that threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by, other residents (including property management staff residing on the premises)
- Any criminal activity that threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences by, persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises
- Any violent criminal activity on or near the premises
- Any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises

However, in the case of criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, if the tenant or an affiliated individual is the victim, the criminal activity may not be construed as cause for terminating the victim's tenancy (see section 12-II.E).

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any member of the household is:

- Fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody, or confinement after conviction for a crime or an attempt to commit a crime that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, or that, in the case of the State of New Jersey, is a high misdemeanor; or
- Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law.

The owner may terminate tenancy during the term of the lease if any member of the household has engaged in abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

Evidence of Criminal Activity

The owner may terminate tenancy and evict by judicial action a family for criminal activity by a covered person if the owner determines the covered person has engaged in the criminal activity, regardless of whether the covered person has been arrested or convicted for such activity and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction. This is the case except in certain incidents where the criminal activity directly relates to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the tenant or an affiliated individual is the victim or threatened victim of the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Other Good Cause

During the initial lease term, the owner may not terminate the tenancy for “other good cause” unless the owner is terminating the tenancy because of something the family did or failed to do. During the initial lease term or during any extension term, other good cause includes the disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises.

After the initial lease term, “other good cause” for termination of tenancy by the owner includes:

- Failure by the family to accept the offer of a new lease or revision
- The owner’s desire to use the unit for personal or family use, or for a purpose other than as a residential rental unit
- A business or economic reason for termination of the tenancy (such as sale of the property, renovation of the unit, or desire to lease the unit at a higher rent)

After the initial lease term, the owner may give the family notice at any time, in accordance with the terms of the lease.

12-III.C. EVICTION [24 CFR 982.310(e) and (f) and Form HUD-52641-A, Tenancy Addendum]

The owner must give the tenant a written notice that specifies the grounds for termination of tenancy during the term of the lease. The tenancy does not terminate before the owner has given this notice, and the notice must be given at or before commencement of the eviction action.

The notice of grounds may be included in, or may be combined with, any owner eviction notice to the tenant.

Owner eviction notice means a notice to vacate, or a complaint or other initial pleading used under state or local law to commence an eviction action. The owner may only evict the tenant from the unit by instituting a court action. The owner must give the Augusta Housing Authority a copy of any eviction notice at the same time the owner notifies the family. The family is also required to give the Augusta Housing Authority a copy of any eviction notice (see Chapter 5).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the eviction action is finalized in court, the owner must provide the AHA with documentation related to the eviction, including notice of the eviction date, as soon as possible, but no later than 5 business days following the court-ordered eviction.

12-III.D. DECIDING WHETHER TO TERMINATE TENANCY [24 CFR 982.310(h), 24 CFR 982.310(h)(4)]

An owner who has grounds to terminate a tenancy is not required to do so, and may consider all of the circumstances relevant to a particular case before making a decision. These might include:

- The nature of the offending action
- The seriousness of the offending action;
- The effect on the community of the termination, or of the owner's failure to terminate the tenancy;
- The extent of participation by the leaseholder in the offending action;
- The effect of termination of tenancy on household members not involved in the offending activity;
- The demand for assisted housing by families who will adhere to lease responsibilities;
- The extent to which the leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action;
- The effect of the owner's action on the integrity of the program.

The owner may require a family to exclude a household member in order to continue to reside in the assisted unit, where that household member has participated in or been culpable for action or failure to act that warrants termination.

In determining whether to terminate tenancy for illegal use of drugs or alcohol abuse by a household member who is no longer engaged in such behavior, the owner may consider whether such household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or

alcohol rehabilitation program, or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully (42 U.S.C. 13661). For this purpose, the owner may require the tenant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in, or successful completion of, a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully.

The owner's termination of tenancy actions must be consistent with the fair housing and equal opportunity provisions in 24 CFR 5.105.

An owner's decision to terminate tenancy for incidents related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking is limited by the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) and the conforming regulations in 24 CFR Part 5, Subpart L. (See section 12-II.E.)

12-III.E. EFFECT OF TENANCY TERMINATION ON THE FAMILY'S ASSISTANCE

If a termination is not due to a serious or repeated violation of the lease, and if the Augusta Housing Authority has no other grounds for termination of assistance, the AHA may issue a new voucher so that the family can move with continued assistance (see Chapter 10).

EXHIBIT 12-1: STATEMENT OF FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

Following is a listing of a participant family's obligations under the HCV program:

- The family must supply any information that the PHA or HUD determines to be necessary, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status.
- The family must supply any information requested by the PHA or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition.
- The family must disclose and verify social security numbers and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
- Any information supplied by the family must be true and complete.
- The family is responsible for any Housing Quality Standards (HQS) breach by the family caused by failure to pay tenant-provided utilities or appliances, or damages to the dwelling unit or premises beyond normal wear and tear caused by any member of the household or guest.
- The family must allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice, as described in Chapter 8 of this plan.
- The family must not commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will determine if a family has committed serious or repeated violations of the lease based on available evidence, including but not limited to, a court-ordered eviction or an owner's notice to evict.

Serious and repeated lease violations will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises, and criminal activity. Generally, the criterion to be used will be whether or not the reason for the eviction was the fault of the tenant or guests. Any incidents of, or criminal activity related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will not be construed as serious or repeated lease violations by the victim [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

- The family must notify the PHA and the owner before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must comply with lease requirements regarding written notice to the owner. The family must provide written notice to the AHA at the same time the owner is notified.

- The family must promptly give the PHA a copy of any owner eviction notice.
- The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.

The composition of the assisted family residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must promptly notify the PHA in writing of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request PHA approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The request to add a family member must be submitted in writing and approved prior to the person moving into the unit. The AHA will determine eligibility of the new member in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3.

- The family must promptly notify the PHA in writing if any family member no longer lives in the unit.
- If the PHA has given approval, a foster child or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. The PHA has the discretion to adopt reasonable policies concerning residency by a foster child or a live-in aide, and to define when PHA consent may be given or denied. For policies related to the request and approval/disapproval of foster children, foster adults, and live-in aides, see Chapter 3 (Sections I.K and I.M), and Chapter 11 (Section II.B).
- The family must not sublease the unit, assign the lease, or transfer the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Subleasing includes receiving payment to cover rent and utility costs by a person living in the unit who is not listed as a family member.

- The family must supply any information requested by the PHA to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.
- The family must promptly notify the PHA when the family is absent from the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Notice is required under this provision when family members will be absent from the unit for an extended period. An extended period is defined as any period greater than 30 calendar days. Written notice must be provided to the AHA at the start of the extended absence.

- The family must pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease [Form HUD-52646, Voucher].
- The family must not own or have any interest in the unit, (other than in a cooperative and owners of a manufactured home leasing a manufactured home space).
- Family members must not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program. (See Chapter 14, Program Integrity for additional information).
- Family members must not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for HUD and PHA policies related to drug-related and violent criminal activity.

- Members of the household must not engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. See Chapter 12 for a discussion of HUD and PHA policies related to alcohol abuse.
- An assisted family or member of the family must not receive HCV program assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other federal, state or local housing assistance program.
- A family must not receive HCV program assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless the PHA has determined (and has notified the owner and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities. [Form HUD-52646, Voucher]

Chapter 13

OWNERS

INTRODUCTION

Owners play a major role in the HCV program by supplying decent, safe, and sanitary housing for participating families.

The term “owner” refers to any person or entity with the legal right to lease or sublease a unit to a participant in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.4(b)]. The term “owner” includes a principal or other interested party [24 CFR 982.453; 24 CFR 982.306(f)], such as a designated agent of the owner.

Owners have numerous responsibilities under the program, including screening and leasing to families, maintaining the dwelling unit, enforcing the lease, and complying with various contractual obligations.

The chapter is organized in two parts:

Part I: Owners in the HCV Program. This part discusses the role of an owner in the AHA’s HCV program and highlights key owner rights and responsibilities.

Part II: HAP Contracts. This part explains provisions of the HAP contract and the relationship between the AHA and the owner as expressed in the HAP contract.

For detailed information about HCV program responsibilities and processes, including AHA policies in key areas, owners will need to refer to several other chapters in this plan. Where appropriate, Chapter 13 will reference the other chapters.

PART I. OWNERS IN THE HCV PROGRAM

13-I.A. OWNER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION [HCV GB, pp. 2-4 to 2-6]

Recruitment

PHAs are responsible for ensuring that very low income families have access to all types and ranges of affordable housing in the PHA's jurisdiction, particularly housing outside areas of poverty or minority concentration. A critical element in fulfilling this responsibility is for the PHA to ensure that a sufficient number of owners, representing all types and ranges of affordable housing in the PHA's jurisdiction, are willing to participate in the HCV program.

To accomplish this objective, PHAs must identify and recruit new owners to participate in the program.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will conduct owner outreach to ensure that owners are familiar with the program and its advantages. The AHA will actively recruit property owners with property located outside areas of poverty and minority concentration. These outreach strategies will include:

- Distributing printed material about the program to property owners and managers
- Contacting property owners and managers by phone, in-person, or email
- Holding owner recruitment/information meetings at least once a year
- Participating in community based organizations comprised of private property and apartment owners and managers
- Developing working relationships with owners and real estate brokers associations

Outreach strategies will be monitored for effectiveness, and adapted accordingly.

Retention

In addition to recruiting owners to participate in the HCV program, the PHA must also provide the kind of customer service that will encourage participating owners to remain active in the program.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

All AHA activities that may affect an owner's ability to lease a unit will be processed as rapidly as possible, in order to minimize vacancy losses for owners.

The AHA will provide owners with a handbook that explains the program, including HUD and AHA policies and procedures, in easy-to-understand language.

When requested by the new owners, the AHA will give special attention to helping new owners succeed through activities such as:

- Providing the owner with a designated AHA contact person.

Coordinating inspection and leasing activities between the AHA, the owner, and the family.

Initiating telephone contact with the owner to explain the inspection process, and providing an inspection booklet and other resource materials about HUD housing quality standards.

Providing other written information about how the program operates, including answers to frequently asked questions.

Additional services may be undertaken on an as-needed basis, and as resources permit.

13-I.B. BASIC HCV PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

HUD requires the PHA to assist families in their housing search by providing the family with a list of landlords or other parties known to the PHA who may be willing to lease a unit to the family, or to help the family find a unit. Although the PHA cannot maintain a list of owners that are pre-qualified to participate in the program, owners may indicate to the PHA their willingness to lease a unit to an eligible HCV family, or to help the HCV family find a unit [24 CFR 982.301(b)(11)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Owners that wish to indicate their willingness to lease a unit to an eligible HCV family or to help the HCV family find a unit must notify the AHA. The AHA will maintain a listing of such owners and provide this listing to the HCV family as part of the informational briefing packet.

When a family approaches an owner to apply for tenancy, the owner is responsible for screening the family and deciding whether to lease to the family, just as the owner would with any potential unassisted tenant. The Augusta Housing Authority has no liability or responsibility to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. See chapters 3 and 9 for more detail on tenant family screening policies and process.

If the owner is willing, the family and the owner must jointly complete a Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA, Form HUD 52517), which constitutes the family's request for assistance in the specified unit, and which documents the owner's willingness to lease to the family and to follow the program's requirements. When submitted to the AHA, this document is the first step in the process of obtaining approval for the family to receive the financial assistance it will need in order to occupy the unit. Also submitted with the RFTA is a copy of the owner's proposed dwelling lease, including the HUD-required Tenancy Addendum (Form HUD-52641-A). See Chapter 9 for more detail on request for tenancy approval policies and process.

HUD regulations stipulate requirements for the approval of an assisted tenancy.

The owner must be qualified to participate in the program [24 CFR 982.306]. Some owners are precluded from participating in the program, or from renting to a particular family, either because of their past history with this or another federal housing program, or because of certain conflicts of interest. Owner qualifications are discussed later in this chapter.

The selected unit must be of a type that is eligible for the program [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. Certain types of dwelling units cannot be assisted under the HCV program. Other types may be assisted under certain conditions. See chapter 9 for more detail on unit eligibility policies and process.

The selected unit must meet HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and/or equivalent state or local standards approved by HUD [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. The AHA will inspect the owner's dwelling unit at least biennially to ensure that the unit continues to meet HQS requirements. See chapter 8 for a discussion of the HQS standards and policies for HQS inspections at initial lease-up and throughout the family's tenancy.

The AHA must determine that the proposed rent for the unit is reasonable [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. The rent must be reasonable in relation to comparable unassisted units in the area and must not be in excess of rents charged by the owner for comparable, unassisted units on the premises. See chapter 8 for a discussion of requirements and policies on rent reasonableness, rent comparability and the rent reasonableness determination process.

At initial lease-up of a unit, if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard, the AHA must ensure that the family share does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. See chapter 6 for a discussion of the calculation of family income, family share of rent and HAP.

The dwelling lease must comply with all program requirements [24 CFR 982.308]. Owners are encouraged to use their standard leases when renting to an assisted family. The HUD Tenancy Addendum includes the HUD requirements governing the tenancy and must be added word-for-word to the owner's lease. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the dwelling lease and tenancy addendum, including lease terms and provisions.

The AHA and the owner must execute a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract (Form HUD-52641). The HAP contract format is prescribed by HUD. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the HUD requirements for execution of the HAP contract.

13-I.C. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.452]

The basic owner responsibilities in the HCV program are outlined in the regulations as follows:

- Complying with all of the owner's obligations under the housing assistance payments (HAP) contract and the lease
- Performing all management and rental functions for the assisted unit, including selecting a voucher-holder to lease the unit, and deciding if the family is suitable for tenancy of the unit
- Maintaining the unit in accordance with the Housing Quality Standards (HQS), including performance of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance
- Complying with equal opportunity requirements
- Preparing and furnishing to the AHA information required under the HAP contract
- Collecting the security deposit, the tenant rent, and any charges for unit damage by the family.
- Enforcing tenant obligations under the dwelling lease
- Paying for utilities and services that are not the responsibility of the family as specified in the lease
- Allowing reasonable modifications to a dwelling unit occupied or to be occupied by a disabled person [24 CFR 100.203]

- Complying with the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) when screening prospective HCV tenants or terminating the tenancy of an HCV family (see 24 CFR Part 5, Subpart L; 24 CFR 982.310(h)(4); and 24 CFR 982.452(b)(1))

13-I.D. OWNER QUALIFICATIONS

The Augusta Housing Authority does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where the AHA may deny approval of an assisted tenancy based on past owner behavior, conflict of interest, or other owner-related issues. No owner has a right to participate in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.306(e)].

Owners Barred from Participation [24 CFR 982.306(a) and (b)]

The AHA must not approve the assisted tenancy if the AHA has been informed that the owner has been debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under 24 CFR part 24. HUD may direct the AHA not to approve a tenancy request if a court or administrative agency has determined that the owner violated the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements, or if such an action is pending.

Leasing to Relatives [24 CFR 982.306(d), HCV GB p. 11-2]

The AHA must not approve a tenancy if the owner is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family. The AHA may make an exception as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. The owner is required to certify that no such relationship exists. This restriction applies at the time that the family receives assistance under the HCV program for occupancy of a particular unit.

Conflict of Interest [24 CFR 982.161; HCV GB p. 8-19]

The AHA must not approve a tenancy in which any of the following classes of persons has any interest, direct or indirect, during tenure or for one year thereafter:

- Any present or former member or officer of the AHA (except a participant commissioner)
- Any employee of the AHA, or any contractor, subcontractor or agent of the AHA, who formulates policy or who influences decisions with respect to the programs
- Any public official, member of a governing body, or State or local legislator, who exercises functions or responsibilities with respect to the programs
- Any member of the Congress of the United States

HUD may waive the conflict of interest requirements, except for members of Congress, for good cause. The PAA must submit a waiver request to the appropriate HUD Field Office for determination.

Any waiver request submitted by the AHA must include the following [HCV Guidebook pp.11-2 and 11-3]:

- Complete statement of the facts of the case;
- Analysis of the specific conflict of interest provision of the HAP contract and justification as to why the provision should be waived;

- Analysis of and statement of consistency with state and local laws. The local HUD office, the AHA, or both parties may conduct this analysis. Where appropriate, an opinion by the state's attorney general should be obtained;
- Opinion by the local HUD office as to whether there would be an appearance of impropriety if the waiver were granted;
- Statement regarding alternative existing housing available for lease under the HCV program or other assisted housing if the waiver is denied;
- If the case involves a hardship for a particular family, statement of the circumstances and discussion of possible alternatives;
- If the case involves a public official or member of the governing body, explanation of his/her duties under state or local law, including reference to any responsibilities involving the HCV program;
- If the case involves employment of a family member by the AHA or assistance under the HCV program for an eligible AHA employee, explanation of the responsibilities and duties of the position, including any related to the HCV program;
- If the case involves an investment on the part of a member, officer, or employee of the AHA, description of the nature of the investment, including disclosure/divestiture plans.

Where the AHA has requested a conflict of interest waiver, the AHA may not execute the HAP contract until HUD has made a decision on the waiver request.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In considering whether to request a conflict of interest waiver from HUD, the AHA will consider certain factors such as consistency of the waiver with state and local laws, the existence of alternative housing available to families, the individual circumstances of a particular family, the specific duties of individuals whose positions present a possible conflict of interest, the nature of any financial investment in the property and plans for disclosure/divestiture, and the possible appearance of impropriety.

Owner Actions That May Result in Disapproval of a Tenancy Request [24 CFR 982.306(c)]

HUD regulations permit the PHA to disapprove a request for tenancy for various actions and inactions of the owner.

If the PHA disapproves a request for tenancy because an owner is not qualified, it may not terminate the HAP contract for any assisted families that are already living in the owner's properties unless the owner has violated the HAP contract for those units [HCV GB p. 11-4].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will refuse to approve a request for tenancy if the AHA becomes aware that any of the following are true:

- The owner has violated obligations under a HAP contract under Section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f);

- The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;

- The owner has engaged in any drug-related criminal activity or any violent criminal activity;

- The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with the HQS for units leased under the tenant-based programs, or with applicable housing standards for units leased with project-based Section 8 assistance or leased under any other federal housing program;

- The owner has a history or practice of failing to terminate tenancy of tenants of units assisted under Section 8 or any other federally assisted housing program for activity engaged in by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or another person under the control of any member of the household that: (i) Threatens the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents; (ii) Threatens the health or safety of other residents, of employees of the PHA, or of owner employees or other persons engaged in management of the housing; (iii) Threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences, by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises; or (iv) Is drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity;

- The owner has a history or practice of renting units that fail to meet state or local housing codes; or

- The owner has not paid state or local real estate taxes, fines, or assessment.

In considering whether to disapprove owners for any of the discretionary reasons listed above, the AHA will consider any mitigating factors. Such factors may include, but are not limited to, the seriousness of the violation in relation to program requirements, the impact on the ability of families to lease units under the program, health and safety of participating families, among others. Upon consideration of such circumstances, the AHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose to approve an owner.

Legal Ownership of Unit

The following represents PHA policy on legal ownership of a dwelling unit to be assisted under the HCV program.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will only enter into a contractual relationship with the legal owner of a qualified unit. No tenancy will be approved without acceptable documentation of legal ownership (e.g., deed of trust, proof of taxes for most recent year).

13-I.E. NON-DISCRIMINATION [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641]

The owner must not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, or disability, in connection with any actions or responsibilities under the HCV program and the HAP contract with the AHA.

The owner must cooperate with the AHA and with HUD in conducting any equal opportunity compliance reviews and complaint investigations in connection with the HCV program and the HAP contract with the PHA.

See Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity requirements in the HCV program.

PART II. HAP CONTRACTS

13-II.A. OVERVIEW

The HAP contract represents a written agreement between the PHA and the owner of the dwelling unit occupied by a HCV assisted family. The contract spells out the owner's responsibilities under the program, as well as the PHA's obligations. Under the HAP contract, the PHA agrees to make housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of the family approved by the PHA to occupy the unit.

The HAP contract is used for all HCV program tenancies except for assistance under the Section 8 homeownership program, and assistance to families that own a manufactured home and use their assistance to lease the space for the manufactured home. See chapter 15 for a discussion of any special housing types included in the AHA's HCV program.

When the AHA has determined that the unit meets program requirements and the tenancy is approvable, the AHA and owner must execute the HAP contract. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the leasing process, including provisions for execution of the HAP contract.

13-II.B. HAP CONTRACT CONTENTS

The HAP contract format is required by HUD, specifically Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract, Form HUD-52641.

The HAP contract contains three parts.

Part A of the contract includes basic contract information: the names of the tenant and all household members, the address of the contract unit, start and end dates of initial lease term, the amount of initial monthly rent to owner, the amount of initial housing assistance payment, the utilities and appliances to be supplied by owner and tenant, and the signatures of the PHA representative and owner [HCV Guidebook, pp. 11-10 and 11-11].

In general, the HAP contract cannot be modified. However, PHAs do have the discretion to add language to Part A of the HAP contract which prohibits the owner from collecting a security deposit in excess of private market practices or in excess of amounts charged to unassisted tenants. PHA policy on the amount of security deposit an owner may collect is found in Chapter 9.

PHAs also have the discretion to add language to Part A of the HAP contract that defines when the housing assistance payment by the PHA is deemed received by the owner (e.g., upon mailing by the PHA or actual receipt by the owner).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA has not adopted a policy that defines when the housing assistance payment by the AHA is deemed received by the owner. Therefore, no modifications to the HAP contract will be necessary.

Part B is the body of the contract. It describes in detail program requirements affecting the owner and owner roles and responsibilities under the HCV program. Most of the requirements contained in Part B of the HAP contract are outlined elsewhere in this plan. Topics addressed in Part B include:

- Lease of Contract Unit
- Maintenance, Utilities, and Other Services
- Term of HAP Contract
- Provision and Payment of Utilities and Appliances
- Rent to Owner: Reasonable Rent
- PHA Payment to Owner
- Prohibition of Discrimination
- Owner's Breach of HAP Contract
- PHA and HUD Access to Premises and Owner's Records
- Exclusion of Third Party Rights
- Conflict of Interest
- Assignment of the HAP Contract
- Written Notices
- Entire Agreement Interpretation

Part C of the contract includes the Tenancy Addendum (Form HUD-52641-A). The addendum sets forth the tenancy requirements for the program and the composition of the household, as approved by the PHA. The tenant has the right to enforce the Tenancy Addendum against the owner. The terms of the Tenancy Addendum prevail over any other provisions of the lease.

13-II.C. HAP CONTRACT PAYMENTS

General

During the term of the HAP contract, and subject to the provisions of the HAP contract, the AHA must make monthly HAP payments to the owner on behalf of the family, at the beginning of each month. If a lease term begins after the first of the month, the HAP payment for the first month is prorated for a partial month.

The amount of the HAP payment is determined according to the policies described in Chapter 6, and is subject to change during the term of the HAP contract. The AHA must notify the owner and the family in writing of any changes in the HAP payment.

HAP payments can be made only during the lease term, and only while the family is residing in the unit.

The monthly HAP payment by the AHA is credited toward the monthly rent to owner under the family's lease. The total of the rent paid by the tenant and the HAP payment is equal to the rent to owner as specified in the lease.

The family is not responsible for payment of the HAP payment, and the AHA is not responsible for payment of the family share of rent.

The family's share of the rent cannot be more than the difference between the rent to owner and the HAP payment. The owner may not demand or accept any rent payment from the tenant in excess of this maximum [24 CFR 982.451(b)(4)]. The owner may not charge the tenant extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality, or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises [24 CFR 982.510(c)]. See chapter 9 for a discussion of separate, non-lease agreements for services, appliances and other items that are not included in the lease.

If the owner receives any excess HAP from the AHA, the excess amount must be returned immediately. If the AHA determines that the owner is not entitled to all or a portion of the HAP, the AHA may deduct the amount of overpayment from any amounts due to the owner, including amounts due under any other Section 8 HCV contract. See Chapter 16 for additional detail on owner reimbursement of HAP overpayments.

Owner Certification of Compliance

Unless the owner complies with all provisions of the HAP contract, the owner is not entitled to receive housing assistance payments under the HAP contract [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641].

By endorsing the monthly check or monthly direct deposit from the AHA, the owner certifies to compliance with the terms of the HAP contract. This includes certification that the owner is maintaining the unit and premises in accordance with HQS; that the contract unit is leased to the tenant family and, to the best of the owner's knowledge, the family resides in the unit as the family's only residence; the rent to owner does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units on the premises; and that the owner does not receive (other than rent to owner) any additional payments or other consideration for rent of the contract unit during the HAP term.

Late HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.451(a)(5)]

The AHA is responsible for making HAP payments promptly when due to the owner, in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract. After the first two calendar months of the HAP contract term, the HAP contract provides for late penalties if the AHA fails to make the HAP payment on time.

Penalties for late HAP payments can only be imposed if 1) the penalties are in accordance with generally accepted local rental market practices and law governing penalties for late payment by tenants; 2) it is the owner's normal business practice to charge late payment penalties for both assisted and unassisted families; and 3) the owner charges the assisted family for late payment of the family's share of the rent.

The AHA is not required to pay a late payment penalty if HUD determines that the payment is late for reasons beyond the AHA's control. In addition, late payment penalties are not required if the AHA intentionally delays or denies payment as a remedy to an owner breach of the HAP contract [HCV Guidebook p. 11-7].

Termination of HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.311(b)]

The AHA must continue making housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the HAP contract as long as the tenant continues to occupy the unit and the HAP contract is not violated.

HAP payments terminate when the HAP contract terminates or when the tenancy is terminated in accordance with the terms of the lease.

If the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit, the AHA must continue to make housing assistance payments to the owner until the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The owner must inform the AHA when the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit.

The owner must inform the AHA when the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant, and provide the AHA with a copy of such judgment or determination.

After the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant, the AHA will continue to make HAP payments to the owner until the family actually moves from the unit or until the family is physically evicted from the unit, whichever is earlier. The owner must inform the AHA of the date when the family actually moves from the unit or the family is physically evicted from the unit.

13-II.D. BREACH OF HAP CONTRACT [24 CFR 982.453]

Any of the following actions by the owner constitutes a breach of the HAP contract:

- If the owner violates any obligations under the HAP contract including failure to maintain the unit in accordance with HQS
- If the owner has violated any obligation under any other HAP contract under Section 8
- If the owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program
- For projects with mortgages insured by HUD or loans made by HUD, if the owner has failed to comply with the regulation for the applicable program; or if the owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the mortgage or loan
- If the owner has engaged in drug-related criminal activity
- If the owner has committed any violent criminal activity

If the AHA determines that a breach of the HAP contract has occurred, it may exercise any of its rights and remedies under the HAP contract.

The AHA rights and remedies against the owner under the HAP contract include recovery of any HAP overpayment, suspension of housing assistance payments, abatement or reduction of the housing assistance payment, termination of the payment or termination of the HAP contract. The AHA may also obtain additional relief by judicial order or action.

The AHA must notify the owner of its determination and provide in writing the reasons for the determination. The notice may require the owner to take corrective action by an established deadline. The AHA must provide the owner with written notice of any reduction in housing assistance payments or the termination of the HAP contract.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Before the AHA invokes a remedy against an owner, the AHA will evaluate all information and documents available to determine if the contract has been breached.

If relevant, the AHA will conduct an audit of the owner's records pertaining to the tenancy or unit.

If it is determined that the owner has breached the contract, the AHA will consider all of the relevant factors including the seriousness of the breach, the effect on the family, the owner's record of compliance and the number and seriousness of any prior HAP contract violations.

13-II.E. HAP CONTRACT TERM AND TERMINATIONS

The term of the HAP contract runs concurrently with the term of the dwelling lease [24 CFR 982.451(a)(2)], beginning on the first day of the initial term of the lease and terminating on the last day of the term of the lease, including any lease term extensions.

The HAP contract and the housing assistance payments made under the HAP contract terminate if [HCV Guidebook pp.11-4 and 11-5, pg. 15-3]:

- The owner or the family terminates the lease;
- The lease expires;
- The AHA terminates the HAP contract;
- The AHA terminates assistance for the family;
- The family moves from the assisted unit. In this situation, the owner is entitled to keep the housing assistance payment for the month when the family moves out of the unit.
- 180 calendar days have elapsed since the AHA made the last housing assistance payment to the owner;
- The family is absent from the unit for longer than the maximum period permitted by the AHA;
- The Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) between the AHA and HUD expires
- The AHA elects to terminate the HAP contract.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA may also elect to terminate the HAP contract in each of the following situations:

Available program funding is not sufficient to support continued assistance for families in the program [24 CFR 982.454];

The unit does not meet HQS size requirements due to change in family composition [24 CFR 982.403] – see chapter 8;

The unit does not meet HQS [24 CFR 982.404] – see chapter 8;

The family breaks up [HUD Form 52641] – see chapter 3;

The owner breaches the HAP contract [24 CFR 982.453(b)] – see Section 13-II.D.

If the AHA terminates the HAP contract, the AHA must give the owner and the family written notice. The notice must specify the reasons for the termination and the effective date of the termination. Once a HAP contract is terminated, no further HAP payments may be made under that contract [HCV Guidebook pg.15-4].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In all cases, the HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which the AHA gives written notice to the owner. The owner is not entitled to any housing assistance payment after this period, and must return to the AHA any housing assistance payment received after this period.

If the family moves from the assisted unit into a new unit, even if the new unit is in the same building or complex as the assisted unit, the HAP contract for the assisted unit terminates. A new HAP contract would be required [HCV GB, p. 11-17].

When the family moves from an assisted unit into a new unit, the term of the HAP contract for the new unit may begin in the same month in which the family moves out of its old unit. This is not considered a duplicative subsidy [HCV GB, p. 8-22].

13-II.F. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP / ASSIGNMENT OF THE HAP CONTRACT [HUD-52641]

The HAP contract cannot be assigned to a new owner without the prior written consent of the AHA.

An owner under a HAP contract must notify the AHA in writing prior to a change in the legal ownership of the unit. The owner must supply all information as requested by the AHA.

Prior to approval of assignment to a new owner, the new owner must agree to be bound by and comply with the HAP contract. The agreement between the new owner and the former owner must be in writing and in a form that the PHA finds acceptable. The new owner must provide the AHA with a copy of the executed agreement.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Assignment of the HAP contract will be approved only if the new owner is qualified to become an owner under the HCV program according to the policies in Section 13-I.D. of this chapter.

The AHA must receive a signed, written request from the existing owner stating the name and address of the new HAP payee and the effective date of the assignment in order to change the HAP payee under an outstanding HAP contract.

Within 10 business days of receiving the owner's request, the AHA will inform the current owner in writing whether the assignment may take place.

The new owner must provide a written certification to the AHA that includes:

- A copy of the escrow statement or other document showing the transfer of title and recorded deed;

- A copy of the owner's IRS Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification, or the social security number of the new owner;

- The effective date of the HAP contract assignment;

- A written agreement to comply with the terms of the HAP contract; and

- A certification that the new owner is not a prohibited relative.

If the new owner does not agree to an assignment of the HAP contract, or fails to provide the necessary documents, the AHA will terminate the HAP contract with the old owner. If the new owner wants to offer the family a new lease, and the family elects to stay with continued assistance, the AHA will process the leasing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 9.

Chapter 14

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

INTRODUCTION

The Augusta Housing Authority is committed to ensuring that subsidy funds made available to the Augusta Housing Authority are spent in accordance with HUD requirements.

This chapter covers HUD and AHA policies designed to prevent, detect, investigate, and resolve instances of program abuse or fraud. It also describes the actions that will be taken in the case of unintentional errors and omissions.

Part I: Preventing, Detecting, and Investigating Errors and Program Abuse. This part presents AHA policies related to preventing, detecting, and investigating errors and program abuse.

Part II: Corrective Measures and Penalties. This part describes the corrective measures the AHA must and may take when errors or program abuses are found.

PART I: PREVENTING, DETECTING, AND INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

14-I.A. PREVENTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

HUD created the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system to provide PHAs with a powerful tool for preventing errors and detecting program abuse. PHAs are required to use the EIV system in its entirety in accordance with HUD administrative guidance [24 CFR 5.233]. PHAs are further required to:

- Provide applicants and participants with form HUD-52675, “Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations”
- Require all adult members of an applicant or participant family to acknowledge receipt of form HUD-52675 by signing a copy of the form for retention in the family file

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

To ensure that the AHA’s HCV program is administered according to the highest ethical and legal standards, the AHA will employ a variety of techniques to ensure that both errors and intentional program abuse are rare.

The AHA will discuss program compliance and integrity issues during the voucher briefing sessions described in Chapter 5.

The AHA will provide each applicant and participant with a copy of “Is Fraud Worth It?” (form HUD-1141-OIG), which explains the types of actions a family must avoid and the penalties for program abuse.

The AHA will provide each applicant and participant with a copy of “What You Should Know about EIV,” a guide to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system published by HUD as an attachment to Notice PIH 2010-19. In addition, the AHA will require the head of each household to acknowledge receipt of the guide by signing a copy for retention in the family file.

The AHA will place a warning statement about the penalties for fraud (as described in 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 1010) on key AHA forms and form letters that request information from a family or owner.

AHA staff will be required to review and explain the contents of all HUD- and AHA-required forms prior to requesting family member signatures.

At every regular reexamination, AHA staff will explain any changes in HUD regulations or AHA policy that affect program participants.

The AHA will encourage first-time owners (or their agents) to participate in a briefing session on HAP contract requirements.

The AHA will provide owners with ongoing information about the program, with an emphasis on actions and situations to avoid.

The AHA will provide each AHA employee with the necessary training on program rules and the organization’s standards of conduct and ethics.

For purposes of this chapter the term *error* refers to an unintentional error or omission. *Program abuse or fraud* refers to a single act or pattern of actions that constitute a false statement, omission, or concealment of a substantial fact, made with the intent to deceive or mislead.

14-I.B. DETECTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

In addition to taking steps to prevent errors and program abuse, the Augusta Housing Authority will use a variety of activities to detect errors and program abuse.

Quality Control and Analysis of Data

Under the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP), HUD requires the Augusta Housing Authority to review a random sample of tenant records annually to determine if the records conform to program requirements and to conduct quality control inspections of a sample of units to ensure HQS compliance [24 CFR, Part 985]. (See Chapter 16 for additional information about SEMAP requirements).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In addition to the SEMAP quality control requirements, the AHA will employ a variety of methods to detect errors and program abuse.

The AHA routinely will use HUD and other non-HUD sources of up-front income verification. This includes The Work Number and any other private or public databases available to the AHA.

At each annual reexamination, current information provided by the family will be compared to information provided at the last annual reexamination to identify inconsistencies and incomplete information.

The AHA will compare family-reported income and expenditures to detect possible unreported income.

Independent Audits and HUD Monitoring

OMB Circular A-133 requires all PHAs that expend \$500,000 or more in federal awards annually to have an independent audit (IPA). In addition, HUD conducts periodic on-site and automated monitoring of Augusta Housing Authority activities and notifies the Augusta Housing Authority of errors and potential cases of program abuse.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will use the results reported in any IPA or HUD monitoring reports to identify potential program abuses as well as to assess the effectiveness of the AHA's error detection and abuse prevention efforts.

Individual Reporting of Possible Errors and Program Abuse

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will encourage staff, program participants, and the public to report possible program abuse.

14-I.C. INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

When the PHA Will Investigate

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will review all referrals, specific allegations, complaints, and tips from any source including other agencies, companies, and individuals, to determine if they warrant investigation. In order for the AHA to investigate, the allegation must contain at least one independently verifiable item of information, such as the name of an employer or the name of an unauthorized household member.

The AHA will investigate when inconsistent or contradictory information is detected through file reviews and the verification process.

Consent to Release of Information [24 CFR 982.516]

The AHA may investigate possible instances of error or abuse using all available AHA and public records. If necessary, the AHA will require HCV families to sign consent forms for the release of additional information.

Analysis and Findings

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will base its evaluation on a preponderance of the evidence collected during its investigation.

Preponderance of the evidence is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence that as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

For each investigation, the AHA will determine (1) whether an error or program abuse has occurred, (2) whether any amount of money is owed the AHA, and (3) what corrective measures or penalties will be assessed.

Consideration of Remedies

All errors and instances of program abuse must be corrected prospectively. Whether the Augusta Housing Authority will enforce other corrective actions and penalties depends upon the nature of the error or program abuse.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the AHA will take into consideration (1) the seriousness of the offense and the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, (2) any special circumstances surrounding the case, (3) any mitigating circumstances related to the disability of a family member, (4) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

In the case of owner-caused errors or program abuse, the AHA will take into consideration (1) the seriousness of the offense, (2) the length of time since the violation has occurred, and (3) the effects of a particular remedy on family members who were not involved in the offense.

Notice and Appeals

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will inform the relevant party in writing of its findings and remedies within 10 business days of the conclusion of the investigation. The notice will include (1) a description of the error or program abuse, (2) the basis on which the AHA determined the error or program abuses, (3) the remedies to be employed, and (4) the family's right to appeal the results through the informal review or hearing process, if applicable (see Chapter 16).

PART II: CORRECTIVE MEASURES AND PENALTIES

14-II.A. SUBSIDY UNDER- OR OVERPAYMENTS

A subsidy under- or overpayment includes (1) an incorrect housing assistance payment to the owner, (2) an incorrect family share established for the family, and (3) an incorrect utility reimbursement to a family.

Corrections

Whether the incorrect subsidy determination is an overpayment or underpayment of subsidy, the Augusta Housing Authority must promptly correct the HAP, family share, and any utility reimbursement prospectively.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Increases in the family share will be implemented on the first of the month following a written 30-day notice.

Any decreases in family share will become effective the first of the month following the discovery of the error.

Reimbursement

Whether the family or owner is required to reimburse the Augusta Housing Authority or the Augusta Housing Authority is required to make retroactive subsidy payments to the owner or family depends upon which party is responsible for the incorrect subsidy payment and whether the action taken was an error or program abuse. Policies regarding reimbursement are discussed in the three sections that follow.

14-II.B. FAMILY-CAUSED ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE

Family obligations and general administrative requirements for participating in the program are discussed throughout this plan. This section deals specifically with errors and program abuse by family members.

An incorrect subsidy determination caused by a family generally would be the result of incorrect reporting of family composition, income, assets, or expenses, but also would include instances in which the family knowingly allows the Augusta Housing Authority to use incorrect information provided by a third party.

Family Reimbursement to PHA [HCV GB pp. 22-12 to 22-13]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the family will be required to repay any excess subsidy received. The AHA may, but is not required to, offer the family a repayment agreement in accordance with Chapter 16. If the family fails to repay the excess subsidy, the AHA will terminate the family's assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

AHA Reimbursement to Family [HCV GB p. 22-12]

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not reimburse the family for any underpayment of assistance when the underpayment clearly is caused by the family.

Prohibited Actions

An applicant or participant in the HCV program must not knowingly:

- Make a false statement to the PHA [Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001].
- Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program [24 CFR 982.552(c)(iv)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of family program abuse:

Payment to the owner in excess of amounts authorized by the AHA for rent, security deposit, and additional services

Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to the AHA Board of Commissioners, employees, contractors, or other AHA representatives

Offering payments or other incentives to the owner or a third party as an inducement for the third party to make false or misleading statements to the AHA on the family's behalf

Use of a false name or the use of falsified, forged, or altered documents

Intentional misreporting of family information or circumstances (e.g. income, family composition)

Omitted facts that were obviously known by a family member (e.g., not reporting employment income)

Admission of program abuse by an adult family member

The AHA may determine other actions to be program abuse based upon a preponderance of the evidence, as defined earlier in this chapter.

Penalties for Program Abuse

In the case of program abuse caused by a family the AHA may, at its discretion, impose any of the following remedies.

- The AHA may require the family to repay excess subsidy amounts paid by the AHA, as described earlier in this section.
- The AHA may require, as a condition of receiving or continuing assistance, that a culpable family member not reside in the unit. See policies in Chapter 3 (for applicants) and Chapter 12 (for participants).
- The AHA may deny or terminate the family's assistance following the policies set forth in Chapter 3 and Chapter 12 respectively.

- The AHA may refer the family for state or federal criminal prosecution as described in section 14-II.E.

14-II.C. OWNER-CAUSED ERROR OR PROGRAM ABUSE

Owner requirements that are part of the regular process of offering, leasing, and maintaining a unit (e.g., HQS compliance, fair housing) are addressed in the appropriate chapters of this plan. This section focuses on errors and program abuse by owners.

An incorrect subsidy determination caused by an owner generally would be the result of an incorrect owner statement about the characteristics of the assisted unit (e.g., the number of bedrooms, which utilities are paid by the family). It also includes accepting duplicate housing assistance payments for the same unit in the same month, or after a family no longer resides in the unit.

Owner Reimbursement to the PHA

In all cases of overpayment of subsidy caused by the owner, the owner must repay to the AHA any excess subsidy received. The AHA may recover overpaid amounts by withholding housing assistance payments due for subsequent months, or if the debt is large, the AHA may allow the owner to pay in installments over a period of time [HCV GB p. 22-13].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In cases where the owner has received excess subsidy, the AHA will require the owner to repay the amount owed in accordance with the policies in Section 16-IV.B.

Prohibited Owner Actions

An owner participating in the HCV program must not:

- Make any false statement to the PHA [Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001].
- Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program [24 CFR 982.453(a)(3)] including:

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of owner program abuse:

Charging the family rent above or below the amount specified by the AHA

Charging a security deposit other than that specified in the family's lease

Charging the family for services that are provided to unassisted tenants at no extra charge

Knowingly accepting housing assistance payments for any month(s) after the family has vacated the unit

Knowingly accepting incorrect or excess housing assistance payments

Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to the AHA Board of Commissioners, employees, contractors, or other AHA representatives

Offering payments or other incentives to an HCV family as an inducement for the family to make false or misleading statements to the AHA

Residing in the unit with an assisted family

Remedies and Penalties

When the AHA determines that the owner has committed program abuse, the AHA may take any of the following actions:

- Require the owner to repay excess housing assistance payments, as discussed earlier in this section and in accordance with the policies in Chapter 16.
- Terminate the HAP contract (See Chapter 13).
- Bar the owner from future participation in any AHA programs.
- Refer the case to state or federal officials for criminal prosecution as described in section 14-II.E.

14-II.D. AHA-CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE

The responsibilities and expectations of Augusta Housing Authority staff with respect to normal program administration are discussed throughout this plan. This section specifically addresses actions of a AHA staff member that are considered errors or program abuse related to the HCV program. Additional standards of conduct may be provided in the Augusta Housing Authority personnel policy.

AHA-caused incorrect subsidy determinations include (1) failing to correctly apply HCV rules regarding family composition, income, assets, and expenses, (2) assigning the incorrect voucher size to a family, and (3) errors in calculation.

Repayment to the AHA

Neither a family nor an owner is required to repay an overpayment of subsidy if the error or program abuse is caused by PHA staff [HCV GB. 22-12].

AHA Reimbursement to Family or Owner

The Augusta Housing Authority must reimburse a family for any underpayment of subsidy, regardless of whether the underpayment was the result of staff-caused error or staff or owner program abuse. Funds for this reimbursement must come from the AHA's administrative fee reserves [HCV GB p. 22-12].

Prohibited Activities

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any of the following will be considered evidence of program abuse by AHA staff:

Failing to comply with any HCV program requirements for personal gain

Failing to comply with any HCV program requirements as a result of a conflict of interest relationship with any applicant, participant, or owner

Seeking or accepting anything of material value from applicants, participating families, vendors, owners, contractors, or other persons who provide services or materials to the AHA

Disclosing confidential or proprietary information to outside parties

Gaining profit as a result of insider knowledge of AHA activities, policies, or practices

Misappropriating or misusing HCV funds

Destroying, concealing, removing, or inappropriately using any records related to the HCV program

Committing any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program

14-II.E. CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When the AHA determines that program abuse by an owner, family, or AHA staff member has occurred and the amount of overpaid subsidy meets or exceeds the threshold for prosecution under local or state law, the AHA will refer the matter to the appropriate entity for prosecution. When the amount of overpaid assistance meets or exceeds the federal threshold, the case will also be referred to the HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Other criminal violations related to the HCV program will be referred to the appropriate local, state, or federal entity.

14-II.F. FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE RECOVERIES

The Augusta Housing Authority may retain a portion of program fraud losses that the AHA recovers from a family or owner through litigation, court order, or a repayment agreement [24 CFR 982.163].

The Augusta Housing Authority must be the principal party initiating or sustaining the action to recover amounts due from tenants that are due as a result of fraud and abuse. 24 CFR 792.202 permits the AHA to retain the greater of:

- 50 percent of the amount it actually collects from a judgment, litigation (including settlement of a lawsuit) or an administrative repayment agreement, or
- Reasonable and necessary costs that the AHA incurs related to the collection including costs of investigation, legal fees, and agency collection fees.

The family must be afforded the opportunity for an informal hearing in accordance with requirements in 24 CFR 982.555.

If HUD incurs costs on behalf of the AHA related to the collection, these costs must be deducted from the amount retained by the AHA.

Chapter 15

SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES

[24 CFR 982 Subpart M]

INTRODUCTION

The Augusta Housing Authority will not permit a family to use any of the special housing types allowed by HUD except Manufactured Homes and Homeownership.

This chapter consists of the following two parts. Each part contains a description of the housing type and any special requirements associated with it. Except as modified by this chapter, the general requirements of the HCV program apply to special housing types.

Part I: Manufactured Homes (including manufactured home space rental)

Part II: Homeownership

PART I: MANUFACTURED HOMES

[24 CFR 982.620 through 982.624; FR Notice 1/18/17]

15-VI.A. OVERVIEW

A manufactured home is a manufactured structure, transportable in one or more parts, that is built on a permanent chassis, and designed for use as a principal place of residence. HCV-assisted families may occupy manufactured homes in two different ways.

(1) A family can choose to rent a manufactured home already installed on a space and the AHA must permit it. In this instance program rules are the same as when a family rents any other residential housing, except that there are special HQS requirements as provided in 15-VI.D below.

(2) HUD also permits an otherwise eligible family that owns a manufactured home to rent a space for the manufactured home and receive HCV assistance with the rent for the space as well as certain other housing expenses. The Augusta Housing Authority may, but are not required to, provide assistance for such families.

15-VI.B. SPECIAL POLICIES FOR MANUFACTURED HOME OWNERS WHO LEASE A SPACE

Family Income

In determining the annual income of families leasing manufactured home spaces, the value of the family's equity in the manufactured home in which the family resides is not counted as a family asset.

Lease and HAP Contract

There is a separate Tenancy Addendum (Form 52642-a) and separate HAP Contract (Form 52642) for this special housing type.

15-VI.C. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION [FR Notice 1/18/17]

Payment Standards

The Augusta Housing Authority payment standard for manufactured homes is determined in accordance with 24 CFR 982.505 and is the payment standard used for the AHA's HCV program. It is based on the applicable FMR for the area in which the manufactured home space is located.

The payment standard for the family is the lower of the family unit size (voucher size) or the payment standard for the number of bedrooms in the manufactured home.

Utility Allowance

The Augusta Housing Authority must establish utility allowances for manufactured home space rental. For the first 12 months of the initial lease term only, the allowance must include an amount for a utility hook-up charge if the family actually incurred a hook-up charge because of a move. This allowance will not be given to a family that leases in place. Utility allowances for manufactured home space must not include the costs of digging a well or installing a septic system.

If the amount of the monthly assistance payment for a family exceeds the monthly rent for the manufactured home space (including the owner's monthly management and maintenance charges), the AHA may pay the remainder to the family, lender, or utility company.

Space Rent

The rent for the manufactured home space (including other eligible housing expenses) is the total of:

- The rent charged for the manufactured home space;
- Owner maintenance and management charges for the space;
- The monthly payments made by the family to amortize the cost of purchasing the manufactured home, including any required insurance and property taxes; and
- The applicable allowance for tenant-paid utilities.

Amortization Costs

The monthly payment made by the family to amortize the cost of purchasing the manufactured home is the debt service established at the time of application to a lender for financing the purchase of the manufactured home if monthly payments are still being made. Any increase in debt service due to refinancing after purchase of the home may not be included in the amortization cost. Debt service for set-up charges incurred by a family may be included in the monthly amortization payments made by the family. In addition, set-up charges incurred before the family became an assisted family may be included in the amortization cost if monthly payments are still being made to amortize the charges.

Housing Assistance Payment

The HAP for a manufactured home space under the Housing Choice Voucher Program is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the manufactured home space rent (including other eligible housing expenses) minus the TTP.

Rent Reasonableness

Initially, and biennially thereafter the AHA must determine that the rent for the manufactured home space is reasonable based on rents for comparable manufactured home spaces. The AHA must consider the location and size of the space, and any services and maintenance to be provided by the owner. By accepting the monthly HAP check or direct deposit payment, the owner certifies that the rent does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted spaces in the manufactured home park or elsewhere.

15-VI.D. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

Under either type of occupancy described in 15-VI.A above, the manufactured home must meet all HQS performance requirements and acceptability criteria discussed in Chapter 8 of this plan. In addition, the following requirement applies:

Manufactured Home Tie-Down

A manufactured home must be placed on the site in a stable manner, and must be free from hazards such as sliding or wind damage. The home must be securely anchored by a tie-down device that distributes and transfers the loads imposed by the unit to appropriate ground anchors to resist overturning and sliding.

PART II: HOMEOWNERSHIP

[24 CFR 982.625 through 982.643]

15-VII.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.625]

The homeownership option is used to assist a family residing in a home purchased and owned by one or more members of the family. A family assisted under this option may be newly admitted or an existing participant in the HCV program. The Augusta Housing Authority must have the capacity to operate a successful HCV Homeownership Program as defined by the regulations.

There are two forms of homeownership assistance described in the regulations: monthly homeownership assistance payments and single down payment assistance grants. However, PHAs may not offer down payment assistance until and unless funding is allocated by Congress. Since this has not yet happened, only monthly homeownership assistance may be offered.

The Augusta Housing Authority must offer homeownership assistance if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. It is the sole responsibility of the AHA to determine whether it is reasonable to implement a homeownership program as a reasonable accommodation. The AHA must determine what is reasonable based on the specific circumstances and individual needs of the person with a disability. The AHA may determine that it is not reasonable to offer homeownership assistance as a reasonable accommodation in cases where the AHA has otherwise opted not to implement a homeownership program.

The AHA must approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

15-VII.B. FAMILY ELIGIBILITY [24 CFR 982.627]

The family must meet all of the requirements listed below before the commencement of homeownership assistance. The Augusta Housing Authority may also establish additional initial requirements as long as they are described in the AHA administrative plan.

- The family must have been admitted to the Housing Choice Voucher Program and desires to participate in the Homeownership Program.
- The family must qualify as a first-time homeowner, or may be a cooperative member.
- The family must meet the Federal minimum income requirement. The family must have a gross annual income equal to the Federal minimum wage multiplied by 2000, based on the income of adult family members who will own the home.
- For disabled families, the minimum income requirement is equal to the current SSI monthly payment for an individual living alone, multiplied by 12.
- For elderly or disabled families, welfare assistance payments for adult family members who will own the home will be included in determining whether the family meets the minimum income requirement. It will not be included for other families.
- The family must satisfy the employment requirements by demonstrating that one or more adult members of the family who will own the home at commencement of homeownership assistance is currently employed on a full-time basis (the term 'full-time employment' means not less than an average of 30 hours per week); and has been continuously so employed during the year before commencement of homeownership assistance for the family.
- The employment requirement does not apply to elderly and disabled families. In addition, if a family, other than an elderly or disabled family includes a person with disabilities, the AHA must grant an exemption from the employment requirement if the AHA determines that it is needed as a reasonable accommodation.
- The family has not defaulted on a mortgage securing debt to purchase a home under the homeownership option
- Except for cooperative members who have acquired cooperative membership shares prior to commencement of homeownership assistance, no family member has a present ownership interest in a residence at the commencement of homeownership assistance for the purchase of any home.
- Except for cooperative members who have acquired cooperative membership shares prior to the commencement of homeownership assistance, the family has entered a contract of sale in accordance with 24 CFR 982.631(c).

15-VII.C. SELECTION OF FAMILIES [24 CFR 982.626]

Unless otherwise provided (under the homeownership option), the Augusta Housing Authority may limit homeownership assistance to families or purposes defined by the AHA, and may prescribe additional requirements for commencement of homeownership assistance for a family. Any such limits or additional requirements must be described in the AHA administrative plan.

If the AHA limits the number of families that may participate in the homeownership option, the AHA must establish a system by which to select families to participate.

15-VII.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS [24 CFR 982.628]

In order for a unit to be eligible, the Augusta Housing Authority must determine that the unit satisfies all of the following requirements:

- The unit must meet HUD’s “eligible housing” requirements. The unit may not be any of the following:
 - A public housing or Indian housing unit;
 - A unit receiving Section 8 project-based assistance;
 - A nursing home, board and care home, or facility providing continual psychiatric, medical or nursing services;
 - A college or other school dormitory;
 - On the grounds of penal, reformatory, medical, mental, or similar public or private institutions.
- The unit must be under construction or already exist at the time the family enters into the contract of sale.
- The unit must be a one-unit property or a single dwelling unit in a cooperative or condominium.
- The unit must have been inspected by the AHA and by an independent inspector designated by the family.
- The unit must meet Housing Quality Standards (see Chapter 8).
- For a unit where the family will not own fee title to the real property (such as a manufactured home), the home must have a permanent foundation and the family must have the right to occupy the site for at least 40 years.

- For AHA-owned units all of the following conditions must be satisfied:
 - The AHA informs the family, both orally and in writing, that the family has the right to purchase any eligible unit and an AHA-owned unit is freely selected by the family without AHA pressure or steering;
 - The unit is not ineligible housing;
 - The AHA obtains the services of an independent agency to inspect the unit for compliance with HQS, review the independent inspection report, review the contract of sale, determine the reasonableness of the sales price and any AHA provided financing. All of these actions must be completed in accordance with program requirements.

The Augusta Housing Authority must not approve the unit if the AHA has been informed that the seller is debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation.

15-VII.E. ADDITIONAL AHA REQUIREMENTS FOR SEARCH AND PURCHASE [24 CFR 982.629]

It is the family's responsibility to find a home that meets the criteria for voucher homeownership assistance. The AHA may establish the maximum time that will be allowed for a family to locate and purchase a home, and may require the family to report on their progress in finding and purchasing a home. If the family is unable to purchase a home within the maximum time established by the AHA, the AHA may issue the family a voucher to lease a unit or place the family's name on the waiting list for a voucher.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Upon approval for the Homeownership Program, a family shall have ninety (90) days to locate a home to purchase. A home shall be considered located if the family submits a proposed sales agreement with requisite components to the AHA. For good cause, the AHA may extend a family's search time to locate the home for additional (30) day increments. During the participant's search for a home to purchase, their HAP shall continue pursuant to the Administrative Plan. If a participant family is unable to locate a home within the time approved by the AHA, their HAP through the HCV Program shall continue.

Once a home is located and a sales agreement approved by the AHA is signed by the family, the family shall have up to three (3) months, or such other time as is approved by the AHA to purchase the home.

If a participant is unable to purchase the home within the maximum time permitted by the AHA, the AHA shall continue the family's participation in the HCV Program. The family may not re-apply for the Homeownership Program until they have completed an additional year of participation in the HCV Program following the initial determination of their eligibility for the Homeownership Program.

15-VII.F. HOMEOWNERSHIP COUNSELING [24 CFR 982.630]

Before commencement of homeownership assistance for a family, the family must attend and satisfactorily complete the pre-assistance homeownership and housing counseling program required by the Augusta Housing Authority. The counseling will be conducted by a HUD approved housing counseling agency. HUD suggests the following topics for the AHA-required pre-assistance counseling:

- Home maintenance (including care of the grounds);
- Budgeting and money management;
- Credit counseling;
- How to negotiate the purchase price of a home;
- How to obtain homeownership financing and loan pre-approvals, including a description of types of financing that may be available, and the pros and cons of different types of financing;
- How to find a home, including information about homeownership opportunities, schools, and transportation in the AHA jurisdiction;
- Advantages of purchasing a home in an area that does not have a high concentration of low-income families and how to locate homes in such areas;
- Information on fair housing, including fair housing lending and local fair housing enforcement agencies; and
- Information about the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (12 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.) (RESPA), state and Federal truth-in-lending laws, and how to identify and avoid loans with oppressive terms and conditions.

The PHA may adapt the subjects covered in pre-assistance counseling (as listed) to local circumstances and the needs of individual families.

The Augusta Housing Authority may also offer additional counseling after commencement of homeownership assistance (ongoing counseling). This counseling will be voluntary for all homeownership assistance recipients except those requesting their first, second, fourteenth and fifteenth years of assistance. The reason for this mandatory counseling is to make sure that families are either off to a good start or preparing for the termination of their assistance.

15-VII.G. HOME INSPECTIONS, CONTRACT OF SALE, AND PHA DISAPPROVAL OF SELLER [24 CFR 982.631]

Home Inspections

The Augusta Housing Authority may not commence monthly homeownership assistance payments for a family until the AHA has inspected the unit and has determined that the unit passes HQS.

An independent professional inspector selected by and paid for by the family must also inspect the unit. The independent inspection must cover major building systems and components, including foundation and structure, housing interior and exterior, and the roofing, plumbing, electrical, and heating systems. The independent inspector must be qualified to report on property conditions, including major building systems and components.

The Augusta Housing Authority may not require the family to use an independent inspector selected by the AHA. The independent inspector may not be an AHA employee or contractor, or other person under control of the AHA. However, the AHA may establish standards for qualification of inspectors selected by families under the homeownership option.

The AHA may disapprove a unit for assistance based on information in the independent inspector's report, even if the unit was found to comply with HQS.

Contract of Sale

Before commencement of monthly homeownership assistance payments, a member or members of the family must enter into a contract of sale with the seller of the unit to be acquired by the family. The family must give the Augusta Housing Authority a copy of the contract of sale. The contract of sale must:

- Specify the price and other terms of sale by the seller to the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser will arrange for a pre-purchase inspection of the dwelling unit by an independent inspector selected by the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser is not obligated to purchase the unit unless the inspection is satisfactory to the purchaser;
- Provide that the purchaser is not obligated to pay for any necessary repairs; and
- Contain a certification from the seller that the seller has not been debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under CFR part 24.

The Augusta Housing Authority is not obligated to pay for any necessary repairs. In addition, at the discretion of the Augusta Housing Authority, the Contract of Sale may also include the Augusta Housing Authority's right to do the following:

- Inspection the dwelling and determine that it meets HQS;
- Review and approve the independent inspection report; and
- Review and approve the financing terms and requirements.

Disapproval of a Seller

In its administrative discretion, the Augusta Housing Authority may deny approval of a seller for the same reasons a Augusta Housing Authority may disapprove an owner under the regular HCV program [see 24 CFR 982.306(c)].

15-VII.H. FINANCING [24 CFR 982.632]

The Augusta Housing Authority may establish requirements for financing purchase of a home under the homeownership option. This may include requirements concerning qualification of lenders, terms of financing, restrictions concerning debt secured by the home, lender qualifications, loan terms, and affordability of the debt. The AHA must establish policies describing these requirements in the administrative plan.

The Augusta Housing Authority may not require that families acquire financing from one or more specified lenders, thereby restricting the family's ability to secure favorable financing terms.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Financing for purchases under this Homeownership Program must generally be provided, insured or guaranteed by the state or federal government, comply with secondary mortgage market requirements or comply with generally accepted private sector underwriting standards.

- A. A purchasing family must invest at least three and one-half percent of the purchase price of the home they are buying in the property. This can take the form of down payment, closing costs, or a combination of the two. Of this sum, at least one thousand dollars must come from the family's personal resources.
- B. The family must qualify for the mortgage loan under a lender's normal lending criteria taking into account the fact that this is by definition a low-income family.
- C. If the home is purchased using FHA mortgage insurance, it is subject to FHA mortgage insurance requirements.
- D. If the loan is financed either by the seller or a non-traditional mortgage lending institution or individual, the loan shall be subject to the review of the AHA. The housing authority may verify that there are no unusual or onerous requirements in the loan documents and that the mortgage is affordable to the purchasing family. Also, the lender must require that an appraisal of the property is conducted and the appraiser must determine that the property is worth at least as much as the purchaser is paying.
- E. The AHA will not allow balloon payment mortgages or variable rate mortgages in the program.
- F. All mortgage loans must close within the period of time established by the AHA at the time the purchaser and seller enter into their sales contract. The AHA may grant an extension for good cause as proven by the purchaser.
- G. The AHA will not approve any lending that it determines in its sole discretion, to be abusive or predatory.

15-VII.I. CONTINUED ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS; FAMILY OBLIGATIONS [24 CFR 982.633]

Homeownership assistance may only be paid while the family is residing in the home. If the family moves out of the home, the Augusta Housing Authority may not continue homeownership assistance after the month when the family moves out. The family or lender is not required to refund to the Augusta Housing Authority the homeownership assistance for the month when the family moves out.

Before commencement of homeownership assistance, the family must execute a statement in which the family agrees to comply with all family obligations under the homeownership option. In the statement, the family agrees to comply with all family obligations under the Homeownership Program. The family must also sign the family obligation form for the Housing Choice Voucher Program as required by the Augusta Housing Authority.

The family must comply with the following obligations:

- The family must attend and complete ongoing homeownership and housing counseling before the end of the first, second, fourteenth and fifteenth years of assistance in order for assistance to continue.
- The family must comply with the terms of the mortgage securing debt incurred to purchase the home, or any refinancing of such debt.
- As long as the family is receiving homeownership assistance, use and occupancy of the home is subject to an annual recertification which may include but is not limited to the following:
 - The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.
 - The composition of the assisted family residing in the unit must be approved by the AHA. The family must promptly inform the housing authority of the birth, adoption, marriage or court-awarded custody. The family must request the housing authority's approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit. No other person (i.e., nobody but members of the assisted family) may reside in the unit (except for a foster child or live-in-aide).
 - The family must promptly notify the AHA if any family member no longer resides in the unit.
 - If the AHA has given approval, a foster child or a live-in-aide may reside in the unit.
 - Members of the household may engage in legal profit-making activities in the unit, but only if such activities are incidental to primary use of the unit for residence by members of the family.
 - The family must not lease or sublet the unit.
 - The family must not transfer ownership.
 - The family must supply information or certification requested by the AHA to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including AHA requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with the housing authority for these purposes. The family must promptly notify the AHA of their absence from the unit.

- The family may not convey or transfer ownership of the home, except for purposes of financing, refinancing, or pending settlement of the estate of a deceased family member. The family must secure written approval from the AHA before any of the exceptions listed in the previous sentence. Use and occupancy of the home are subject to 24 CFR 982.551 (h) and (i).
- The family must supply information to the AHA or HUD as specified in 24 CFR 982.551(b). The family must further supply any information required by the AHA or HUD concerning mortgage financing or refinancing, sale or transfer of any interest in the home, or homeownership expenses.
- The family must notify the AHA before moving out of the home.
- The family must notify the AHA if the family defaults on the mortgage used to purchase the home.
- No family member may have any ownership interest in any other residential property.
- The family must comply with the obligations of a participant family described in 24 CFR 982.551, except for the following provisions which do not apply to assistance under the homeownership option: 24 CFR 982.551(c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and (j).
- When requested by the AHA, the family must provide verification that all real estate taxes were paid in a timely manner. If not paid, AHA may terminate Homeownership assistance.
- The family must allow biennial home inspections by the AHA for the first three years of the homeownership assistance or when the AHA deems it appropriate. The AHA shall provide a minimum of a 48-hour notification except in the case of an emergency.

15-VII.J. MAXIMUM TERM OF HOMEOWNER ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.634]

Except in the case of a family that qualifies as an elderly or disabled family, other family members (described below) shall not receive homeownership assistance for more than:

- Fifteen (15) years, if the initial mortgage incurred to finance purchase of the home has a term of 20 years or longer; or
- Ten (10) years, in all other cases.

The maximum term described above applies to any member of the family who:

- Has an ownership interest in the unit during the time that homeownership payments are made; or
- Is the spouse of any member of the household who has an ownership interest in the unit during the time homeownership payments are made.

In the case of an elderly family, the exception only applies if the family qualifies as an elderly family at the start of homeownership assistance. In the case of a disabled family, the exception applies if at any time during receipt of homeownership assistance the family qualifies as a disabled family.

If, during the course of homeownership assistance, the family ceases to qualify as a disabled or elderly family, the maximum term becomes applicable from the date homeownership assistance commenced. However, such a family must be provided at least 6 months of homeownership assistance after the maximum term becomes applicable (provided the family is otherwise eligible to receive homeownership assistance).

If the family has received such assistance for different homes, or from different housing authorities, the total of such assistance terms is subject to the maximum term described in this part.

15-VII.K. HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS AND HOMEOWNERSHIP EXPENSES [24 CFR 982.635]

The monthly homeownership assistance payment is the lower of: the voucher payment standard minus the total tenant payment, or the monthly homeownership expenses minus the total tenant payment.

In determining the amount of the homeownership assistance payment, the Augusta Housing Authority will use the same payment standard schedule, payment standard amounts, and subsidy standards as those described elsewhere in this plan for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The payment standard for a family is the greater of (i) The payment standard as determined at the commencement of homeownership assistance for occupancy of the home, or (ii) The payment standard at the most recent regular reexamination of family income and composition since the commencement of homeownership assistance for occupancy of the home.

The Augusta Housing Authority may pay the homeownership assistance payments directly to the family, or at the AHA's discretion, to a lender on behalf of the family. If the assistance payment exceeds the amount due to the lender, the AHA must pay the excess directly to the family.

Homeownership assistance for a family terminates automatically 180 calendar days after the last homeownership assistance payment on behalf of the family. However, the Augusta Housing Authority may grant relief from this requirement in those cases where automatic termination would result in extreme hardship for the family.

The Augusta Housing Authority must adopt policies for determining the amount of homeownership expenses to be allowed by the AHA in accordance with HUD requirements.

Homeownership expenses (not including cooperatives) only include amounts allowed by the Augusta Housing Authority to cover:

- Principal and interest on initial mortgage debt, any refinancing of such debt, and any mortgage insurance premium incurred to finance purchase of the home;
- Real estate taxes and public assessments on the home;
- Home insurance;
- The AHA allowance for maintenance expenses;
- The AHA allowance for costs of major repairs and replacements;
- The AHA utility allowance for the home;
- Principal and interest on mortgage debt incurred to finance costs for major repairs, replacements or improvements for the home. If a member of the family is a person with disabilities, such debt may include debt incurred by the family to finance costs needed to make the home accessible for such person, if the AHA determines that allowance of such costs as homeownership expenses is needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the homeownership option is readily accessible to and usable by such person;
- Land lease payments where a family does not own fee title to the real property on which the home is located; [see 24 CFR 982.628(b)].
- For a condominium unit, condominium operating charges or maintenance fees assessed by the condominium homeowner association.

Homeownership expenses for a cooperative member may only include amounts allowed by the Augusta Housing Authority to cover:

- The cooperative charge under the cooperative occupancy agreement including payment for real estate taxes and public assessments on the home;
- Principal and interest on initial debt incurred to finance purchase of cooperative membership shares and any refinancing of such debt;
- Home insurance;
- The AHA allowance for maintenance expenses;
- The AHA allowance for costs of major repairs and replacements;
- The AHA utility allowance for the home; and
- Principal and interest on debt incurred to finance major repairs, replacements or improvements for the home. If a member of the family is a person with disabilities, such debt may include debt incurred by the family to finance costs needed to make the home accessible for such person, if the PHA determines that allowance of such costs as homeownership expenses is needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the homeownership option is readily accessible to and usable by such person.
- Cooperative operating charges or maintenance fees assessed by the cooperative homeowner association.

15-VII.L. PORTABILITY [24 CFR 982.636, 982.637, 982.353(b) and (c), 982.552, 982.553]

Subject to the restrictions on portability included in HUD regulations and Augusta Housing Authority policies, a family may exercise portability if the receiving PHA is administering a voucher homeownership program and accepting new homeownership families. The receiving PHA may absorb the family into its voucher program, or bill the initial PHA.

The family must attend the briefing and counseling sessions required by the receiving PHA. The receiving PHA will determine whether the financing for, and the physical condition of the unit, are acceptable. The receiving PHA must promptly notify the initial PHA if the family has purchased an eligible unit under the program, or if the family is unable to purchase a home within the maximum time established by the PHA.

15-VII.M. MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.637]

A family receiving homeownership assistance may move with continued tenant-based assistance. The family may move with voucher rental assistance or with voucher homeownership assistance (in accordance with Homeownership Program requirements). Continued tenant-based assistance for a new unit cannot begin so long as any family member holds title or other interest in the prior home.

The Augusta Housing Authority must determine that all initial requirements (including the environmental requirements with respect to a unit not yet under construction) have been satisfied if a family that received homeownership assistance wants to move to a new unit with continued homeownership assistance. However, the following requirements do not apply:

1. The requirement for pre-assistance counseling is not applicable. However, The Augusta Housing Authority may require that the family complete additional counseling (before or after moving to a new unit with continued assistance under the Homeownership Program).
2. The requirement that a family must be a first-time homeowner is not applicable.

The Augusta Housing Authority may deny permission to move to a new unit with continued voucher assistance:

- If the AHA has insufficient funding to provide continued assistance.
- In accordance with 24 CFR 982.638, regarding denial or termination of assistance.
- In accordance with the AHA's policy regarding number of moves within a 12-month period.

The Augusta Housing Authority must deny the family permission to move to a new unit with continued voucher rental assistance if:

- The family defaulted on an FHA-insured mortgage; and
- The family fails to demonstrate that the family has conveyed, or will convey, title to the home, as required by HUD, to HUD or HUD's designee; and the family has moved, or will move, from the home within the period established or approved by HUD.

15-VII.N. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.638]

At any time, the Augusta Housing Authority may deny or terminate homeownership assistance in accordance with HCV program requirements in 24 CFR 982.552 (Grounds for denial or termination of assistance) or 24 CFR 982.553 (Crime by family members).

The Augusta Housing Authority may also deny or terminate assistance for violation of participant obligations described in 24 CFR Parts 982.551 or 982.633 and in accordance with its own policy.

The Augusta Housing Authority must terminate voucher homeownership assistance for any member of family receiving homeownership assistance that is dispossessed from the home pursuant to a judgment or order of foreclosure on any mortgage (whether FHA insured or non-FHA) securing debt incurred to purchase the home, or any refinancing of such debt. The Augusta Housing Authority in its discretion may permit the family to move to a new unit with continued voucher rental assistance. However, the housing authority must deny such permission, if the following:

- The family defaulted on an FHA-insured mortgage; and
- The family fails to demonstrate that
 - The family has conveyed title to the home as required by HUD, to HUD or HUD's designee; and
 - The family has moved or will move from the home within the period established or approved by HUD.

A participant in the Homeownership Program will be entitled to the same termination or denial notices and informal hearing procedures as stated in the HCV Program.

Chapter 16

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses administrative policies and practices that are relevant to the activities covered in this plan. The policies are discussed in nine parts as described below:

Part I: Administrative Fee Reserve. This part describes the AHA's policies with regard to oversight of expenditures from its administrative fee reserve.

Part II: Setting Program Standards and Schedules. This part describes what payment standards are, and how they are updated, as well as how utility allowances are established and revised.

Part III: Informal Reviews and Hearings. This part outlines the requirements and procedures for informal reviews and hearings, and for informal hearings regarding citizenship status.

Part IV: Owner or Family Debts to the AHA. This part describes policies for recovery of monies that the AHA has overpaid on behalf of families, or to owners, and describes the circumstances under which the AHA will offer repayment agreements to owners and families. Also discussed are the consequences for failure to make payments in accordance with a repayment agreement.

Part V: Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP). This part describes what the SEMAP scores represent, how they are established, and how those scores affect the AHA.

Part VI: Record-Keeping. All aspects of the program involve certain types of record-keeping. This part outlines the privacy rights of applicants and participants and record retention policies the AHA will follow.

Part VII: Reporting and Record Keeping for Children with Environmental Intervention Blood Lead Level. This part describes the AHA's responsibilities for reporting, data collection, and record keeping relative to children with environmental intervention blood lead levels that are less than six years of age, and are receiving HCV assistance.

Part VIII: Determination of Insufficient Funding. This part describes the AHA's policies for determining if there is sufficient funding to issue vouchers, to approve moves to higher cost units or areas, and to continue assistance for all participant families.

Part IX: Violence against Women Act (VAWA): Notification, Documentation, Confidentiality. This part contains key terms used in VAWA and describes requirements related to notifying families and owners about their rights and responsibilities under VAWA; requesting documentation from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained from victims.

PART I: ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE [24 CFR 982.155]

The Augusta Housing Authority will maintain administrative fee reserves, or unrestricted net position (UNP) for the program to pay program administrative expenses in excess of administrative fees paid by HUD for the AHA fiscal year. HUD appropriations acts beginning with FFY 2004 have specified that administrative fee funding may be used only for activities related to the provision of HCV assistance, including related development activities. Notice PIH 2012-9 cites two examples of related development activities: unit modification for accessibility purposes and development of project-based voucher units. The notice makes clear that other activities may also qualify as related development activities. Administrative fees that remain in the UNP account from funding provided prior to 2004 may be used for “other housing purposes permitted by state and local law,” in accordance with 24 CFR 982.155(b)(1).

If a PHA has not adequately administered its HCV program, HUD may prohibit use of funds in the UNP Account and may direct the PHA to use funds in that account to improve administration of the program, for HCV HAP expenses, or to reimburse ineligible expenses in accordance with the regulation at 24 CFR 982.155(b)(3).

HUD requires the PHA Board of Commissioners or other authorized officials to establish the maximum amount that may be charged against the UNP account without specific approval.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Expenditures from the UNP account will be made in accordance with all applicable federal requirements. Expenditures will not exceed \$10,000 per occurrence without the prior approval of the AHA’s Board of Commissioners.

PART II: SETTING PROGRAM STANDARDS AND SCHEDULES

16-II.A. OVERVIEW

Although many of the program's requirements are established centrally by HUD, the HCV program's regulations recognize that some flexibility is required to allow the Augusta Housing Authority to adapt the program to local conditions. This part discusses how the Augusta Housing Authority establishes and updates certain schedules and standards that are used to administer the program locally. Details about how these schedules are applied to individual families are provided in other chapters. The schedules and standards discussed here include:

- *Payment Standards*, which dictate the maximum subsidy a family can receive (application of the payment standards is discussed in Chapter 6); and
- *Utility Allowances*, which specify how a family's payment should be adjusted to account for tenant-paid utilities (application of utility allowances is discussed in Chapter 6).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Copies of the payment standard and utility allowance schedules are available for review in the AHA's offices during normal business hours.

Families, owners, and members of the public may submit written comments on the schedules discussed in this part, at any time, for consideration during the next revision cycle.

The AHA will maintain documentation to support its annual review of payment standards and utility allowance schedules. This documentation will be retained for at least 3 years.

Establishing and updating the AHA passbook rate, which is used to calculate imputed income from assets, is covered in Chapter 6 (see Section 6-I.G.).

16-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.503; HCV GB, Chapter 7]

The payment standard sets the maximum subsidy payment a family can receive from the Augusta Housing Authority each month [24 CFR 982.505(a)]. Payment standards are based on fair market rents (FMRs) published annually by HUD. FMRs are set at a percentile within the rent distribution of standard quality rental housing units in each FMR area. For most jurisdictions FMRs are set at the 40th percentile of rents in the market area.

The Augusta Housing Authority must establish a payment standard schedule that establishes payment standard amounts for each FMR area within the AHA's jurisdiction, and for each unit size within each of the FMR areas. For each unit size, the AHA may establish a single payment standard amount for the whole FMR area, or may set different payment standards for different parts of the FMR area. Unless HUD grants an exception, the AHA is required to establish a payment standard within a "basic range" established by HUD – between 90 and 110 percent of the published FMR for each unit size.

Updating Payment Standards

When HUD updates its FMRs, the Augusta Housing Authority must update its payment standards if the standards are no longer within the basic range [24 CFR 982.503(b)]. HUD may require the AHA to make further adjustments if it determines that rent burdens for assisted families in the AHA's jurisdiction are unacceptably high 24 CFR 982.503(g)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will review the appropriateness of the payment standards on an annual basis when the new FMR is published, and at other times as determined necessary. In addition to ensuring the payment standards are always within the "basic range" the AHA will consider the following factors when determining whether an adjustment should be made to the payment standard schedule:

Funding Availability: The AHA will review the budget to determine the impact projected subsidy adjustments will have on funding available for the program and the number of families served. The AHA will compare the number of families who could be served under revised payment standard amounts with the number assisted under current payment standard amounts.

Rent Burden of Participating Families: Rent burden will be determined by identifying the percentage of families, for each unit size, that are paying more than 30 percent of their monthly adjusted income as the family share. When 40 percent or more of families, for any given unit size, are paying more than 30 percent of adjusted monthly income as the family share, the AHA will consider increasing the payment standard. In evaluating rent burdens, the AHA will not include families renting a larger unit than their family unit size.

Quality of Units Selected: The AHA will review the quality of units selected by participant families when making the determination of the percent of income families are paying for housing, to ensure that payment standard increases are only made when needed to reach the mid-range of the market.

Changes in Rent to Owner: The AHA may review a sample of the units to determine how often owners are increasing or decreasing rents and the average percent of increases/decreases by bedroom size.

Unit Availability: The AHA will review the availability of units for each unit size, particularly in areas with low concentrations of poor and minority families.

Lease-up Time and Success Rate: The AHA will consider the percentage of families that are unable to locate suitable housing before the voucher expires and whether families are leaving the jurisdiction to find affordable housing.

Changes to payment standard amounts will be effective on October 1st of every year unless, based on the effective date of the published FMRs.

If the AHA has already processed reexaminations that will be effective on or after October 1st, and the effective date of the payment standards is October 1st, the AHA will not make retroactive adjustments to any such reexaminations if the new payment standard amount is higher than the one used by the AHA at the time the reexamination was originally processed.

Exception Payment Standards [982.503(c)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must request HUD approval to establish payment standards that are higher than the basic range. At HUD's sole discretion, HUD may approve a payment standard amount that is higher than the basic range for a designated part of the FMR area. HUD may approve an exception payment standard amount (in accordance with program requirements) for all units, or for all units of a given size, leased by program families in the exception area. Any PHA with jurisdiction in the exception area may use the HUD-approved exception payment standard amount. The total population of all HUD-approved exception areas in an FMR area may not include more than 50 percent of the population of the FMR area.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The HCV families have experienced delays in locating affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary units in Augusta-Richmond County. To assist with this dilemma, AHA requested an Exception Payment Standard from HUD to give HCV clients an opportunity to lease units in low poverty zip codes that will offer HCV families affordable, new, and renovated units. HUD approved AHA's request for an Exception Payment Standard for the **30907 zip code only**. AHA's Board approved an effective date of September 1, 2017.

Unit-by-Unit Exceptions [24 CFR 982.503(b), 24 CFR 982.505(d), Notice PIH 2010-26]

Unit-by-unit exceptions to the AHA's payment standards generally are not permitted. However, an exception may be made as a reasonable accommodation for a family that includes a person with disabilities. (See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodations.) This type of exception does not affect the AHA's payment standard schedule.

When needed as a reasonable accommodation, the Augusta Housing Authority may make an exception to the payment standard without HUD approval if the exception amount does not exceed 120 percent of the applicable FMR for the unit size [24 CFR 982.503(b)]. The Augusta Housing Authority may request HUD approval for an exception to the payment standard for a particular family if the required amount exceeds 120 percent of the FMR.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A family that requires a reasonable accommodation may request a higher payment standard at the time the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) is submitted. The family must document the need for the exception. In order to approve an exception, or request an exception from HUD, the AHA must determine that:

There is a shortage of affordable units that would be appropriate for the family;

The family's TTP would otherwise exceed 40 percent of adjusted monthly income; and

The rent for the unit is reasonable.

"Success Rate" Payment Standard Amounts [24 CFR 982.503(e)]

If a substantial percentage of families have difficulty finding a suitable unit, the Augusta Housing Authority may request a "success rate payment standard" that applies to the entire jurisdiction. If approved by HUD, a success rate payment standard allows the AHA to set its payment standards at 90-110 percent of a higher FMR (the 50th, rather than the 40th percentile FMR). To support the request, the AHA must demonstrate that during the most recent 6-month period for which information is available:

- Fewer than 75 percent of families who were issued vouchers became participants;
- The AHA had established payment standards for all unit sizes, and for the entire jurisdiction, at 110 percent of the published FMR; and
- The AHA had a policy of allowing voucher holders who made sustained efforts to locate units at least 90 days to search for a unit.

Although HUD approves the success rate payment standard for all unit sizes in the FMR area, the AHA may choose to adjust the payment standard for only some unit sizes in all, or a designated part, of the AHA's jurisdiction within the FMR area.

Decreases in the Payment Standard below the Basic Range [24 CFR 982.503(d)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must request HUD approval to establish a payment standard amount that is lower than the basic range. At HUD's sole discretion, HUD may approve establishment of a payment standard lower than the basic range. HUD will not approve a lower payment standard if the family share for more than 40 percent of program participants exceeds 30 percent of adjusted monthly income.

16-II.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517]

A AHA-established utility allowance schedule is used in determining family share and AHA subsidy. The PHA must maintain a utility allowance schedule for (1) all tenant-paid utilities, (2) the cost of tenant-supplied refrigerators and ranges, and (3) other tenant-paid housing services such as trash collection.

The utility allowance schedule must be determined based on the typical cost of utilities and services paid by energy-conservative households that occupy housing of similar size and type in the same locality. In developing the schedule, the AHA must use normal patterns of consumption for the community as a whole, and current utility rates.

The utility allowance must include the utilities and services that are necessary in the locality to provide housing that complies with housing quality standards. Costs for telephone, cable/satellite television, and internet services are not included in the utility allowance schedule.

In the utility allowance schedule, the AHA must classify utilities and other housing services according to the following general categories: space heating; air conditioning; cooking; water heating; water; sewer; trash collection; other electric; cost of tenant-supplied refrigerator; cost of tenant-supplied range; and other specified housing services.

The cost of each utility and housing service must be stated separately by unit size and type. Chapter 18 of the *HCV Guidebook* provides detailed guidance to the AHA about establishing utility allowance schedules.

Air Conditioning

An allowance for air-conditioning must be provided when the majority of housing units in the market have central air-conditioning or are wired for tenant-installed air conditioners.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA has included an allowance for air-conditioning in its schedule. Central air-conditioning or a portable air conditioner must be present in a unit before the AHA will apply this allowance to a family's rent and subsidy calculations.

Reasonable Accommodation

HCV program regulations require a AHA to approve a utility allowance amount higher than shown on the AHA's schedule if a higher allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. For example, if a family member with a disability requires such an accommodation, the AHA will approve an allowance for air-conditioning, even if the AHA has determined that an allowance for air-conditioning generally is not needed (See Chapter 2 for policies regarding the request and approval of reasonable accommodations).

Utility Allowance Revisions

The Augusta Housing Authority must review its schedule of utility allowances each year, and must revise the schedule if there has been a change of 10 percent or more in any utility rate since the last time the allowance for that utility was revised.

The AHA must maintain information supporting its annual review of utility allowance and any revisions made in its utility allowance schedule.

PART III: INFORMAL REVIEWS AND HEARINGS

16-III.A. OVERVIEW

Both applicants and participants have the right to disagree with, and appeal, certain decisions of the Augusta Housing Authority that may adversely affect them. AHA decisions that may be appealed by applicants and participants are discussed in this section.

The process for applicant appeals of AHA decisions is called the “informal review.” For participants (or applicants denied admission because of citizenship issues), the appeal process is called an “informal hearing.” PHAs are required to include informal review procedures for applicants and informal hearing procedures for participants in their administrative plans [24 CFR 982.54(d)(12) and (13)].

16-III.B. INFORMAL REVIEWS

Informal reviews are provided for program applicants. An applicant is someone who has applied for admission to the program, but is not yet a participant in the program. Informal reviews are intended to provide a “minimum hearing requirement” [24 CFR 982.554], and need not be as elaborate as the informal hearing requirements [*Federal Register* 60, no. 127 (3 July 1995): 34690].

Decisions Subject to Informal Review

The Augusta Housing Authority must give an applicant the opportunity for an informal review of a decision denying assistance [24 CFR 982.554(a)]. Denial of assistance may include any or all of the following [24 CFR 982.552(a)(2)]:

- Denying listing on the AHA waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Informal reviews are *not* required for the following reasons [24 CFR 982.554(c)]:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by the AHA
- General policy issues or class grievances
- A determination of the family unit size under the AHA subsidy standards
- AHA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term
- AHA determination not to grant approval of the tenancy
- AHA determination that the unit is not in compliance with the HQS
- AHA determination that the unit is not in accordance with the HQS due to family size or composition

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will only offer an informal review to applicants for whom assistance is being denied. Denial of assistance includes: denying listing on the AHA waiting list; denying or withdrawing a voucher; refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease; refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures.

Notice to the Applicant [24 CFR 982.554(a)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying assistance. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the AHA decision, and must also state that the applicant may request an informal review of the decision. The notice must describe how to obtain the informal review.

Scheduling an Informal Review

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A request for an informal review must be made in writing and delivered to the AHA either in person, by email, or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 10 calendar days from the date of the AHA's denial of assistance.

The AHA must schedule and send written notice of the informal review within 10 business days of the family's request.

Informal Review Procedures [24 CFR 982.554(b)]

The informal review must be conducted by a person other than the one who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of this person.

The applicant must be provided an opportunity to present written or oral objections to the decision of the AHA.

Informal Review Decision [24 CFR 982.554(b)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must notify the applicant of the AHA's final decision, including a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will notify the applicant of the final decision, including a statement explaining the reason(s) for the decision. The notice will be mailed within 10 business days of the informal review, to the applicant and his or her representative, if any.

If the decision to deny is overturned as a result of the informal review, processing for admission will resume.

If the family fails to appear in person or remotely (phone, webcast, video call, or other electronic communications) for their informal review, the denial of admission will stand and the family will be notified in writing.

16-III.C. INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS [24 CFR 982.555]

The Augusta Housing Authority must offer an informal hearing for certain AHA determinations relating to the individual circumstances of a participant family. A participant is defined as a family that has been admitted to the AHA's HCV program and is currently assisted in the program. The purpose of the informal hearing is to consider whether the AHA's decisions related to the family's circumstances are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations and AHA policies.

The AHA is not permitted to terminate a family's assistance until the time allowed for the family to request an informal hearing has elapsed, and any requested hearing has been completed. Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
- Terminating housing assistance payments under an outstanding HAP contract
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Decisions Subject to Informal Hearing

Circumstances for which the Augusta Housing Authority must give a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing are as follows:

- A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment
- A determination of the appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from the AHA utility allowance schedule
- A determination of the family unit size under the AHA's subsidy standards
- A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's actions or failure to act
- A determination to terminate assistance because the participant has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under AHA policy and HUD rules
- A determination to terminate a family's Family Self Sufficiency contract, withhold supportive services, or propose forfeiture of the family's escrow account [24 CFR 984.303(i)]

Circumstances for which an informal hearing is not required are as follows:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by the AHA
- General policy issues or class grievances
- Establishment of the AHA schedule of utility allowances for families in the program
- AHA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term
- AHA determination not to approve a unit or tenancy
- AHA determination that a unit selected by the applicant is not in compliance with the HQS
- AHA determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of family size
- A determination by the AHA to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against an owner under a HAP contract

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will only offer participants the opportunity for an informal hearing when required to by the regulations.

Informal Hearing Procedures

Notice to the Family [24 CFR 982.555(c)]

When the Augusta Housing Authority makes a decision that is subject to informal hearing procedures, the AHA must inform the family of its right to an informal hearing at the same time that it informs the family of the decision.

For decisions related to the family's annual or adjusted income, the determination of the appropriate utility allowance, and the determination of the family unit size, the AHA must notify the family that they may ask for an explanation of the basis of the determination, and that if they do not agree with the decision, they may request an informal hearing on the decision.

For decisions related to the termination of the family's assistance, or the denial of a family's request for an exception to the AHA's subsidy standards, the notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the decision, a statement that if the family does not agree with the decision, the family may request an informal hearing on the decision, and a statement of the deadline for the family to request an informal hearing.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In cases where the AHA makes a decision for which an informal hearing must be offered, the notice to the family will include all of the following:

The proposed action or decision of the AHA.

A brief statement of the reasons for the decision.

The date the proposed action will take place.

A statement of the family's right to an explanation of the basis for the AHA's decision.

A statement that if the family does not agree with the decision the family may request an informal hearing of the decision.

A deadline for the family to request the informal hearing.

To whom the hearing request should be addressed.

A copy of the AHA's hearing procedures.

Scheduling an Informal Hearing [24 CFR 982.555(d)]

When an informal hearing is required, the Augusta Housing Authority must proceed with the hearing in a reasonably expeditious manner upon the request of the family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

A request for an informal hearing must be made in writing and delivered to the AHA either in person, by email, or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 10 calendar days from the date of the AHA's decision or notice to terminate assistance.

The AHA must schedule and send written notice of the informal hearing to the family within 30 calendar days of the family's request.

The family may request to reschedule a hearing for good cause, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety or welfare of the family. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date. At its discretion, the AHA may request documentation of the "good cause" prior to rescheduling the hearing.

If the family does not appear in person or remotely (phone, webcast, video call, or other electronic communications) within 20 minutes of the scheduled time and does not request to reschedule the hearing, the AHA decision shall take effect and another hearing will not be granted. If the family can show good cause for the failure to appear, the AHA may reschedule the hearing. Subsequently, if the family fails to appear because the family needed a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities, the AHA will reschedule the hearing for the family.

Pre-Hearing Right to Discovery [24 CFR 982.555(e)]

Participants and the Augusta Housing Authority are permitted pre-hearing discovery rights. The family must be given the opportunity to examine before the hearing any AHA documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The family must be allowed to copy any such documents at their own expense. If the AHA does not make the document available for examination on request of the family, the AHA may not rely on the document at the hearing.

The AHA hearing procedures may provide that the AHA must be given the opportunity to examine at the AHA offices before the hearing, any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The AHA must be allowed to copy any such document at the AHA's expense. If the family does not make the document available for examination on request of the AHA, the family may not rely on the document at the hearing.

For the purpose of informal hearings, *documents* include records and regulations.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of \$.25 per page. The family must request discovery of AHA documents no later than 5 calendar days prior to the scheduled hearing date.

Participant's Right to Bring Counsel [24 CFR 982.555(e)(3)]

At its own expense, the family may be represented by a lawyer or other representative at the informal hearing.

Informal Hearing Officer [24 CFR 982.555(e)(4)]

Informal hearings will be conducted by a person or persons approved by the Augusta Housing Authority, other than the person who made or approved the decision or a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA has designated the following to serve as hearing officers:

AHA's HCV Coordinator

AHA's Quality Control Specialist

AHA's approved law firm (Attorneys)

Attendance at the Informal Hearing

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Hearings may be attended in person or remotely (phone, webcast, video call, or other electronic communications) by a hearing officer and the following applicable persons:

AHA representative(s) and any witnesses for the AHA

AHA's counsel or other representative

The participant and any witnesses for the participant

The participant's counsel or other representative

Any other person approved by the AHA as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability

Conduct at Hearings

The person who conducts the hearing may regulate the conduct of the hearing in accordance with the AHA's hearing procedures [24 CFR 982.555(4)(ii)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The hearing officer is responsible to manage the order of business and to ensure that hearings are conducted in a professional and businesslike manner. Attendees are expected to comply with all hearing procedures established by the hearing officer and guidelines for conduct. Any person demonstrating disruptive, abusive or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be excused from the hearing at the discretion of the hearing officer.

Recording of the Hearing

The family is entitled to have the hearing recorded by audiotape.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must request an audio recording of the hearing, if desired, five (5) days prior to the hearing date. The AHA will not provide a transcript of an audio taped hearing.

Evidence [24 CFR 982.555(e)(5)]

The Augusta Housing Authority and the family must be given the opportunity to present evidence and question any witnesses. In general, all evidence is admissible at an informal hearing. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any evidence to be considered by the hearing officer must be presented at the time of the hearing. There are four categories of evidence.

Oral evidence: the testimony of witnesses

Documentary evidence: a writing which is relevant to the case, for example, a letter written to the AHA. Writings include all forms of recorded communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds, videotapes or symbols or combinations thereof.

Demonstrative evidence: Evidence created specifically for the hearing and presented as an illustrative aid to assist the hearing officer, such as a model, a chart or other diagram.

Real evidence: A tangible item relating directly to the case.

Hearsay Evidence is evidence of a statement that was made other than by a witness while testifying at the hearing and that is offered to prove the truth of the matter. Even though evidence, including hearsay, is generally admissible, hearsay evidence alone cannot be used as the sole basis for the hearing officer's decision.

If either the AHA or the family fail to comply with the discovery requirements described above, the hearing officer will refuse to admit such evidence.

Other than the failure of a party to comply with discovery, the hearing officer has the authority to overrule any objections to evidence.

Hearing Officer's Decision [24 CFR 982.555(e)(6)]

The person who conducts the hearing must issue a written decision, stating briefly the reasons for the decision. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family must be based on a preponderance of evidence presented at the hearing. A copy of the hearing must be furnished promptly to the family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

In rendering a decision, the hearing officer will consider the following matters:

AHA Notice to the Family: The hearing officer will determine if the reasons for the AHA's decision are factually stated in the Notice.

Discovery: The hearing officer will determine if the AHA and the family were given the opportunity to examine any relevant documents in accordance with AHA policy.

AHA Evidence to Support the AHA Decision: The evidence consists of the facts presented. Evidence is not conclusion and it is not argument. The hearing officer will evaluate the facts to determine if they support the AHA's conclusion.

Validity of Grounds for Termination of Assistance (when applicable): The hearing officer will determine if the termination of assistance is for one of the grounds specified in the HUD regulations and AHA policies. If the grounds for termination are not specified in the regulations or in compliance with AHA policies, then the decision of the AHA will be overturned.

The hearing officer will issue a written decision to the family and the AHA no later than 10 business days after the hearing. The notice will contain the following information:

Hearing information:

Name of the participant;

Date, time and place of the hearing;

Name of the hearing officer;

Name of the AHA representative; and

Name of family representative (if any).

Background: A brief, impartial statement of the reason for the hearing.

Summary of the Evidence: The hearing officer will summarize the testimony of each witness and identify any documents that a witness produced in support of his/her testimony and that are admitted into evidence.

Findings of Fact: The hearing officer will include all findings of fact, based on a preponderance of the evidence. *Preponderance of the evidence* is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

Conclusions: The hearing officer will render a conclusion derived from the facts that were found to be true by a preponderance of the evidence. The conclusion will result in a determination of whether these facts uphold the AHA's decision.

Order: The hearing report will include a statement of whether the AHA's decision is upheld or overturned. If it is overturned, the hearing officer will instruct the AHA to change the decision in accordance with the hearing officer's determination. In the case of termination of assistance, the hearing officer will instruct the AHA to restore the participant's program status.

Procedures for Rehearing or Further Hearing

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The hearing officer may ask the family for additional information and/or might adjourn the hearing in order to reconvene at a later date, before reaching a decision. If the family misses an appointment or deadline ordered by the hearing officer, the action of the AHA will take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

AHA Notice of Final Decision [24 CFR 982.555(f)]

The Augusta Housing Authority is not bound by the decision of the hearing officer for matters in which the AHA is not required to provide an opportunity for a hearing, decisions that exceed the authority of the hearing officer, decisions that conflict with or contradict HUD regulations, requirements, or are otherwise contrary to federal, state, or local laws.

If the AHA determines it is not bound by the hearing officer's decision in accordance with HUD regulations, the AHA must promptly notify the family of the determination and the reason for the determination.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will mail a "Notice of Final Decision" to the participant and their representative. This notice will be sent by first-class mail. The participant will be mailed the original "Notice of Final Decision" with a copy mailed to the participant's representative and a copy maintained in the participant's file.

16-III.D. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR NONCITIZENS [24 CFR 5.514]

Denial or termination of assistance based on immigration status is subject to special hearing and notice rules. Applicants who are denied assistance due to immigration status are entitled to an informal hearing, not an informal review.

Assistance to a family may not be delayed, denied, or terminated on the basis of immigration status at any time prior to a decision under the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) appeal process. Assistance to a family may not be terminated or denied while the AHA hearing is pending, but assistance to an applicant may be delayed pending the completion of the informal hearing.

A decision against a family member, issued in accordance with the USCIS appeal process or the AHA informal hearing process, does not preclude the family from exercising the right, that may otherwise be available, to seek redress directly through judicial procedures.

Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 5.514(d)]

The notice of denial or termination of assistance for noncitizens must advise the family:

- That financial assistance will be denied or terminated, and provide a brief explanation of the reasons for the proposed denial or termination of assistance.
- The family may be eligible for proration of assistance.
- In the case of a participant, the criteria and procedures for obtaining relief under the provisions for preservation of families [24 CFR 5.514 and 5.518].
- That the family has a right to request an appeal to the USCIS of the results of secondary verification of immigration status and to submit additional documentation or explanation in support of the appeal.
- That the family has a right to request an informal hearing with the AHA either upon completion of the USCIS appeal or in lieu of the USCIS appeal.
- For applicants, assistance may not be delayed until the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process, but assistance may be delayed during the period of the informal hearing process.

USCIS Appeal Process [24 CFR 5.514(e)]

When the AHA receives notification that the USCIS secondary verification failed to confirm eligible immigration status, the AHA must notify the family of the results of the USCIS verification. The family will have 30 days from the date of the notification to request an appeal of the USCIS results. The request for appeal must be made by the family in writing directly to the USCIS. The family must provide the AHA with a copy of the written request for appeal and the proof of mailing.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will notify the family in writing of the results of the USCIS secondary verification within 10 business days of receiving the results.

The family must provide the AHA with a copy of the written request for appeal and proof of mailing within 10 business days of sending the request to the USCIS.

The family must forward to the designated USCIS office any additional documentation or written explanation in support of the appeal. This material must include a copy of the USCIS document verification request (used to process the secondary request) or such other form specified by the USCIS, and a letter indicating that the family is requesting an appeal of the USCIS immigration status verification results.

The USCIS will notify the family, with a copy to the AHA, of its decision. When the USCIS notifies the AHA of the decision, the AHA must notify the family of its right to request an informal hearing.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will send written notice to the family of its right to request an informal hearing within 10 business days of receiving notice of the USCIS decision regarding the family's immigration status.

Informal Hearing Procedures for Applicants [24 CFR 5.514(f)]

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, the family may request that the AHA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the AHA notice of denial, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

The informal hearing procedures for applicant families are described below.

Informal Hearing Officer

The AHA must provide an informal hearing before an impartial individual, other than a person who made or approved the decision under review, and other than a person who is a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision. See Section 16-III.C. for a listing of positions that serve as informal hearing officers.

Evidence

The family must be provided the opportunity to examine and copy at the family's expense, at a reasonable time in advance of the hearing, any documents in the possession of the AHA pertaining to the family's eligibility status, or in the possession of the USCIS (as permitted by USCIS requirements), including any records and regulations that may be relevant to the hearing.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of \$.25 per page. The family must request discovery of AHA documents no later than 5 calendar days prior to the scheduled hearing date.

The family must be provided the opportunity to present evidence and arguments in support of eligible status. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

The family must also be provided the opportunity to refute evidence relied upon by the AHA, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information the AHA relies.

Representation and Interpretive Services

The family is entitled to be represented by an attorney or other designee, at the family's expense, and to have such person make statements on the family's behalf.

The family is entitled to request an interpreter. Upon request, the AHA will provide competent interpretation services, free of charge.

Recording of the Hearing

The family is entitled to have the hearing recorded by audiotape.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family must request an audio recording of the hearing, if desired, five (5) days prior to the hearing date. The AHA will not provide a transcript of an audio taped hearing.

Hearing Decision

The AHA must provide the family with a written final decision, based solely on the facts presented at the hearing, within 14 calendar days of the date of the informal hearing. The decision must state the basis for the decision.

Informal Hearing Procedures for Residents [24 CFR 5.514(f)]

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, the family may request that the AHA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the AHA notice of termination, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

For the informal hearing procedures that apply to participant families whose assistance is being terminated based on immigration status, see Section 16-III.C.

Retention of Documents [24 CFR 5.514(h)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must retain for a minimum of 5 years the following documents that may have been submitted to the AHA by the family, or provided to the AHA as part of the USCIS appeal or the AHA informal hearing process:

- The application for assistance
- The form completed by the family for income reexamination
- Photocopies of any original documents, including original USCIS documents
- The signed verification consent form
- The USCIS verification results
- The request for a USCIS appeal
- The final USCIS determination
- The request for an informal hearing
- The final informal hearing decision

PART IV: OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PHA

16-IV.A. OVERVIEW

The Augusta Housing Authority is required to include in the administrative plan, policies concerning repayment by a family of amounts owed to the AHA [24 CFR 982.54]. This part describes the AHA's policies for recovery of monies owed to the AHA by families or owners.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When an action or inaction of an owner or participant results in the overpayment of housing assistance, the AHA holds the owner or participant liable to return any overpayments to the AHA.

The AHA will enter into repayment agreements in accordance with the policies contained in this part as a means to recover overpayments.

When an owner or participant refuses to repay monies owed to the AHA, the AHA will utilize other available collection alternatives including, but not limited to, the following:

- Collection agencies
- Small claims court
- Civil law suit
- State income tax set-off program

16-IV.B. REPAYMENT POLICY

Owner Debts to the PHA

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines that the owner has retained housing assistance or claim payments the owner is not entitled to, the AHA will take rigorous steps for the amounts to be repaid.

Any amount due to the AHA by an owner must be repaid by the owner within 30 days of the AHA determination of the debt.

If the owner fails to repay the debt within the required time frame and is entitled to future HAP payments, the AHA will reduce the future HAP payments by the amount owed until the debt is paid in full.

If the owner is not entitled to future HAP payments, the AHA may, in its sole discretion, offer to enter into a repayment agreement on terms prescribed by the AHA.

If the owner refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, the AHA will ban the owner from future participation in the program and pursue other modes of collection.

Family Debts to the PHA

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any amount owed to the AHA by an HCV family must be repaid by the family. If the family is unable to repay the debt within 30 days, the AHA will offer to enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies below.

If the family refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, the AHA will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12 and pursue other modes of collection.

Repayment Agreement [24 CFR 792.103]

The term *repayment agreement* refers to a formal written document signed by a tenant or owner and provided to the AHA in which a tenant or owner acknowledges a debt in a specific amount and agrees to repay the amount due at specific time periods. Families who have misrepresented their income for the first time and the amount owed to the Augusta Housing Authority is below \$10,000.00 will be given an opportunity to establish a Repayment Agreement within thirty (30) calendar days of written notification. If the family elects not to pay the initial 15% and enter a Repayment Agreement, termination procedures will begin. The maximum length of time the Augusta Housing Authority will enter into a Repayment Agreement with a family is 24 months for repayment of unreported income. All payments must be in the form of a money order, cashiers check and/or check from reputable agency/organization. Personal checks will not be accepted.

General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families

Down Payment Requirement

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Before executing a repayment agreement with a family, the AHA will require a down payment (initial payment) of 15 percent of the total amount owed. The initial payment must be paid within 30 calendar days of the written notification to the family or termination procedures will begin.

Payment Thresholds

Notice PIH 2010-19 recommends that the total amount that a family must pay each month—the family’s monthly share of rent plus the monthly debt repayment amount—should not exceed 40 percent of the family’s monthly adjusted income. However, a family may already be paying 40 per cent or more of its monthly adjusted income in rent. Moreover, Notice PIH 2010-19 acknowledges that PHAs have the discretion to establish “thresholds and policies” for repayment agreements with families [24 CFR 982.552(c)(1)(vii)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA has established the following thresholds for repayment of debts:

Amounts between \$1 and \$9,999 and the federal or state threshold for criminal prosecution must be repaid within 24 months.

Monthly payments may be decreased in cases of family hardship and if requested with reasonable notice from the family, verification of the hardship, and the approval of the

AHA. If a family can provide evidence satisfactory to the AHA that the threshold applicable to the family's debt would impose an undue hardship, the AHA may, in its sole discretion, determine that a lower monthly payment amount is reasonable.

No move will be approved until the debt is paid in full unless the move is the result of the following causes, and the payment agreement is current:

- Family size exceeds the subsidy standards;
- The HAP contract is terminated due to owner non-compliance or opt-out; or
- A natural disaster.

Execution of the Agreement

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any repayment agreement between the AHA and a family must be signed and dated by the AHA and by the head of household and spouse/cohead (if applicable).

Due Dates

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

All payments are due by the close of business on the 1st day of the month. If the 1st does not fall on a business day, the due date is the close of business on the first business day after the 1st.

Extensions

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The family is required to pay the initial 15% within thirty (30) calendar days of the notice. If the initial payment has been received and the outstanding balance is current, the family may submit a written request to the AHA to receive an extension. The request must state the reason(s) for the request and additional time needed to repay the outstanding balance. Although each case will be reviewed on an individual basis, the AHA shall not extend the Repayment Agreement period beyond 30 months.

Late or Missed Payments

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The agreement will be in default when a payment is delinquent by the fifth day of the month and when it is in arrears for two months.

If a payment is not received by the 5th of the month, and prior approval for the missed payment has not been given by the AHA, the payment will be considered a late payment.

If the family's Repayment Agreement is in arrears, and the family has not contacted or made arrangements with the Augusta Housing Authority, the Augusta Housing Authority may:

- Require the family to pay the balance in full;
- Pursue civil collection of the balance due; or
- Terminate the housing assistance

If the family requests a move to another unit and has a Repayment Agreement in place for the payment of an owner claim, and the Repayment Agreement is not in arrears the family will be required to pay the balance in full prior to the issuance of a Voucher.

If the family requests a move to another unit and is in arrears on a Repayment Agreement for the payment of an owner claim, the family will be required to pay the balance in full and will not be permitted to move unless the unit has life threatening HQS violations.

If a family fails to pay according to the terms of the repayment agreement, the repayment agreement will be considered in default, and the AHA will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

No Offer of Repayment Agreement

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not enter into a repayment agreement with a family if there is already a repayment agreement in place with the family or if the amount owed by the family exceeds the federal or state threshold for criminal prosecution.

The AHA will not enter into a repayment agreement with a family when the debt owed is \$10,000 or greater. Families who have misrepresented their income and the amount owed to the AHA is above \$10,000.00 will not be given an opportunity to establish a Repayment Agreement. Termination procedures will begin immediately for the families who have an egregious amount of \$10,000 or more.

Repayment Agreements Involving Improper Payments

Notice PIH 2010-19 requires certain provisions to be included in any repayment agreement involving amounts owed by a family because it underreported or failed to report income:

- A reference to the items in the family briefing packet that state the family's obligation to provide true and complete information at every reexamination and the grounds on which the AHA may terminate assistance because of a family's action or failure to act
- A statement clarifying that each month the family not only must pay to the AHA the monthly payment amount specified in the agreement but must also pay to the owner the family's monthly share of the rent to owner
- A statement that the terms of the repayment agreement may be renegotiated if the family's income decreases or increases
- A statement that late or missed payments constitute default of the repayment agreement and may result in termination of assistance

Writing Off Debts

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Debts will be written off if the debtor is deceased.

The AHA will maintain the Repayment Agreement unless the family is no longer receiving Section 8 Program assistance. If a family continues to owe monies but the

family is no longer receiving housing assistance, the AHA will forward the cases for collection. If housing assistance has ended for any reason, the family may setup a Repayment Agreement schedule with the collection agency.

All debts owed to the AHA must be repaid in full prior to additional housing assistance from the AHA. If the family files bankruptcy, the AHA will receive the status of the bankruptcy case prior to attempting to deny or terminating housing assistance.

PART V: SECTION 8 MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (SEMAP)

16-V.A. OVERVIEW

The Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) is a tool that allows HUD to measure PHA performance in key areas to ensure program integrity and accountability. SEMAP scores translate into a rating for each PHA as high performing, standard, or troubled. Scores on individual SEMAP indicators, as well as overall SEMAP ratings, can affect the PHA in several ways.

- High-performing PHAs can be given a competitive advantage under notices of funding availability [24 CFR 985.103].
- PHAs with deficiencies on one or more indicators are required to correct the deficiencies and report to HUD [24 CFR 985.106].
- PHAs with an overall rating of “troubled” are subject to additional HUD oversight, including on-site reviews by HUD staff, a requirement to develop a corrective action plan, and monitoring to ensure the successful implementation of the corrective action plan. In addition, PHAs that are designated “troubled” may not use any part of the administrative fee reserve for other housing purposes [24 CFR 985.107].
- HUD may determine that a PHA's failure to correct identified SEMAP deficiencies or to prepare and implement a corrective action plan required by HUD constitutes a default under the ACC [24 CFR 985.109].

16-V.B. SEMAP CERTIFICATION [24 CFR 985.101]

PHAs must submit the HUD-required SEMAP certification form within 60 calendar days after the end of its fiscal year. The certification must be approved by PHA board resolution and signed by the PHA executive director. If the PHA is a unit of local government or a state, a resolution approving the certification is not required, and the certification must be executed by the Section 8 program director.

PHAs with less than 250 voucher units are only required to be assessed every other PHA fiscal year. HUD will assess such PHAs annually if the PHA elects to have its performance assessed on an annual basis; or is designated as “troubled” [24 CFR 985.105].

Failure of a PHA to submit its SEMAP certification within the required time frame will result in an overall performance rating of “troubled.”

A PHA’s SEMAP certification is subject to HUD verification by an on-site confirmatory review at any time.

Upon receipt of the PHA’s SEMAP certification, HUD will rate the PHA’s performance under each SEMAP indicator in accordance with program requirements.

HUD Verification Method

Several of the SEMAP indicators are scored based on a review of a quality control sample selected for this purpose. The PHA or the Independent Auditor must select an unbiased sample that provides an adequate representation of the types of information to be assessed, in accordance with SEMAP requirements [24 CFR 985.2].

If the HUD verification method for the indicator relies on data in the Form-50058 module (formerly known as MTCS) in the PIH Information Center (PIC), and HUD determines that those data are insufficient to verify the PHA's certification on the indicator due to the PHA's failure to adequately report family data, HUD will assign a zero rating for the indicator [24 CFR 985.3].

16-V.C. SEMAP INDICATORS [24 CFR 985.3 and form HUD-52648]

The table below lists each of the SEMAP indicators, contains a description of each indicator, and explains the basis for points awarded under each indicator.

A PHA that expends less than \$300,000 in Federal awards and whose Section 8 programs are not audited by an independent auditor, is not be rated under SEMAP indicators 1-7.

SEMAP Indicators
Indicator 1: Selection from the waiting list Maximum Score: 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This indicator shows whether the PHA has written policies in its administrative plan for selecting applicants from the waiting list and whether the PHA follows these policies when selecting applicants for admission from the waiting list.• Points are based on the percent of families that are selected from the waiting list in accordance with the PHA's written policies, according to the PHA's quality control sample.
Indicator 2: Rent reasonableness Maximum Score: 20 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This indicator shows whether the PHA has and implements a reasonable written method to determine and document for each unit leased that the rent to owner is reasonable based on current rents for comparable unassisted units• Points are based on the percent of units for which the PHA follows its written method to determine reasonable rent and has documented its determination that the rent to owner is reasonable, according to the PHA's quality control sample.
Indicator 3: Determination of adjusted income Maximum Score: 20 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This indicator measures whether the PHA verifies and correctly determines adjusted income for each assisted family, and where applicable, uses the appropriate utility allowances for the unit leased in determining the gross rent.• Points are based on the percent of files that are calculated and verified correctly, according to the PHA's quality control sample.
Indicator 4: Utility allowance schedule Maximum Score: 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This indicator shows whether the PHA maintains an up-to-date utility allowance schedule.• Points are based on whether the PHA has reviewed the utility allowance schedule and adjusted it when required, according to the PHA's certification.

Indicator 5: HQS quality control inspections**Maximum Score: 5**

- This indicator shows whether a PHA supervisor reinspects a sample of units under contract during the PHA fiscal year, which meets the minimum sample size requirements for quality control of HQS inspections.
- Points are based on whether the required quality control reinspections were completed, according to the PHA's certification.

Indicator 6: HQS enforcement**Maximum Score: 10**

- This indicator shows whether, following each HQS inspection of a unit under contract where the unit fails to meet HQS, any cited life-threatening deficiencies are corrected within 24 hours from the inspection and all other deficiencies are corrected within no more than 30 calendar days from the inspection or any PHA-approved extension.
- Points are based on whether the PHA corrects all HQS deficiencies in accordance with required time frames, according to the PHA's certification.

Indicator 7: Expanding housing opportunities**Maximum Points: 5**

- Only applies to PHAs with jurisdiction in metropolitan FMR areas.
- This indicator shows whether the PHA has adopted and implemented a written policy to encourage participation by owners of units located outside areas of poverty or minority concentration; informs voucher holders of the full range of areas where they may lease units both inside and outside the PHA's jurisdiction; and supplies a list of landlords or other parties who are willing to lease units or help families find units, including units outside areas of poverty or minority concentration.
- Points are based on whether the PHA has adopted and implemented written policies in accordance with SEMAP requirements, according to the PHA's certification.

Indicator 8: FMR limit and payment standards**Maximum Points: 5 points**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA has adopted a payment standard schedule that establishes payment standard amounts by unit size for each FMR area in the PHA's jurisdiction, that are within the basic range of 90 to 110 percent of the published FMR.
- Points are based on whether the PHA has appropriately adopted a payment standard schedule(s), according to the PHA's certification.

Indicator 9: Annual reexaminations**Maximum Points: 10**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA completes a reexamination for each participating family at least every 12 months.
- Points are based on the percent of reexaminations that are more than 2 months overdue, according to data from PIC.

Indicator 10: Correct tenant rent calculations**Maximum Points: 5**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA correctly calculates the family's share of the rent to owner.
- Points are based on the percent of correct calculations of family share of the rent, according to data from PIC.

Indicator 11: Pre-contract HQS inspections**Maximum Points: 5**

- This indicator shows whether newly leased units pass HQS inspection on or before the effective date of the assisted lease and HAP contract.
- Points are based on the percent of newly leased units that passed HQS inspection prior to the effective date of the lease and HAP contract, according to data from PIC.

Indicator 12: Annual/Biennial HQS**inspections Maximum Points: 10**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA inspects each unit under contract at least once every 24 months.
- Points are based on the percent of biennial HQS inspections of units under contract that are more than 2 months overdue, according to data from PIC.

Indicator 13: Lease-up**Maximum Points: 20 points**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA enters HAP contracts for at least 98 percent of the number of the PHA's baseline voucher units in the ACC for the calendar year ending on or before the PHA's fiscal year, or whether the PHA has expended at least 98 percent of its allocated budget authority for the same calendar year. The PHA can receive 15 points if 95 to 97 percent of vouchers are leased or budget authority is utilized.
- Points are based on utilization of vouchers and HAP expenditures as reported in the voucher management system (VMS) for the most recently completed calendar year.

Indicator 14: Family self-sufficiency (FSS) enrollment and escrow account balances**Maximum Points: 10**

- Only applies to PHAs with mandatory FSS programs.
- This indicator shows whether the PHA has enrolled families in the FSS program as required, and measures the percent of current FSS participants that have had increases in earned income which resulted in escrow account balances.
- Points are based on the percent of mandatory FSS slots that are filled and the percent of families with escrow account balances, according to data from PIC.

Success Rate of Voucher Holders**Maximum Points: 5**

- Only applies to PHAs that have received approval to establish success rate payment standard amounts, and isn't effective until the second full PHA fiscal year following the date of HUD approval of success rate payment standard amounts.
- This indicator shows whether voucher holders were successful in leasing units with voucher assistance.
- Points are based on the percent of families that were issued vouchers, and that became participants in the voucher program.

Deconcentration Bonus Indicator**Maximum Points: 5**

- Submission of data for this indicator is mandatory for a PHA using one or more payment standard amount(s) that exceed(s) 100 percent of the published FMR set at the 50-percentile rent, starting with the second full PHA fiscal year following initial use of payment standard amounts based on the FMRs set at the 50th percentile.
- Additional points are available to PHAs that have jurisdiction in metropolitan FMR areas and that choose to submit the required data.
- Points are based on whether the data that is submitted meets the requirements for bonus points.

PART VI: RECORD KEEPING

16-VI.A. OVERVIEW

The Augusta Housing Authority must maintain complete and accurate accounts and other records for the program in accordance with HUD requirements, in a manner that permits a speedy and effective audit. All such records must be made available to HUD or the Comptroller General of the United States upon request.

In addition, the AHA must ensure that all applicant and participant files are maintained in a way that protects an individual's privacy rights.

16-VI.B. RECORD RETENTION [24 CFR 982.158]

During the term of each assisted lease, and for at least three years thereafter, the AHA must keep:

- A copy of the executed lease;
- The HAP contract; and
- The application from the family.

In addition, the AHA must keep the following records for at least three years:

- Records that provide income, racial, ethnic, gender, and disability status data on program applicants and participants;
- An application from each ineligible family and notice that the applicant is not eligible;
- HUD-required reports;
- Unit inspection reports;
- Lead-based paint records as required by 24 CFR 35, Subpart B.
- Accounts and other records supporting AHA budget and financial statements for the program;
- Records to document the basis for AHA determination that rent to owner is a reasonable rent (initially and during the term of a HAP contract); and
- Other records specified by HUD.
- Notice PIH 2014-20 requires the AHA to keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions related to violations of the Fair Housing Act or the equal access final rule.

If an informal hearing to establish a family's citizenship status is held, longer retention requirements apply for some types of documents. For specific requirements, see Section 16-III.D., Retention of Documents.

16-VI.C. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Augusta Housing Authority must maintain applicant and participant files and information in accordance with the regulatory requirements described below.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

All applicant and participant information will be kept in a secure location and access will be limited to authorized AHA staff.

AHA staff will not discuss personal family information unless there is a business reason to do so. Inappropriate discussion of family information or improper disclosure of family information by staff will result in disciplinary action.

Privacy Act Requirements [24 CFR 5.212 and Form-9886]

The collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of social security numbers (SSN), employer identification numbers (EIN), any information derived from these numbers, and income information of applicants and participants must be conducted, to the extent applicable, in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and all other provisions of Federal, State, and local law.

Applicants and participants, including all adults in the household, are required to sign a consent form, HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information. This form incorporates the Federal Privacy Act Statement and describes how the information collected using the form may be used, and under what conditions HUD or the AHA may release the information collected.

Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Records

PHAs that access UIV data through HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system are required to adopt and follow specific security procedures to ensure that all EIV data is protected in accordance with federal laws, regardless of the media on which the data is recorded (e.g. electronic, paper). These requirements are contained in the HUD-issued document, *Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System, Security Procedures for Upfront Income Verification data*.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Prior to utilizing HUD's EIV system, the AHA will adopt and implement EIV security procedures required by HUD.

Criminal Records

The Augusta Housing Authority may only disclose the criminal conviction records which the AHA receives from a law enforcement agency to officers or employees of the AHA, or to authorized representatives of the AHA who have a job-related need to have access to the information [24 CFR 5.903(e)].

The AHA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any criminal record received by the AHA from a law enforcement agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to the AHA action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation [24 CFR 5.903(g)].

The Augusta Housing Authority must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any sex offender registration information received by the AHA from a State or local agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to the AHA action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation. However, a record of the screening, including the type of screening and the date performed must be retained [Notice PIH 2012-28]. This requirement does not apply to information that is public information, or is obtained by a AHA other than under 24 CFR 5.905.

Medical/Disability Records

The Augusta Housing Authority is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability. The AHA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If the AHA receives a verification document that provides such information, the AHA should not place this information in the tenant file. The AHA should destroy the document.

Documentation of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

For requirements and Augusta Housing Authority policies related to management of documentation obtained from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, see section 16-IX.E.

PART VII: REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL

16-VII.A. OVERVIEW

The Augusta Housing Authority has certain responsibilities relative to children with environmental intervention blood lead levels that are receiving HCV assistance. The notification, verification, and hazard reduction requirements are discussed in Chapter 8. This part deals with the reporting requirements, and data collection and record keeping responsibilities that the AHA is subject to.

16-VII.B. REPORTING REQUIREMENT [24 CFR 35.1225(e)]

The PHA must report the name and address of a child identified as having an environmental intervention blood lead level to the public health department within 5 business days of being so notified by any other medical health care professional.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will provide the public health department written notice of the name and address of any child identified as having an environmental intervention blood lead level.

16-VII.C. DATA COLLECTION AND RECORD KEEPING [24 CFR 35.1225(f)]

At least quarterly, the AHA must attempt to obtain from the public health department(s) with a similar area of jurisdiction, the names and/or addresses of children less than 6 years old with an identified environmental intervention blood lead level.

If the AHA obtains names and addresses of environmental intervention blood lead level children from the public health department(s), the AHA must match this information with the names and addresses of families receiving HCV assistance, unless the public health department performs such a procedure. If a match occurs, the AHA must carry out the notification, verification, and hazard reduction requirements discussed in Chapter 8, and the reporting requirement discussed above.

At least quarterly, the AHA must also report an updated list of the addresses of units receiving assistance under the HCV program to the same public health department(s), unless the public health department(s) states that it does not wish to receive such a report.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The public health department(s) has stated they **do not** wish to receive a report of an updated list of the addresses of units receiving assistance under the HCV program, on a quarterly basis. Therefore, the AHA is not providing such a report.

PART VIII: DETERMINATION OF INSUFFICIENT FUNDING

16-VIII.A. OVERVIEW

The HCV regulations allow the Augusta Housing Authority to deny families permission to move and to terminate Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contracts if funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance [24 CFR 982.354(e)(1) and 982.454]. If the AHA denies a family a portability move based on insufficient funding, the AHA is required to notify the local HUD office within 10 business days [24 CFR 982.354].

Insufficient funding may also impact the AHA's ability to issue vouchers to families on the waiting list. This part discusses the methodology the AHA will use to determine whether or not the AHA has sufficient funding to issue vouchers, approve moves, and to continue subsidizing all families currently under a HAP contract.

16-VIII.B. METHODOLOGY

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will determine whether there is adequate funding to issue vouchers, approve moves to higher cost units and areas, and continue subsidizing all current participants by comparing the AHA's annual budget authority to the annual total HAP needs on a monthly basis. The total HAP needs for the calendar year will be projected by establishing the actual HAP costs year to date. To that figure, the AHA will add anticipated HAP expenditures for the remainder of the calendar year. Projected HAP expenditures will be calculated by multiplying the projected number of units leased per remaining months by the most current month's average HAP. The projected number of units leased per month will take into account the average monthly turnover of participant families. If the total annual HAP needs equal or exceed the annual budget authority, or if the AHA cannot support the cost of the proposed subsidy commitment (voucher issuance or move) based on the funding analysis, the AHA will be considered to have insufficient funding.

PART IX: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2022 (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, CONFIDENTIALITY

16-IX.A. OVERVIEW

The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022 ("VAWA") provides special protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking who are applying for or receiving assistance under the housing choice voucher (HCV) program. If your state or local laws provide greater protection for such victims, those laws apply in conjunction with VAWA.

In addition to definitions of key terms used in VAWA, this part contains general VAWA requirements and AHA policies in three areas: notification, documentation, and confidentiality. Specific VAWA requirements and AHA policies are located primarily in the following sections: 3-I.C, "Family Breakup and Remaining Member of Tenant Family"; 3-III.G, "Prohibition against Denial of Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking"; 10-I.A, "Allowable Moves"; 10-I.B, "Restrictions on Moves"; 12-II.E, "Terminations Related to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking"; and 12-II.F, "Termination Notice."

COVERED HOUSING PROGRAMS:

- Public Housing;
- Housing Choice Voucher;
- Project-based Section 8 and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room
- Occupancy;
- Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, including Section 202 Direct Loan;
- Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities;
- Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA);
- HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME);
- Emergency Solutions Grants and Continuum of Care program;
- Multifamily rental housing under Section 221 (d)(3) of the National Housing Act with a below-market interest rate (BMIR) pursuant to Section 221 (d)(5);
- Multifamily rental housing under Section 236 of the National Housing Act; and o Housing Trust Fund program.

Furthermore, consistent with VAWA 2022, HUD will issue regulations, notices, and/or other documents to identify when VAWA applies to additional HUD housing programs. HUD offices that previously issued notices with lists of covered housing programs will issue new notices with revised lists.

COMPLIANCE REVIEW PROCESSES:

VAWA 2022 includes a new section that requires HUD and other covered agencies to establish a compliance review process. HUD will incorporate this process into its existing compliance review processes where possible, enumerates six items for compliance review, and requires

HUD to conduct the review on a regular basis, and requires HUD to publicly disclose its assessment of the information collected during the compliance review process. VAWA 2022 also requires HUD to develop and issue regulations in consultation with "appropriate stakeholders" to implement these changes related to compliance review no later than March 15, 2024. These implementing regulations must define standards of compliance under HUD's covered housing programs and include detailed reporting requirements, including reporting on emergency transfers, and include standards for corrective action plans where compliance standards have not been met.

Furthermore, to the extent possible, HUD will identify existing compliance review procedures that could be used for such reviews, including those currently administered by the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

PROHIBITION ON RETALIATION: It is illegal for a public housing agency (PHA) or owner or manager of covered housing to discriminate against any person because that person has opposed any act or practice made unlawful by VAWA 's housing provisions, or because that person testified, assisted, or participated in any related matter.

The new section also provides that it is illegal for a PHA or owner or manager of covered housing to coerce, intimidate, threaten, interfere with, or retaliate against any person who exercises or assists or encourages a person to exercise any rights or protections under VAWA's housing provisions.

RIGHT TO REPORT CRIME AND EMERGENCIES: Provides that landlords, homeowners, tenants, residents, occupants, and guests of, and applicants for, housing shall have the right to seek law enforcement or emergency assistance on their own behalf or on behalf of another person in need of assistance. This section also prohibits penalizing or threatening to penalize persons because they request assistance or report criminal activity of which they are a victim or otherwise not at fault under the laws or policies adopted or enforced by "covered governmental entities."

This provision further requires that covered governmental entities report on their laws or policies, or their subgrantees' laws or policies, that penalize protected persons based on requests for law enforcement or emergency assistance or based on criminal activity that occurred at a property. These entities must also certify compliance with these protections or explain how they will come into compliance or ensure compliance among subgrantees within 180 days of submitting the report to HUD.

The law, however, became effective on October 1, 2022, so covered governmental entities are advised not to engage in any practices that violate the right to report provided for in Section 603 of VAWA 2022. Furthermore, covered governmental entities should update applicable policies and practices to include the statutory right to report to avoid potential liability under the law.

16-IX.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003, 42 USC 13925]

As used in VAWA:

- The term *bifurcate* means, with respect to a public housing or Section 8 lease, to divide a lease as a matter of law such that certain tenants can be evicted or removed while the remaining family members' lease and occupancy rights are allowed to remain intact.
- The term *dating violence* means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a

social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- The length of the relationship
- The type of relationship
- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
- The term *domestic violence* includes felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant funding and, in the case of victim services, includes the use or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim, including verbal, psychological, economic, or technological abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior, by a person who—
 - A. is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, or person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim.
 - B. is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner.
 - C. shares a child in common with the victim; or
- commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction. The term *affiliated individual means*, with respect to a person:
 - A spouse, parent, brother or sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in the position or place of a parent; or
 - Any other individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- The term *sexual assault* means:
 - Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks the capacity to consent.
- The term *stalking* means:
 - To engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

16-IX.C. NOTIFICATION [24 CFR 5.2005(a)]

Notification to Public

The Augusta Housing Authority adopts the following policy to help ensure that all actual and potential beneficiaries of its HCV program are aware of their rights under VAWA.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will post the following information regarding VAWA in its offices and on its website. It will also make the information readily available to anyone who requests it.

A notice of occupancy rights under VAWA to housing choice voucher program applicants and participants who are or have been victims of domestic violence,

dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (Form HUD-5380, see Exhibit 16-1)

A copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternate Documentation (see Exhibit 16-2)

A copy of the AHA's emergency transfer plan (Exhibit 16-3)

A copy of HUD's Emergency Transfer Request for Certain Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking, Form HUD-5383 (Exhibit 16-4)

The National Domestic Violence Hot Line: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) (included in Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2)

Contact information for local victim advocacy groups or service providers

Notification to Program Applicants and Participants [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(1)]

The Augusta Housing Authority is required to inform program applicants and participants of their rights under VAWA, including their right to confidentiality and the limits thereof, when they are denied assistance, when they are admitted to the program, and when they are notified of an eviction or termination of housing benefits.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will provide all applicants with information about VAWA at the time they request an application for housing assistance. The AHA will also include information about VAWA in all notices of denial of assistance (see section 3-III.G).

The AHA will provide all participants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see section 5-I.B) and at annual reexamination. The AHA will also include information about VAWA in notices of termination of assistance, as provided in section 12-II.F.

The VAWA information provided to applicants and participants will consist of the notices in Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2.

Notification to Owners and Managers

While PHAs are no longer required by regulation to notify owners and managers participating in the HCV program of their rights and obligations under VAWA, the PHA may still choose to inform them.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will provide owners and managers with information about their rights and obligations under VAWA when they begin their participation in the HCV program and at least annually thereafter.

The VAWA information provided to owners will consist of the notice in Exhibit 16-5 and a copy of form HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking and Alternate Documentation.

16-IX.D. DOCUMENTATION [24 CFR 5.2007]

A PHA presented with a claim for initial or continued assistance based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or criminal activity related to any of these forms of abuse may—but is not required to—request that the individual making the claim document the abuse. Any request for documentation must be in writing, and the individual must be allowed at least 14 business days after receipt of the request to submit the documentation. The Augusta Housing Authority may extend this time period at its discretion. [24 CFR 5.2007(a)]

The individual may satisfy the AHA's request by providing any one of the following three forms of documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)]:

- (1) A completed and signed HUD-approved certification form (HUD-5382, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking), which must include the name of the perpetrator only if the name of the perpetrator is safe to provide and is known to the victim
- (2) A federal, state, tribal, territorial, or local police report or court record, or an administrative record
- (3) Documentation signed by a person who has assisted the victim in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, or the effects of such abuse. This person may be an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider; an attorney; a mental health professional; or a medical professional. The person signing the documentation must attest under penalty of perjury to the person's belief that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse. The victim must also sign the documentation.

The Augusta Housing Authority may not require third-party documentation (forms 2 and 3) in addition to certification (form 1), except as specified below under "Conflicting Documentation," nor may it require certification in addition to third-party documentation [VAWA final rule].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Any request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will be in writing, will specify a deadline of 14 business days following receipt of the request, will describe the three forms of acceptable documentation, will provide explicit instructions on where and to whom the documentation must be submitted, and will state the consequences for failure to submit the documentation or request an extension in writing by the deadline.

The AHA may, in its discretion, extend the deadline for 10 business days. Any extension granted by the AHA will be in writing.

Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(e)]

In cases where the Augusta Housing Authority receives conflicting certification documents from two or more members of a household, each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the perpetrator, the AHA may determine which is the true victim by requiring each to provide acceptable third-party documentation, as described above (forms 2 and 3) within 30 calendar days of the date of the request for third-party documentation. The AHA must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If presented with conflicting certification documents (two or more forms HUD-5382)

from members of the same household, the AHA will attempt to determine which is the true victim by requiring each of them to provide third-party documentation in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(e) and by following any HUD guidance on how such determinations should be made. The family will have 30 calendar days from the date of request by the AHA to provide this documentation.

Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(d)]

The Augusta Housing Authority has the discretion to provide benefits to an individual based solely on the individual's statement or other corroborating evidence—i.e., without requiring formal documentation of abuse in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(b).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the AHA accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, the AHA will document acceptance of the statement or evidence in the individual's file.

Failure to Provide Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(c)]

In order to deny relief for protection under VAWA, the Augusta Housing Authority must provide the individual requesting relief with a written request for documentation of abuse. If the individual fails to provide the documentation within 14 business days from the date of receipt, or such longer time as the AHA may allow, the AHA may deny relief for protection under VAWA.

16-IX.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)]

All information provided to the Augusta Housing Authority regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of such violence or stalking, must be retained in confidence. This means that the AHA (1) may not enter the information into any shared database, (2) may not allow employees or others to access the information unless they are explicitly authorized to do so and have a need to know the information for purposes of their work, and (3) may not provide the information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that the disclosure is (a) requested or consented to by the individual in writing, (b) required for use in an eviction proceeding, or (c) otherwise required by applicable law.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If disclosure is required for use in an eviction proceeding or is otherwise required by applicable law, the AHA will inform the victim before disclosure occurs so that safety risks can be identified and addressed.

EXHIBIT 16-1
NOTICE OF OCCUPANCY RIGHTS UNDER THE
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT,
FORM HUD-5380

Augusta Housing Authority

Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act¹

To all Tenants and Applicants

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. VAWA protections are not only available to women, but are available equally to all individuals regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal agency that oversees that the Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program is in compliance with VAWA. This notice explains your rights under VAWA. A HUD-approved certification form is attached to this notice. You can fill out this form to show that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and that you wish to use your rights under VAWA."

Protections for Applicants

If you otherwise qualify for assistance under Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program, you cannot be denied admission or denied assistance because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Protections for Tenants

If you are receiving assistance under the Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program, you may not be denied assistance, terminated from participation, or be evicted from your rental housing because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Also, if you or an affiliated individual of yours is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking by a member of your household or any guest, you may not be denied rental assistance or occupancy rights under the Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Affiliated individual means your spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child, or a person to whom you stand in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is in your care, custody, or control); or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in your household.

¹ Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

² Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household

The Augusta Housing Authority may divide (bifurcate) your lease in order to evict the individual or terminate the assistance of the individual who has engaged in criminal activity (the abuser or perpetrator) directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

If the Augusta Housing Authority chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, the Augusta Housing Authority may not take away the rights of eligible tenants to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. If the evicted abuser or perpetrator was the sole tenant to have established eligibility for assistance under the program, the Augusta Housing Authority must allow the tenant who is or has been a victim and other household members to remain in the unit for a period of time, in order to establish eligibility under the program or under another HUD housing program covered by VAWA, or, find alternative housing.

In removing the abuser or perpetrator from the household, the Augusta Housing Authority must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, the Augusta Housing Authority may, but is not required to, ask you for documentation or certification of the incidences of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Moving to Another Unit

Upon your request, the Augusta Housing Authority may permit you to move to another unit, subject to the availability of other units, and still keep your assistance. In order to approve a request, the Augusta Housing Authority may ask you to provide documentation that you are requesting to move because of an incidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If the request is a request for emergency transfer, the housing provider may ask you to submit a written request or fill out a form where you certify that you meet the criteria for an emergency transfer under VAWA. The criteria are:

- 1. You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.**
If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation, as described in the documentation section below.
- 2. You expressly request the emergency transfer.** Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit a form, or may accept another written or oral request.
- 3. You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit.** This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

OR

You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer. If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you expressly request the transfer.

The Augusta Housing Authority will keep confidential requests for emergency transfers by victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the location of any move by such victims and their families.

The Augusta Housing Authority's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and the Augusta Housing Authority must make a copy of its emergency transfer plan available to you if you ask to see it.

Documenting You Are or Have Been a Victim of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking

The Augusta Housing Authority can, but is not required to, ask you to provide documentation to "certify" that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Such request from the Augusta Housing Authority must be in writing, and the Augusta Housing Authority must give you at least 14 business days (Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays do not count) from the day you receive the request to provide the documentation. The Augusta Housing Authority may, but does not have to, extend the deadline for the submission of documentation upon your request.

You can provide one of the following to the Augusta Housing Authority as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if the Augusta Housing Authority asks you to provide documentation that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

- A complete HUD-approved certification form given to you by the Augusta Housing Authority with this notice, that documents an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The form will ask for your name, the date, time, and location of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and a description of the incident. The certification form provides for including the name of the abuser or perpetrator if the name of the abuser or perpetrator is known and is safe to provide.
- A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency that documents the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Examples of such records include police reports, protective orders, and restraining orders, among others.
- A statement, which you must sign, along with the signature of an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, "professional") from whom you sought assistance in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse, and with the professional selected by you attesting under penalty of perjury that he or she believes that the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking are grounds for protection.
- Any other statement or evidence that the Augusta Housing Authority has agreed to accept.

If you fail or refuse to provide one of these documents within the 14 business days, the Augusta Housing Authority does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

If the Augusta Housing Authority receives conflicting evidence that an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking has been committed (such as certification forms from two or more members of a household each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the abuser or perpetrator), the Augusta Housing Authority has the right to request that you provide third-party documentation within thirty (30) calendar days in order to resolve the conflict. If you fail or refuse to provide third-party documentation where there is conflicting evidence, the Augusta Housing Authority does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

Confidentiality

The Augusta Housing Authority must keep confidential any information you provide related to the exercise of your rights under VAWA, including the fact that you are exercising your rights under VAWA.

The Augusta Housing Authority must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of the Augusta Housing Authority (for example, employees and contractors) to have access to confidential information unless for reasons that specifically call for these individuals to have access to this information under applicable Federal, State, or local law.

The Augusta Housing Authority must not enter your information into any shared database or disclose your information to any other entity or individual. The Augusta Housing Authority, however, may disclose the information provided if:

- You give written permission to the Augusta Housing Authority to release the information on a time limited basis.
- The Augusta Housing Authority needs to use the information in an eviction or termination proceeding, such as to evict your abuser or perpetrator or terminate your abuser or perpetrator from assistance under this program.
- A law requires the Augusta Housing Authority or your landlord to release the information.

VAWA does not limit the Augusta Housing Authority's duty to honor court orders about access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect a victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

Reasons a Tenant Eligible for Occupancy Rights under VAWA May Be Evicted or Assistance May Be Terminated

You can be evicted and your assistance can be terminated for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against you. However, the Augusta Housing Authority cannot hold tenants who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding set of rules than it applies to tenants who have not been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The protections described in this notice might not apply, and you could be evicted and your assistance terminated, if the Augusta Housing Authority can demonstrate that not evicting you or terminating your assistance would present a real physical danger that:

1. Would occur within an immediate time frame, and
2. Could result in death or serious bodily harm to other tenants or those who work on the property.

If the Augusta Housing Authority can demonstrate the above, the Augusta Housing Authority should only terminate your assistance or evict you if there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat.

Other Laws

VAWA does not replace any Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You may be entitled to additional housing protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking under other Federal laws, as well as under State and local laws.

Non-Compliance with The Requirements of This Notice

You may report a covered housing provider's violations of these rights and seek additional assistance, if needed, by contacting or filing a complaint with the HUD field office, Atlanta Regional Office at (404) 331-5001 or (404) 331-5136.

For Additional Information

You may view a copy of HUD's final VAWA rule at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-11-16/pdf/2016-25888.pdf>. Additionally, the Augusta Housing Authority must make a copy of HUD's VAWA regulations available to you if you ask to see them.

For questions regarding VAWA, please contact the Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program at phaaug@augustapha.org.

For help regarding an abusive relationship, you may call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or, for persons with hearing impairments, 1-800-787-3224 (TTY). You may also contact the following local agencies:

- **Safe Homes of Augusta at (706) 736-2499**
- **Interfaith Hospitality Network at (706) 364-4462**
- **Salvation Army at (706) 826-7933**

For tenants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact: See above list of local agencies.

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact: See above list of local agencies.

Attachment: Certification form HUD-5382

EXHIBIT 16-2
CERTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL
ASSAULT, OR STALKING AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION,
FORM HUD-5382

**CERTIFICATION OF U.S. Department of Housing
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, and Urban Development
DATING VIOLENCE,
SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING,
AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION**

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286
Exp. 06/30/2017

Purpose of Form: The Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) protects applicants, tenants, and program participants in certain HUD programs from being evicted, denied housing assistance, or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against them. Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Use of This Optional Form: If you are seeking VAWA protections from your housing provider, your housing provider may give you a written request that asks you to submit documentation about the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

In response to this request, you or someone on your behalf may complete this optional form and submit it to your housing provider, or you may submit one of the following types of third-party documentation:

- (1) A document signed by you and an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional, or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom you have sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse. The document must specify, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking occurred and meet the definition of “domestic violence,” “dating violence,” “sexual assault,” or “stalking” in HUD’s regulations at 24 CFR 5.2003.
- (2) A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or
- (3) At the discretion of the housing provider, a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

Submission of Documentation: The time period to submit documentation is 14 business days from the date that you receive a written request from your housing provider asking that you provide documentation of the occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Your housing provider may, but is not required to, extend the time period to submit the documentation, if you request an extension of the time period. If the requested information is not received within 14 business days of when you received the request for the documentation, or any extension of the date provided by your housing provider, your housing provider does not need to grant you any of the VAWA protections. Distribution or issuance of this form does not serve as a written request for certification.

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall be kept confidential and such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections to you, and such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**

1. Date the written request is received by victim: _____

2. Name of victim: _____

3. Your name (if different from victim's): _____

4. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: _____

5. Residence of victim: _____

6. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed): _____

7. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: _____

8. Date(s) and times(s) of incident(s) (if known): _____

10. Location of incident(s): _____

In your own words, briefly describe the incident(s):

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection, and that the individual named above in Item 2 is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature _____ Signed on (Date) _____

Public Reporting Burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response. This includes the time for collecting, reviewing, and reporting the data. The information provided is to be used by the housing provider to request certification that the applicant or tenant is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The information is subject to the confidentiality requirements of VAWA. This agency may not collect this information, and you are not required to complete this form, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget control number.

EXHIBIT 16-3
**EMERGENCY TRANSFER PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**

Attachment: Certification form HUD-5382

**Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program
Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence,
Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking**

Emergency Transfers

The Augusta Housing Authority is concerned about the safety of its tenants, and such concern extends to tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA),¹ the Augusta Housing Authority allows tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to request an emergency transfer from the tenant's current unit to another unit. The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² The ability of the Augusta Housing Authority to honor such request for tenants currently receiving assistance, however, may depend upon a preliminary determination that the tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and on whether the Augusta Housing Authority has another dwelling unit that is available and is safe to offer the tenant for temporary or more permanent occupancy.

This plan identifies tenants who are eligible for an emergency transfer, the documentation needed to request an emergency transfer, confidentiality protections, how an emergency transfer may occur, and guidance to tenants on safety and security. This plan is based on a model emergency transfer plan published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the federal agency that ensures that the Augusta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program is in compliance with VAWA.

Eligibility for Emergency Transfers

A tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as provided in HUD's regulations at 24 CFR part 5, subpart L, is eligible for an emergency transfer if the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant remains within the same unit. If the tenant is a victim of sexual assault, the tenant may also be eligible to transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises within the 90-calendar-day period preceding a request for an emergency transfer.

¹Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

²Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

A tenant requesting an emergency transfer must expressly request the transfer in accordance with the procedures described in this plan.

Tenants who are not in good standing may still request an emergency transfer if they meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

Emergency Transfer Request Documentation

To request an emergency transfer, the tenant shall notify their HCV assigned case manager and submit a written request for a transfer to the Augusta Housing Authority. The Augusta Housing Authority will provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities. The tenant's written request for an emergency transfer should include either:

1. A statement expressing that the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant were to remain in the same dwelling unit assisted under the Augusta Housing Authority's program; OR
2. A statement that the tenant was a sexual assault victim and that the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period preceding the tenant's request for an emergency transfer.

Confidentiality

The Augusta Housing Authority will keep confidential any information that the tenant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the tenant gives the Augusta Housing Authority written permission to release the information on a time-limited basis, or disclosure of the information is required by law or required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the covered program. This includes keeping confidential the new location of the dwelling unit of the tenant, if one is provided, from the person or persons that committed an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against the tenant. See the Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act for All Tenants for more information about the Augusta Housing Authority's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information related to incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Emergency Transfer Timing and Availability

The Augusta Housing Authority cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. The Augusta Housing Authority will, however, act as quickly as possible to move a tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to another unit, subject to availability and safety of a unit. If a tenant reasonably believes a proposed transfer would not be safe, the tenant may request a transfer to a different unit. If a unit is available, the transferred tenant must agree to abide by the terms and conditions that govern occupancy in the unit to which the tenant has been transferred. The Augusta Housing Authority may be unable to transfer a tenant to a particular unit if the tenant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

If the Augusta Housing Authority has no safe and available units for which a tenant who needs an emergency transfer is eligible, the Augusta Housing Authority will assist the tenant in identifying other housing providers who may have safe and available units to which the tenant could move. At the tenant's request, the Augusta Housing Authority will also assist tenants in

contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are attached to this plan.

Emergency Transfers: Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

Tenant-based assistance: If you are a participant in the tenant-based HCV Program and request an emergency transfer as described in this plan, the Augusta Housing Authority will assist you to move to a safe unit quickly using your existing voucher assistance. The Augusta Housing Authority will make exceptions to program regulations restricting moves as required.

At your request, the Augusta Housing Authority will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

Project-based assistance: If you are assisted under the project-based voucher (PBV) program, you may request an emergency transfer under the following programs for which you are not required to apply:

- ☐ Tenant-based voucher, if available
- ☐ Project-based assistance in the same project (if a vacant unit is available and you determine that the vacant unit is safe)
- ☐ Project-based assistance in another development owned by the Augusta Housing Authority
- ☐ Emergency transfers under VAWA will take priority over waiting list admissions for these types of assistance.

You may also request an emergency transfer under the following programs for which you are required to apply:

- Public housing program
- PBV assistance in another development not owned by the Augusta Housing Authority

Emergency transfers will not take priority over waiting list admissions for these programs. At your request, the Augusta Housing Authority will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

Safety and Security of Tenants

Pending processing of the transfer and the actual transfer, if it is approved and occurs, the tenant is urged to take all reasonable precautions to be safe.

Tenants who are or have been victims of domestic violence are encouraged to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233, or a local domestic violence shelter, for assistance in creating a safety plan. For persons with hearing impairments, that hotline can be accessed by calling 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Tenants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE, or visit the online hotline at: <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>.

Tenants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at: <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

Attachment: Local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

EXHIBIT 16-4
**EMERGENCY TRANSFER REQUEST FOR CERTAIN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**
FORM HUD-5383

**EMERGENCY TRANSFER
REQUEST FOR CERTAIN
VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE,
SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**

**U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development**

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286
Exp. 06/30/2017

Purpose of Form: If you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and you are seeking an emergency transfer, you may use this form to request an emergency transfer and certify that you meet the requirements of eligibility for an emergency transfer under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Although the statutory name references women, VAWA rights and protections apply to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. Using this form does not necessarily mean that you will receive an emergency transfer. See your housing provider's emergency transfer plan for more information about the availability of emergency transfers.

The requirements you must meet are:

(1) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation. In response, you may submit Form HUD-5382, or any one of the other types of documentation listed on that Form.

(2) You expressly request the emergency transfer. Submission of this form confirms that you have expressly requested a transfer. Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit this form, or may accept another written or oral request. Please see your housing provider's emergency transfer plan for more details.

(3) You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit. This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future.

OR

You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer. If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you submit this form or otherwise expressly request the transfer.

Submission of Documentation: If you have third-party documentation that demonstrates why you are eligible for an emergency transfer, you should submit that documentation to your housing provider if it is safe for you to do so. Examples of third party documentation include, but are not limited to: a letter or other documentation from a victim service provider, social worker, legal assistance provider, pastoral counselor, mental health provider, or other professional from whom you have sought assistance; a current restraining order; a recent court order or other court records; a law enforcement report or records; communication records from the perpetrator of the violence or family members or friends of the perpetrator of the violence, including emails, voicemails, text messages, and social media posts.

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and concerning your request for an emergency transfer shall be kept confidential. Such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections or an emergency transfer to you. Such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE PERSON REQUESTING A TRANSFER

1. Name of victim requesting an emergency transfer: _____

2. Your name (if different from victim's) _____

3. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: _____

4. Name(s) of other family member(s) who would transfer with the victim: _____

5. Address of location from which the victim seeks to transfer: _____

6. Address or phone number for contacting the victim: _____

7. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed): _____

8. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: _____

9. Date(s), Time(s) and location(s) of incident(s): _____

10. Is the person requesting the transfer a victim of a sexual assault that occurred in the past 90 days on the premises of the property from which the victim is seeking a transfer? If yes, skip question 11. If no, fill out question 11. _____

11. Describe why the victim believes they are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if they remain in their current unit.

12. If voluntarily provided, list any third-party documentation you are providing along with this notice: _____

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that the individual named above in Item 1 meets the requirement laid out on this form for an emergency transfer. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature _____ Signed on (Date) _____

EXHIBIT 16-5

NOTICE TO HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER OWNERS AND MANAGERS REGARDING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

A federal law that went into effect in 2013 protects individuals who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The name of the law is the Violence Against Women Act, or “VAWA.” This notice explains your obligations under VAWA.

Protections for Victims

You cannot refuse to rent to an applicant solely because he or she is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

You cannot evict a tenant who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking based on acts or threats of violence committed against the victim. Also, criminal acts directly related to the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are caused by a household member or guest cannot be cause for evicting the victim of the abuse.

Permissible Evictions

You can evict a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking if you can demonstrate that there is an *actual and imminent* (immediate) threat to other tenants or employees at the property if the victim is not evicted. Also, you may evict a victim for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You cannot hold a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding standard than you hold tenants who are not victims.

Removing the Abuser from the Household

You may bifurcate (split) the lease to evict a tenant who has committed criminal acts of violence against family members or others, while allowing the victim and other household members to stay in the unit. If you choose to remove the abuser, you may not take away the remaining tenants’ rights to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. In removing the abuser from the household, you must follow federal, state, and local eviction procedures.

Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

If a tenant asserts VAWA’s protections, you can ask the tenant to certify that he or she is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You are not required to demand official documentation and may rely upon the victim’s statement alone. If you choose to request certification, you must do so in writing and give the tenant at least 14 business days to provide documentation. You are free to extend this deadline. A tenant can certify that he or she is a victim by providing any one of the following three documents:

- A completed, signed HUD-approved certification form. The most recent form is HUD-5382. This form is available at the housing authority or online at <https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=5382.docx>.

- A statement from a victim service provider, attorney, mental health professional, or medical professional who has helped the victim address incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The professional must state that he or she believes that the incidents of abuse are real. Both the victim and the professional must sign the statement under penalty of perjury.
- A police or court record, such as a protective order, or administrative record.

If the tenant fails to provide one of these documents within 14 business days, you may evict the tenant if authorized by otherwise applicable law and lease provisions.

Confidentiality

You must keep confidential any information a tenant provides to certify that he or she is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You cannot enter the information into a shared database or reveal it to outside entities unless:

- The tenant provides written permission releasing the information.
- The information is required for use in an eviction proceeding, such as to evict the abuser.
- Release of the information is otherwise required by law.

The victim should inform you if the release of the information would put his or her safety at risk.

VAWA and Other Laws

VAWA does not limit your obligation to honor court orders regarding access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect the victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

VAWA does not replace any federal, state, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Additional Information

- If you have any questions regarding VAWA, please contact the Augusta Housing Authority at phaaug@augustapha.org.

Definitions

For purposes of determining whether a tenant may be covered by VAWA, the following list of definitions applies:

VAWA defines *domestic violence* to include felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by any of the following:

- A current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim
- A person with whom the victim shares a child in common
- A person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner
- A person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies
- Any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction

VAWA defines *dating violence* as violence committed by a person (1) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim AND (2) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- The length of the relationship
- The type of relationship
- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

VAWA defines *sexual assault* as "any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent" (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)).

VAWA defines *stalking* as engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

Chapter 17

PROJECT-BASED VOUCHERS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes HUD regulations and Augusta Housing Authority policies related to the Project Based Voucher (PBV) Program in nine parts:

Part I: General Requirements. This part describes general provisions of the PBV Program including maximum budget authority requirements, relocation requirements, and equal opportunity requirements.

Part II: PBV Owner Proposals. This part includes policies related to the submission and selection of owner proposals for PBV assistance. It describes the factors the AHA will consider when selecting proposals, the type of housing that is eligible to receive PBV assistance, the cap on assistance at projects receiving PBV assistance, subsidy layering requirements, site selection standards, and environmental review requirements.

Part III: Dwelling Units. This part describes requirements related to housing quality standards, the type and frequency of inspections, and housing accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Part IV: Rehabilitated and Newly Constructed Units. This part describes requirements and policies related to the development and completion of rehabilitated and newly constructed housing units that will be receiving PBV assistance.

Part V: Housing Assistance Payments Contract. This part discusses HAP contract requirements and policies including the execution, term, and termination of the HAP contract. In addition, it describes how the HAP contract may be amended and identifies provisions that may be added to the HAP contract at the AHA's discretion.

Part VI: Selection of PBV Program Participants. This part describes the requirements and policies governing how the AHA and the owner will select a family to receive PBV assistance.

Part VII: Occupancy. This part discusses occupancy requirements related to the lease, and describes under what conditions families are allowed or required to move. In addition, exceptions to the occupancy cap (which limits PBV assistance to 25 percent of the units in any project) are also discussed.

Part VIII: Determining Rent to Owner. This part describes how the initial rent to owner is determined, and how rent will be redetermined throughout the life of the HAP contract. Rent reasonableness requirements are also discussed.

Part IX: Payments to Owner. This part describes the types of payments owners may receive under this program.

PART I: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

17-I.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 983.5]

The Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Program allows PHAs that already administer a Tenant-Based Voucher Program under an Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) with HUD to take up to 20 percent of its authorized units and attach the funding to specific units rather than using it for tenant-based assistance [24 CFR 983.6]. PHAs may only operate a PBV Program if doing so is consistent with the PHA's Annual Plan, and the goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities [42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(13)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will operate a Project-Based Voucher Program using up to 20 percent of its authorized units for Project-Based assistance.

PBV assistance may be attached to existing housing or newly constructed or rehabilitated housing [24 CFR 983.52]. If PBV units are already selected for project-based assistance either under an Agreement to Enter into HAP Contract (Agreement) or a HAP contract, the Augusta Housing Authority is not required to reduce the number of these units if the number of authorized units is subsequently reduced. However, the AHA is responsible for determining the amount of budget authority that is available for Project-Based Vouchers and ensuring that the amount of assistance that is attached to units is within the amounts available under the ACC, regardless of whether the AHA has vouchers available for project-basing [FR Notice 1/18/17].

Additional Project-Based Units [FR Notice 1/18/17]

The Augusta Housing Authority may project-base an additional 10 percent of its units above the 20 percent program limit, if the units:

- Are specifically made available to house individuals and families that meet the definition of homeless under section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302).
- Are specifically made available to house families that are comprised of or include a veteran.
 - *Veteran* means an individual who has served in the United States Armed Forces.
- Provide supportive housing to persons with disabilities or elderly persons as defined in 24 CFR 5.403.
- Are located in a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or less, as determined in the most recent American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA may set aside units above the 20 percent program limit if a proposal is presented that meets one or more of the above criteria.

Units Not Subject to the PBV Program Limitation [FR Notice 1/18/17]

PBV units under the RAD program and HUD-VASH PBV set-aside vouchers do not count toward the 20 percent limitation when PBV assistance is attached to them.

In addition, units that were previously subject to certain federal rent restrictions or were receiving another type of long-term housing subsidy provided by HUD are not subject to the cap. In order to be excepted, the unit must meet the following conditions:

- The unit must be covered under a PBV HAP contract that first became effective on or after 4/18/17; and
- In the five years prior to the date the PHA either issued the RFP or selected the project, the unit either:
 - Received Public Housing Capital or Operating Funds, Project-Based Rental Assistance, Housing for Elderly (Section 202), Housing for Persons with Disabilities (section 811), Rent Supplement (Rent Supp), or Rental Assistance Program (RAP); or
 - The unit was subject to a rent restriction through a loan or insurance program as a result of Section 236, Section 221(d)(3) or (d)(4) BMIR, Housing for Elderly Persons (Section 202), or Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811)

Units that have previously received either PBV or HCV assistance are not covered under the exception.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not project-base any of the above unit types.

17-I.B. TENANT-BASED VS. PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 983.2]

Much of the Tenant-Based Voucher Program regulations also apply to the PBV Program. Consequently, many of the Augusta Housing Authority policies related to Tenant-Based assistance also apply to PBV assistance. The provisions of the Tenant-Based Voucher regulations that do not apply to the PBV Program are listed at 24 CFR 983.2.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Except as otherwise noted in this chapter, or unless specifically prohibited by PBV Program regulations, the AHA policies for the Tenant-Based Voucher Program contained in this Administrative Plan also apply to the PBV Program and its participants.

17-I.C. RELOCATION REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 983.7]

Any persons displaced as a result of implementation of the PBV Program must be provided relocation assistance in accordance with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA)[42 U.S.C. 4201-4655] and implementing regulations at 49 CFR part 24.

The cost of required relocation assistance may be paid with funds provided by the owner, local public funds, or funds available from other sources. The Augusta Housing Authority may not use Voucher Program funds to cover relocation costs, except that the AHA may use their administrative fee reserve to pay for relocation expenses after all other program administrative expenses are satisfied, and provided that payment of the relocation benefits is consistent with state and local law. Use of the administrative fee for these purposes must also be consistent with other legal and regulatory requirements, including the requirement in 24 CFR 982.155 and other official HUD issuances.

The acquisition of real property for a PBV project is subject to the URA and 49 CFR part 24, subpart B. It is the responsibility of the Augusta Housing Authority to ensure the owner complies with these requirements.

17-I.D. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 983.8]

The Augusta Housing Authority must comply with all equal opportunity requirements under federal law and regulations in its implementation of the PBV Program. This includes the requirements and authorities cited at 24 CFR 5.105(a). In addition, the Augusta Housing Authority must comply with the AHA Plan certification on civil rights and affirmatively furthering fair housing, submitted in accordance with 24 CFR 903.7(o).

PART II: PBV OWNER PROPOSALS

17-II.A. OVERVIEW

With certain exceptions, the Augusta Housing Authority must describe the procedures for owner submission of PBV proposals and for Augusta Housing Authority selection of PBV proposals [24 CFR 983.51]. Before selecting a PBV proposal, the Augusta Housing Authority must determine that the PBV proposal complies with HUD program regulations and requirements, including a determination that the property is eligible housing [24 CFR 983.53 and 983.54], complies with the cap on the number of PBV units per project [24 CFR 983.56], and meets the site selection standards [24 CFR 983.57]. The Augusta Housing Authority may not commit PBVs until or unless it has followed the proposal selection requirements defined in 24 CFR 983.51 [Notice PIH 2011-54].

17-II.B. OWNER PROPOSAL SELECTION PROCEDURES [24 CFR 983.51(b)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must select PBV proposals in accordance with the selection procedures in the AHA Administrative Plan. The Augusta Housing Authority must select PBV proposals by either of the following two methods.

- AHA request for PBV Proposals. The Augusta Housing Authority may solicit proposals by using a request for proposals to select proposals on a competitive basis in response to the Augusta Housing Authority request. The Augusta Housing Authority may not limit proposals to a single site or impose restrictions that explicitly or practically preclude owner submission of proposals for PBV housing on different sites.
- The AHA may select proposal that were previously selected based on a competition. This may include selection of a proposal for housing assisted under a federal, state, or local government housing assistance program that was subject to a competition in accordance with the requirements of the applicable program, community development program, or supportive services program that requires competitive selection of proposals (e.g., HOME, and units for which competitively awarded LIHTCs have been provided), where the proposal has been selected in accordance with such program's competitive selection requirements within three (3) years of the PBV proposal selection date, and the earlier competitive selection proposal did not involve any consideration that the project would receive PBV assistance. The AHA need not conduct another competition.

Units Selected Non-Competitively [FR Notice 1/18/17]

For certain public housing projects where the PHA has an ownership interest or control and will spend a minimum amount per unit on rehabilitation or construction, the PHA may select a project without following one of the two processes above.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA may attach PBVs to projects owned by the AHA as described above.

Solicitation and Selection of PBV Proposals [24 CFR 983.51(c)]

Augusta Housing Authority procedures for selecting PBV proposals must be designed and actually operated to provide broad public notice of the opportunity to offer PBV proposals for consideration by the Augusta Housing Authority. The public notice procedures may include publication of the public notice in a local newspaper of general circulation and other means designed and actually operated to provide broad public notice. The public notice of the Augusta Housing Authority request for PBV proposals must specify the submission deadline. Detailed application and selection information must be provided at the request of interested parties.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

AHA Request for Proposals for Rehabilitated and Newly Constructed Units

The AHA will advertise its Request for Proposals (RFP) for rehabilitated and newly constructed housing in the following newspapers and trade journals.

Augusta Chronicle

Metro Courier

Urban Pro

In addition, the AHA will post the RFP and proposal submission and rating and ranking procedures on its electronic web site.

The AHA will publish its advertisement in the newspapers mentioned above that specifies the number of units the AHA estimates that it will be able to assist under the funding the AHA is making available. Proposals will be due in the AHA office by close of business 30 calendar days from the date of the publication.

In order for the proposal to be considered, the owner must submit the proposal to the AHA by the published deadline date, and the proposal must respond to all requirements as outlined in the RFP. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

The AHA will rate and rank proposals for rehabilitated and newly constructed housing using the following criteria:

- Owner experience and capability to build or rehabilitate housing as identified in the RFP;

- Extent to which the project furthers the AHA's goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities;

- If applicable, the extent to which services for special populations are provided on site or in the immediate area for occupants of the property; and

- Projects with less than 25 percent of the units assisted will be rated higher than projects with 25 percent of the units assisted. In the case of projects for occupancy by the elderly, persons with disabilities or families needing other services, the AHA will rate partially assisted projects on the percent of units assisted. Projects with the lowest percent of assisted units will receive the highest score.

Augusta Housing Authority Requests for Proposals for Existing Housing Units

The AHA will advertise its Request for Proposals (RFP) for existing housing in the following newspapers.

Augusta Chronicle

Metro Courier

Urban Pro

In addition, the AHA will post the notice inviting such proposal submission and the rating and ranking procedures on its electronic web site.

The AHA will publish its advertisement in the newspapers mentioned that specifies the number of units the AHA estimates that it will be able to assist under the funding the AHA is making available. Owner proposals will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis and will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Experience as an owner in the Tenant-Based Voucher Program and owner compliance with the owner's obligations under the Tenant-Based Program;

- Extent to which the project furthers the AHA's goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities;

- If applicable, extent to which services for special populations are provided on site or in the immediate area for occupants of the property; and

- Extent to which units are occupied by families that are eligible to participate in the PBV Program.

Augusta Housing Authority Selection of Proposals Subject to a Previous Competition under a Federal, State, or Local Housing Assistance Program

The Augusta Housing Authority will accept proposals for PBV assistance from owners that were competitively selected under another federal, state or local housing assistance program, including projects that were competitively awarded Low-Income Housing Tax Credits on an ongoing basis.

The AHA may periodically advertise that it is accepting proposals, in the following newspapers:

Augusta Chronicle

Metro Courier

Urban Pro

In addition to, or in place of advertising, the AHA may also directly contact specific owners that have already been selected for federal, state, or local housing assistance based on a previously held competition, to inform them of available PBV assistance.

Proposals will be reviewed on a first-come first-served basis. The AHA will evaluate each proposal on its merits using the following factors:

- Extent to which the project furthers the AHA's goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities; and

- Extent to which the proposal complements other local activities such as the redevelopment of a public housing site under the HOPE VI Program, the HOME Program, CDBG activities, other development activities in a HUD-designated Enterprise Zone, Economic Community, or Renewal Community.

PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.51(e), 983.59, Notice PIH 2015-05, and FR Notice 1/18/17]

A PHA-owned unit may be assisted under the PBV program only if the HUD field office or HUD-approved independent entity reviews the selection process and determines that the PHA-owned units were appropriately selected based on the selection procedures specified in the PHA administrative plan. If the PHA selects a proposal for housing that is owned or controlled by the PHA, the PHA must identify the entity that will review the PHA proposal selection process and perform specific functions with respect to rent determinations and inspections.

In the case of PHA-owned units, the term of the HAP contract and any HAP contract renewal must be agreed upon by the PHA and a HUD-approved independent entity. In addition, an independent entity must determine the rent to owner, the redetermined rent to owner, and reasonable rent. Housing Quality Standards inspections must also be conducted by an independent entity.

The independent entity that performs these program services may be the unit of general local government for the PHA jurisdiction (unless the PHA is itself the unit of general local government or an agency of such government) or another HUD-approved public or private independent entity.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA may submit a proposal for project-based housing that is owned or controlled by the AHA. If the proposal for AHA-owned housing is selected, the AHA will use the local HUD field office to review the AHA selection process and to perform the required administrative functions of the PBV Program. The AHA will obtain HUD approval prior to selecting the proposal for AHA-owned housing.

The AHA may only compensate the independent entity from AHA ongoing administrative fee income (including amounts credited to the administrative fee reserve). The AHA may not use other program receipts to compensate the independent entity for its services. The AHA and independent entity may not charge the family any fee for the appraisal or the services provided by the independent entity.

AHA Notice of Owner Selection [24 CFR 983.51(d)]

The PHA must give prompt written notice to the party that submitted a selected proposal and must also give prompt public notice of such selection. Public notice procedures may include publication of public notice in a local newspaper of general circulation and other means designed and actually operated to provide broad public notice.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Within 10 business days of the AHA making the selection, the AHA will notify the selected owner in writing of the owner's selection for the PBV Program. The AHA will also notify in writing all owners that submitted proposals that were not selected and advise such owners of the name of the selected owner.

In addition, the AHA will publish its notice for selection of PBV proposals in the same newspapers the AHA used to solicit the proposals. The announcement will include the name of the owner that was selected for the PBV Program. The AHA will also post the notice of owner selection on its electronic web site.

The AHA will make available to any interested party its rating and ranking sheets and documents that identify the AHA basis for selecting the proposal. These documents will be available for review by the public and other interested parties for one month after publication of the notice of owner selection. The AHA will not make available sensitive owner information that is privileged, such as financial statements and similar information about the owner.

The AHA will make these documents available for review at the PHA during normal business hours. The cost for reproduction of allowable documents will be \$.25 per page.

17-II.C. HOUSING TYPE [24 CFR 983.52]

The AHA may attach PBV assistance for units in existing housing or for newly constructed or rehabilitated housing developed under and in accordance with an Agreement to enter into a Housing Assistance Payments (AHAP) contract that was executed prior to the start of construction. A housing unit is considered an existing unit for purposes of the PBV Program, if, at the time of notice of AHA selection, the units substantially comply with HQS. Units for which new construction or rehabilitation began after the owner's proposal submission but prior to the execution of the HAP do not subsequently qualify as existing housing. Units that were newly constructed or rehabilitated in violation of program requirements also do not qualify as existing housing.

The AHA must decide what housing type, new construction, rehabilitation, or existing housing, will be used to develop project-based housing. The AHA choice of housing type must be reflected in its solicitation for proposals.

17-II.D. PROHIBITION OF ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN UNITS

Ineligible Housing Types [24 CFR 983.53]

The Augusta Housing Authority may not attach or pay PBV assistance to shared housing units; units on the grounds of a penal reformatory, medical, mental, or similar public or private institution; nursing homes or facilities providing continuous psychiatric, medical, nursing services, board and care, or intermediate care (except that assistance may be provided in assisted living facilities); units that are owned or controlled by an educational institution or its affiliate and are designated for occupancy by students; manufactured homes; and transitional housing. In addition, the Augusta Housing Authority may not attach or pay PBV assistance for a unit occupied by an owner and the Augusta Housing Authority may not select or enter into an Agreement to enter into a HAP contract or HAP contract for a unit occupied by a family ineligible for participation in the PBV Program. A member of a cooperative who owns shares in the project assisted under the PBV Program is not considered an owner for purposes of participation in the PBV Program. Finally, PBV assistance may not be attached to units for which construction or rehabilitation has started after the proposal submission and prior to the execution of an AHAP.

Subsidized Housing [24 CFR 983.54]

The Augusta Housing Authority may not attach or pay PBV assistance to units in any of the following types of subsidized housing:

- A public housing unit;
- A unit subsidized with any other form of Section 8 assistance;
- A unit subsidized with any governmental rent subsidy;
- A unit subsidized with any governmental subsidy that covers all or any part of the operating costs of the housing;
- A unit subsidized with Section 236 rental assistance payments (except that a PHA may attach assistance to a unit subsidized with Section 236 interest reduction payments);
- A Section 202 project for non-elderly with disabilities;
- Section 811 project-based supportive housing for persons with disabilities;
- Section 202 supportive housing for the elderly;
- A Section 101 rent supplement project;
- A unit subsidized with any form of tenant-based rental assistance;
- A unit with any other duplicative federal, state, or local housing subsidy, as determined by HUD or the AHA in accordance with HUD requirements.

17-II.E. SUBSIDY LAYERING REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 983.55, FR Notice 11/24/08, FR Notice 7/9/10, and FR Notice 6/25/14]

The Augusta Housing Authority may provide PBV assistance only in accordance with HUD subsidy layering regulations [24 CFR 4.13] and other requirements.

The subsidy layering review is intended to prevent excessive public assistance by combining (layering) housing assistance payment subsidy under the PBV Program with other governmental housing assistance from federal, state, or local agencies, including assistance such as tax concessions or tax credits.

Subsidy layering requirements do not apply to existing housing. A further subsidy layering review is not required for new construction or rehabilitation if HUD's designee has conducted a review that included a review of PBV assistance in accordance with the PBV subsidy layering guidelines.

The Augusta Housing Authority must submit the necessary documentation to HUD for a subsidy layering review. Except in cases noted above, the AHA may not enter into an Agreement to enter into a HAP contract or a HAP contract until HUD, or a HUD-approved housing credit agency (HCA), has conducted any required subsidy layering review and determined that the PBV assistance is in accordance with HUD subsidy layering requirements. However, in order to satisfy applicable requirements, HCAs must conduct subsidy layering reviews in compliance with the guidelines set forth in the *Federal Register* notice published July 9, 2010.

The HAP contract must contain the owner's certification that the project has not received and will not receive (before or during the term of the HAP contract) any public assistance for acquisition, development, or operation of the housing other than assistance disclosed in the subsidy layering review in accordance with HUD requirements.

17-II.F. CAP ON NUMBER OF PBV UNITS IN EACH PROJECT

25 Percent per Project Cap [24 CFR 983.56]

In general, the Augusta Housing Authority may not select a proposal to provide PBV assistance for units in a project or enter into an Agreement to Enter into a HAP or a HAP contract to provide PBV assistance for units in a project, if the total number of dwelling units in the project that will receive PBV assistance during the term of the PBV HAP contract is more than the greater of 25 units or 25 percent of the number of dwelling units (assisted or unassisted) in the project.

Exceptions to 25 Percent per Project Cap [FR Notice 1/18/17]

Exceptions are allowed and PBV units are not counted against the 25 percent or 25-unit per project cap if:

- The units are exclusively for elderly families
- The units are for households eligible for supportive services available to all families receiving PBV assistance in the project
- The project is located in a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or less, as determined in the most recent American Community Survey Five-Year estimates

The Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) eliminated the project cap exemption for projects that serve disabled families and modified the exception for supportive services. Projects where these caps were implemented prior to HOTMA may continue to use the former exemptions and may renew their HAP contracts under the old requirements, unless the Augusta Housing Authority and owner agree to change the conditions of the HAP contract. However, this change may not be made if it would jeopardize an assisted family's eligibility for continued assistance in the project.

The Augusta Housing Authority must include in the AHA Administrative Plan the type of services offered to families for a project to qualify for the exception and the extent to which such services will be provided. The project must make supportive services available to all families receiving PBV assistance in the project, but the family does not actually have to accept and receive supportive services for the exception to apply to the unit. It is not necessary that the services be provided at or by the project, but must be reasonably available to families receiving PBV assistance at the project and designed to help families in the project achieve self-sufficiency or live in the community as independently as possible. The Augusta Housing Authority may not require participation in the supportive service as a condition of living in the excepted unit, although such services may be offered. The following types of services may be provided depending on the needs of the family:

- Transportation for activities such as grocery shopping, attending medical and dental appointments;
- Supervised taking of medications;
- Treatment for drug rehabilitation in the case of current abusers;
- Treatment for alcohol addiction in the case of current abusers;
- Training in housekeeping and homemaking activities;
- Family budgeting;
- Child care;
- Parenting skills;
- Computer labs; and
- Work skills development and job training.

If a family at the time of initial tenancy is receiving, and while the resident of an excepted unit has received, FSS supportive services or any other supportive services as defined in the AHA Administrative Plan, and successfully completes the FSS contract of participation or the supportive services requirement, the unit continues to count as an excepted unit for as long as the family resides in the unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Excepted units will be specifically made available for elderly or disabled families or families receiving supportive services.

Projects not Subject to a Project Cap [FR Notice 1/18/17]

PBV units that were previously subject to certain federal rent restrictions or receiving another type of long-term housing subsidy provided by HUD are exempt from the project cap. In other words, 100 percent of the units in these projects may receive PBV assistance. To qualify for the exception, the unit must:

- Be covered by a PBV HAP contract that first became effective on or after 4/18/17; and
- In the five years prior to the date the PHA either issued the RFP under which the project was selected or the PHA selected the project without competition, the unit met at least one of the two following conditions:
 - The unit received Public Housing Capital or Operating Funds, Project-Based Rental Assistance, Housing for the Elderly (Section 303), Housing for Persons with disabilities (Section 811), the Rental Supplement program,
 - The unit was subject to a rent restriction as a result of one of the following HUD loans or insurance programs: Section 236, Section 221(d)(3) or (d)(4) BMIR, Housing for the Elderly (Section 202), or Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811)

Units that were previously receiving PBV assistance are not covered by the exception. Both existing and rehabilitation units are eligible for this exception. Newly constructed units qualify if they meet the definition of *replacement unit* described in FR Notice 1/18/17.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA does not have any PBV units that are subject to the per project cap exception.

Promoting Partially-Assisted Projects [24 CFR 983.56(c)]

A PHA may establish local requirements designed to promote PBV assistance in partially assisted projects. A *partially assisted project* is a project in which there are fewer units covered by a HAP contract than residential units [24 CFR 983.3].

A PHA may establish a per-project cap on the number of units that will receive PBV assistance or other project-based assistance in a multifamily project containing excepted units or in a single-family building. A PHA may also determine not to provide PBV assistance for excepted units, or the PHA may establish a per-project cap of less than 25 percent.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy:

The AHA will not impose any further cap on the number of PBV units assisted per project.

17-II.G. SITE SELECTION STANDARDS

Compliance with PBV Goals, Civil Rights Requirements, and HQS Site Standards [24 CFR 983.57(b)]

The Augusta Housing Authority may not select a proposal for existing, newly constructed, or rehabilitated PBV housing on a site or enter into an Agreement to enter into a HAP contract or HAP contract for units on the site, unless the AHA has determined that PBV assistance for housing at the selected site is consistent with the goal of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities. The standard for deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities must be consistent with the AHA Plan under 24 CFR 903 and the AHA Administrative Plan.

In addition, prior to selecting a proposal, the AHA must determine that the site is suitable from the standpoint of facilitating and furthering full compliance with the applicable Civil Rights Laws, regulations, and Executive Orders, and that the site meets the HQS site and neighborhood standards at 24 CFR 982.401(l).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

It is the AHA goal to select sites for PBV housing that provide for deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities. In complying with this goal, the AHA will limit approval of sites for PBV housing in census tracts that have poverty concentrations of 20 percent or less.

However, the AHA will grant exceptions to the 20 percent standard where the AHA determines that the PBV assistance will complement other local redevelopment activities designed to deconcentrate poverty and expand housing and economic opportunities in census tracts with poverty concentrations greater than 20 percent, such as sites in:

- A census tract in which the proposed PBV development will be located in a HUD-designated Enterprise Zone, Economic Community, or Renewal Community;

- A census tract where the concentration of assisted units will be or has decreased as a result of public housing demolition and HOPE VI redevelopment;

- A census tract in which the proposed PBV development will be located is undergoing significant revitalization as a result of state, local, or federal dollars invested in the area;

- A census tract where new market rate units are being developed where such market rate units will positively impact the poverty rate in the area;

- A census tract where there has been an overall decline in the poverty rate within the past five years; or

- A census tract where there are meaningful opportunities for educational and economic advancement.

Existing and Rehabilitated Housing Site and Neighborhood Standards [24 CFR 983.57(d)]

The Augusta Housing Authority may not enter into an Agreement to enter into a HAP contract nor enter into a HAP contract for existing or rehabilitated housing until it has determined that the site complies with the HUD required site and neighborhood standards. The site must:

- Be adequate in size, exposure, and contour to accommodate the number and type of units proposed;
- Have adequate utilities and streets available to service the site;
- Promote a greater choice of housing opportunities and avoid undue concentration of assisted persons in areas containing a high proportion of low-income persons;
- Be accessible to social, recreational, educational, commercial, and health facilities and services and other municipal facilities and services equivalent to those found in neighborhoods consisting largely of unassisted similar units; and
- Be located so that travel time and cost via public transportation or private automobile from the neighborhood to places of employment is not excessive.

New Construction Site and Neighborhood Standards [24 CFR 983.57(e)]

In order to be selected for PBV assistance, a site for newly constructed housing must meet the following HUD required site and neighborhood standards:

- The site must be adequate in size, exposure, and contour to accommodate the number and type of units proposed;
- The site must have adequate utilities and streets available to service the site;
- The site must not be located in an area of minority concentration unless the Augusta Housing Authority determines that sufficient, comparable opportunities exist for housing for minority families in the income range to be served by the proposed project outside areas of minority concentration or that the project is necessary to meet overriding housing needs that cannot be met in that housing market area;
- The site must not be located in a racially mixed area if the project will cause a significant increase in the proportion of minority to non-minority residents in the area.
- The site must promote a greater choice of housing opportunities and avoid undue concentration of assisted persons in areas containing a high proportion of low-income persons;
- The neighborhood must not be one that is seriously detrimental to family life or in which substandard dwellings or other undesirable conditions predominate;
- The housing must be accessible to social, recreational, educational, commercial, and health facilities and services and other municipal facilities and services equivalent to those found in neighborhoods consisting largely of unassisted similar units; and
- Except for housing designed for elderly persons, the housing must be located so that travel time and cost via public transportation or private automobile from the neighborhood to places of employment is not excessive.

17-II.H. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW [24 CFR 983.58]

The Augusta Housing Authority activities under the PBV program are subject to HUD environmental regulations in 24 CFR parts 50 and 58. The *responsible entity* is responsible for performing the federal environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). The PHA may not enter into an Agreement to enter into a HAP contract nor enter into a HAP contract until it has complied with the environmental review requirements.

In the case of existing housing, the responsible entity that is responsible for the environmental review under 24 CFR part 58 must determine whether or not PBV assistance is categorically excluded from review under the National Environmental Policy Act and whether or not the assistance is subject to review under the laws and authorities listed in 24 CFR 58.5.

The AHA may not enter into an Agreement to enter into a HAP contract or a HAP contract with an owner, and the AHA, the owner, and its contractors may not acquire, rehabilitate, convert, lease, repair, dispose of, demolish, or construct real property or commit or expend program or local funds for PBV activities under this part, until the environmental review is completed.

The AHA must supply all available, relevant information necessary for the responsible entity to perform any required environmental review for any site. The PHA must require the owner to carry out mitigating measures required by the responsible entity (or HUD, if applicable) as a result of the environmental review.

PART III: DWELLING UNITS

17-III.A. OVERVIEW

This part identifies the special Housing Quality Standards that apply to the PBV Program, housing accessibility for persons with disabilities, and special procedures for conducting Housing Quality Standards inspections.

17-III.B. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS [24 CFR 983.101]

The Housing Quality Standards (HQS) for the tenant-based program, including those for special housing types, generally apply to the PBV Program. HQS requirements for shared housing, manufactured home space rental, and the homeownership option do not apply because these housing types are not assisted under the PBV Program.

The physical condition standards at 24 CFR 5.703 do not apply to the PBV Program.

Lead Based Paint [24 CFR 983.101(c)]

The lead-based paint requirements for the Tenant Based Voucher Program do not apply to the PBV Program. Instead, The Lead-based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 4821-4846), the Residential Lead-based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 4851-4856), and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 35, subparts A, B, H, and R, apply to the PBV Program.

17-III.C. HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The housing must comply with program accessibility requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8. The AHA must ensure that the percentage of accessible dwelling units complies with the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), as implemented by HUD's regulations at 24 CFR 8, subpart C.

Housing first occupied after March 13, 1991, must comply with design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and implementing regulations at 24 CFR 100.205, as applicable. (24 CFR 983.102)

17-III.D. INSPECTING UNITS

Pre-selection Inspection [24 CFR 983.103(a)]

The AHA must examine the proposed site before the proposal selection date. If the units to be assisted already exist, the PHA must inspect all the units before the proposal selection date, and must determine whether the units substantially comply with HQS. To qualify as existing housing, units must substantially comply with HQS on the proposal selection date. However, the AHA may not execute the HAP contract until the units fully comply with HQS, unless the AHA has adopted a policy to enter into a HAP contract for units that fail the initial HQS inspection as a result of only non-life-threatening conditions, unless the AHA has adopted a policy to enter into a HAP contract for units that fail the initial HQS inspection as a result of only non-life-threatening conditions.

Pre-HAP Contract Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(b); FR Notice 1/18/17]

The PHA must inspect each contract unit before execution of the HAP contract. The PHA may not enter into a HAP contract covering a unit until the unit fully complies with HQS, unless the PHA has adopted a policy to enter into a HAP contract for units that fail the initial HQS inspection as a result of only non-life-threatening conditions.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not enter into a PBV HAP contract until all units that will be under contract fully comply with HQS.

Turnover Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(c)]

Before providing assistance to a new family in a contract unit, the AHA must inspect the unit. The AHA may not provide assistance on behalf of the family until the unit fully complies with HQS.

Annual/Biennial Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(d); FR Notice 6/25/14]

At least once every 24 months during the term of the HAP contract, the AHA must inspect a random sample consisting of at least 20 percent of the contract units in each building to determine if the contract units and the premises are maintained in accordance with HQS. Turnover inspections are not counted toward meeting this inspection requirement.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will inspect on an annual basis a random sample consisting of at least 20 percent of the contract units in each building to determine if the contract units and the premises are maintained in accordance with HQS.

If more than 20 percent of the sample of inspected contract units in a building fail the initial inspection, the AHA must reinspect 100 percent of the contract units in the building.

Other Inspections [24 CFR 983.103(e)]

The AHA must inspect contract units whenever needed to determine that the contract units comply with HQS and that the owner is providing maintenance, utilities, and other services in accordance with the HAP contract. The PHA must take into account complaints and any other information coming to its attention in scheduling inspections.

The AHA must conduct follow-up inspections needed to determine if the owner (or, if applicable, the family) has corrected an HQS violation, and must conduct inspections to determine the basis for exercise of contractual and other remedies for owner or family violation of HQS.

In conducting AHA supervisory quality control HQS inspections, the AHA should include a representative sample of both tenant-based and project-based units.

Inspecting PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.103(f)]

In the case of PHA-owned units, the inspections must be performed by an independent agency designated by the PHA and approved by HUD. The independent entity must furnish a copy of each inspection report to the PHA and to the HUD field office where the project is located. The PHA must take all necessary actions in response to inspection reports from the independent agency, including exercise of contractual remedies for violation of the HAP contract by the PHA-owner.

PART IV: REHABILITATED AND NEWLY CONSTRUCTED UNITS

17-IV.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 983.151]

There are specific requirements that apply to PBV assistance for newly constructed or rehabilitated housing that do not apply to PBV assistance in existing housing. This part describes the requirements unique to this type of assistance.

Housing selected for this type of assistance may not at a later date be selected for PBV assistance as existing housing.

17-IV.B. AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO HAP CONTRACT

In order to offer PBV assistance in rehabilitated or newly constructed units, the AHA must enter into an Agreement to enter into HAP contract (Agreement) with the owner of the property. The Agreement must be in the form required by HUD [24 CFR 983.152(b)]. The AHA may not enter into an Agreement if commencement of construction or rehabilitation has commenced after proposal submission [24 CFR 983.152(c)]. Construction begins when excavation or site preparation (including clearing of the land) begins for the housing. Rehabilitation begins with the physical commencement of rehabilitation activity on the housing.

In the Agreement, the owner agrees to develop the PBV contract units to comply with HQS, and the AHA agrees that upon timely completion of such development in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, the AHA will enter into a HAP contract with the owner for the contract units [24 CFR 983.152(a)].

Content of the Agreement [24 CFR 983.152(d)]

At a minimum, the Agreement must describe the following features of the housing to be developed and assisted under the PBV program:

- Site and the location of the contract units;
- Number of contract units by area (size) and number of bedrooms and bathrooms;
- Services, maintenance, or equipment to be supplied by the owner without charges in addition to the rent;
- Utilities available to the contract units, including a specification of utility services to be paid by the owner and utility services to be paid by the tenant;
- An indication of whether or not the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 apply to units under the Agreement. If applicable, any required work item resulting from these requirements must be included in the description of work to be performed under the Agreement;
- Estimated initial rents to owner for the contract units;
- Description of the work to be performed under the Agreement. For rehabilitated units, the description must include the rehabilitation work write up and, where determined necessary by the AHA, specifications and plans. For new construction units, the description must include the working drawings and specifications.

- Any additional requirements for quality, architecture, or design over and above HQS.

Execution of the Agreement [24 CFR 983.153]

The Agreement must be executed promptly after AHA notice of proposal selection to the selected owner. The AHA may not enter into the Agreement if construction or rehabilitation has started after proposal submission. Generally, the AHA may not enter into the Agreement with the owner until the subsidy layering review is completed. Likewise, the AHA may not enter into the Agreement until the environmental review is completed and the AHA has received environmental approval. However, the AHA does not need to conduct a subsidy layering review in the case of a HAP contract for existing housing or if the applicable state or local agency has conducted such a review. Similarly, environmental reviews are not required for existing structures unless otherwise required by law or regulation.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will enter into the Agreement with the owner within 10 business days of receiving both environmental approval and notice that subsidy layering requirements have been met, and before construction or rehabilitation work is started.

17-IV.C. CONDUCT OF DEVELOPMENT WORK

Labor Standards [24 CFR 983.154(b)]

If an Agreement covers the development of nine or more contract units (whether or not completed in stages), the owner and the owner's contractors and subcontractors must pay Davis-Bacon wages to laborers and mechanics employed in the development of housing. The HUD-prescribed form of the Agreement will include the labor standards clauses required by HUD, such as those involving Davis-Bacon wage rates.

The owner, contractors, and subcontractors must also comply with the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, Department of Labor regulations in 29 CFR part 5, and other applicable federal labor relations laws and regulations. The PHA must monitor compliance with labor standards.

Equal Opportunity [24 CFR 983.154(c)]

The owner must comply with Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 and the implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 135. The owner must also comply with federal equal employment opportunity requirements.

Owner Disclosure [24 CFR 983.154(d) and (e)]

The Agreement and HAP contract must include a certification by the owner that the owner and other project principals are not on the U.S. General Services Administration list of parties excluded from federal procurement and non-procurement programs.

The owner must also disclose any possible conflict of interest that would be a violation of the Agreement, the HAP contract, or HUD regulations.

17-IV.D. COMPLETION OF HOUSING

The Agreement must specify the deadlines for completion of the housing, and the owner must develop and complete the housing in accordance with these deadlines. The Agreement must also specify the deadline for submission by the owner of the required evidence of completion.

Evidence of Completion [24 CFR 983.155(b)]

At a minimum, the owner must submit the following evidence of completion to the AHA in the form and manner required by the AHA:

- Owner certification that the work has been completed in accordance with HQS and all requirements of the Agreement; and
- Owner certification that the owner has complied with labor standards and equal opportunity requirements in development of the housing.

At the AHA's discretion, the Agreement may specify additional documentation that must be submitted by the owner as evidence of housing completion.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will determine the need for the owner to submit additional documentation as evidence of housing completion on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the PBV project. The AHA will specify any additional documentation requirements in the Agreement to enter into HAP contract.

AHA Acceptance of Completed Units [24 CFR 983.156]

Upon notice from the owner that the housing is completed, the PHA must inspect to determine if the housing has been completed in accordance with the Agreement, including compliance with HQS and any additional requirements imposed under the Agreement. The AHA must also determine if the owner has submitted all required evidence of completion.

If the work has not been completed in accordance with the Agreement, the AHA must not enter into the HAP contract.

If the PHA determines the work has been completed in accordance with the Agreement and that the owner has submitted all required evidence of completion, the AHA must submit the HAP contract for execution by the owner and must then execute the HAP contract.

PART V: HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS CONTRACT (HAP)

17-V.A. OVERVIEW

The AHA must enter into a HAP contract with an owner for units that are receiving PBV assistance. The purpose of the HAP contract is to provide housing assistance payments for eligible families. Housing assistance is paid for contract units leased and occupied by eligible families during the HAP contract term. With the exception of single-family scattered-site projects, a HAP contract shall cover a single project. If multiple projects exist, each project is covered by a separate HAP contract. The HAP contract must be in the form required by HUD [24 CFR 983.202(a)].

17-V.B. HAP CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Contract Information [24 CFR 983.203]

The HAP contract must specify the following information:

- The total number of contract units by number of bedrooms;
- The project's name, street address, city or county, state and zip code, block and lot number (if known), and any other information necessary to clearly identify the site and the building;
- The number of contract units in each building, the location of each contract unit, the area of each contract unit, and the number of bedrooms and bathrooms in each contract unit;
- Services, maintenance, and equipment to be supplied by the owner and included in the rent to owner;
- Utilities available to the contract units, including a specification of utility services to be paid by the owner (included in rent) and utility services to be paid by the tenant;
- Features provided to comply with program accessibility requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8;
- The HAP contract term;
- The number of units in any project that will exceed the 25 percent per project cap, which will be set aside for occupancy by qualifying families (elderly and/or disabled families and families receiving supportive services); and
- The initial rent to owner for the first 12 months of the HAP contract term.

Execution of the HAP Contract [24 CFR 983.204]

The PHA may not enter into a HAP contract until each contract unit has been inspected and the PHA has determined that the unit complies with the Housing Quality Standards (HQS), unless the PHA has adopted a policy to enter into a HAP contract for units that fail the initial HQS inspection as a result of only non-life-threatening conditions. For existing housing, the HAP contract must be executed promptly after the PHA selects the owner proposal and inspects the housing units. For newly constructed or rehabilitated housing the HAP contract must be executed after the PHA has inspected the completed units and has determined that the units have been completed in accordance with the agreement to enter into HAP, and the owner furnishes all required evidence of completion.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

For existing housing, the HAP contract will be executed within 10 business days of the AHA determining that all units pass HQS.

For rehabilitated or newly constructed housing, the HAP contract will be executed within 10 business days of the AHA determining that the units have been completed in accordance with the Agreement to enter into HAP, all units meet HQS, and the owner has submitted all required evidence of completion.

Term of HAP Contract [24 CFR 983.205; FR Notice 1/18/17]

The AHA may enter into a HAP contract with an owner for an initial term of no less than one year and no more than 20 years for each contract unit. The length of the term of the HAP contract for any contract unit may not be less than one year, nor more than 20 years. In the case of AHA-owned units, the term of the HAP contract must be agreed upon by the AHA and the independent entity approved by HUD [24 CFR 983.59(b)(2)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The term of all PBV HAP contracts will be negotiated with the owner on a case-by-case basis.

At the time of the initial HAP contract term or any time before expiration of the HAP contract, the AHA may extend the term of the contract for an additional term of up to 20 years if the AHA determines an extension is appropriate to continue providing affordable housing for low-income families. A HAP contract extension may not exceed 20 years. The AHA may provide for multiple extensions; however, in no circumstances may such extensions exceed 20 years, cumulatively. Extensions after the initial extension are allowed at the end of any extension term, provided that not more than 24 months prior to the expiration of the previous extension contract the AHA agrees to extend the term, and that such extension is appropriate to continue providing affordable housing for low-income families or to expand housing opportunities. Extensions after the initial extension term shall not begin prior to the expiration date of the previous extension term. Subsequent extensions are subject to the same limitations. All extensions must be on the form and subject to the conditions prescribed by HUD at the time of the extension. In the case of AHA-owned units, any extension of the term of the HAP contract must be agreed upon by the AHA and the independent entity approved by HUD [24 CFR 983.59(b)(2)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When determining whether or not to extend an expiring PBV contract, the AHA will consider several factors including, but not limited to:

The cost of extending the contract and the amount of available budget authority;

The condition of the contract units;

The owner's record of compliance with obligations under the HAP contract and lease(s);

Whether the location of the units continues to support the goals of deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing opportunities; and

Whether the funding could be used more appropriately for tenant-based assistance.

Termination by PHA [24 CFR 983.205(c); FR Notice 1/18/17]

The HAP contract must provide that the term of the AHA's contractual commitment is subject to the availability of sufficient appropriated funding as determined by HUD or by the AHA in accordance with HUD instructions. For these purposes, sufficient funding means the availability of appropriations, and of funding under the ACC from such appropriations, to make full payment of housing assistance payments payable to the owner for any contract year in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract.

In times of insufficient funding, HUD requires that the AHA first take all cost-saving measures prior to failing to make payments under existing PBV HAP contracts.

If it is determined that there may not be sufficient funding to continue housing assistance payments for all contract units and for the full term of the HAP contract, the AHA may terminate the HAP contract by notice to the owner. The termination must be implemented in accordance with HUD instructions.

Termination by Owner [24 CFR 983.205(d)]

If in accordance with program requirements the amount of rent to an owner for any contract unit is reduced below the amount of the rent to owner at the beginning of the HAP contract term, the owner may terminate the HAP contract by giving notice to the AHA. In this case, families living in the contract units must be offered tenant-based assistance.

Statutory Notice Requirements: Contract Termination or Expiration [24 CFR 983.206; FR Notice 1/18/17]

Not less than one year before the HAP contract terminates, or if the owner refuses to renew the HAP contract, the owner must notify the AHA and assisted tenants of the termination. The notice must be provided in the form prescribed by HUD. If the owner does not give timely notice, the owner must permit the tenants in assisted units to remain in their units for the required notice period with no increase in the tenant portion of their rent, and with no eviction as a result of the owner's inability to collect an increased tenant portion of rent. An owner may renew the terminating contract for a period of time sufficient to give tenants one-year advance notice under such terms as HUD may require.

Upon termination or expiration of the contract, a family living at the property is entitled to receive a Tenant-Based Voucher. Tenant-based assistance would not begin until the owner's required notice period ends. The AHA must provide the family with a voucher and the family must also be given the option by the AHA and owner to remain in their unit with HCV tenant-based assistance as long as the unit complies with inspection and rent reasonableness requirements. The family must pay their total tenant payment (TTP) and any additional amount if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard. The family has the right to remain in the project as long as the units are used for rental housing and are otherwise eligible for HCV assistance. The owner may not terminate the tenancy of a family that exercises its right to remain except for serious or repeated lease violations or other good cause. Families that receive a Tenant-Based Voucher at the expiration or termination of the PBV HAP contract are not new admissions to the PHA HCV Tenant-Based Program, and are not subject to income eligibility requirements or any other admission requirements. If the family chooses to remain in their unit with tenant-based assistance, the family may do so regardless of whether the family share would initially exceed 40 percent of the family's adjusted monthly income.

Remedies for HQS Violations [24 CFR 983.208(b)]

The AHA may not make any HAP payment to the owner for a contract unit during any period in which the unit does not comply with HQS. If the AHA determines that a contract does not comply with HQS, the AHA may exercise any of its remedies under the HAP contract, for any or all of the contract units. Available remedies include termination of housing assistance payments, abatement or reduction of housing assistance payments, reduction of contract units, and termination of the HAP contract.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will abate and terminate PBV HAP contracts for non-compliance with HQS in accordance with the policies used in the Tenant-Based Voucher Program. These policies are contained in Section 8-II.G., Enforcing Owner Compliance.

17-V.C. AMENDMENTS TO THE HAP CONTRACT

Substitution of Contract Units [24 CFR 983.207(a)]

At the AHA's discretion and subject to all PBV requirements, the HAP contract may be amended to substitute a different unit with the same number of bedrooms in the same project for a previously covered contract unit. Before any such substitution can take place, the AHA must inspect the proposed unit and determine the reasonable rent for the unit.

Addition of Contract Units [FR Notice 1/18/17]

The AHA and owner may amend the HAP contract to add additional PBV contract units in projects that already have a HAP contract without having to fulfill the selection requirements found at 24 CFR 983.51(b) for those additional PBV units, regardless of when the HAP contract was signed. The additional PBV units, however, are still subject to the PBV Program cap and individual project caps. Prior to attaching additional units without competition, the AHA must submit to the local field office information outlined in FR Notice 1/18/17. The AHA must also detail in the Administrative Plan their intent to add PBV units and the rationale for adding units to the specific PBV project.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will consider adding Contract units to the HAP Contract when the AHA determines that additional housing is needed to serve eligible low-income families. Circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

The local housing inventory is reduced due to a disaster (either due to loss of housing units, or an influx of displaced families)

Voucher holders are having difficulty finding units that meet program requirements

17-V.D. HAP CONTRACT YEAR, ANNIVERSARY AND EXPIRATION DATES [24 CFR 983.207(b) and 983.302(e)]

The HAP contract year is the period of 12 calendar months preceding each annual anniversary of the HAP contract during the HAP contract term. The initial contract year is calculated from the first day of the first calendar month of the HAP contract term.

The annual anniversary of the HAP contract is the first day of the first calendar month after the end of the preceding contract year.

There is a single annual anniversary and expiration date for all units under a particular HAP contract, even in cases where contract units are placed under the HAP contract in stages (on different dates) or units are added by amendment. The anniversary and expiration dates for all units coincide with the dates for the contract units that were originally placed under contract.

17-V.E. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE HAP [24 CFR 983.210]

When the owner executes the HAP contract s/he certifies that at such execution and at all times during the term of the HAP contract:

- All contract units are in good condition and the owner is maintaining the premises and contract units in accordance with HQS;
- The owner is providing all services, maintenance, equipment and utilities as agreed to under the HAP contract and the leases;
- Each contract unit for which the owner is receiving HAP, is leased to an eligible family referred by the AHA, and the lease is in accordance with the HAP contract and HUD requirements;
- To the best of the owner's knowledge the family resides in the contract unit for which the owner is receiving HAP, and the unit is the family's only residence;
- The owner (including a principal or other interested party) is not the spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of a family residing in a contract unit;
- The amount of the HAP the owner is receiving is correct under the HAP contract;
- The rent for contract units does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units;
- Except for HAP and tenant rent, the owner has not received and will not receive any other payment or consideration for rental of the contract unit;
- The family does not own or have any interest in the contract unit (does not apply to family's membership in a cooperative); and
- Repair work on the project selected as an existing project that is performed after HAP execution within such post-execution period as specified by HUD may constitute development activity, and if determined to be development activity, the repair work undertaken shall be in compliance with Davis-Bacon wage requirements.

17-V.F. ADDITIONAL HAP REQUIREMENTS

Housing Quality and Design Requirements [24 CFR 983.101(e) and 983.208(a)]

The owner is required to maintain and operate the contract units and premises in accordance with HQS, including performance of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance. The owner must provide all the services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities specified in the HAP contract with the AHA and in the lease with each assisted family. In addition, maintenance, replacement and redecoration must be in accordance with the standard practice for the building as established by the owner.

The AHA may elect to establish additional requirements for quality, architecture, or design of PBV housing. Any such additional requirements must be specified in the Agreement to enter into a HAP contract and the HAP contract. These requirements must be in addition to, not in place of, compliance with HQS.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will identify the need for any special features on a case-by-case basis depending on the intended occupancy of the PBV project. The AHA will specify any special design standards or additional requirements in the invitation for PBV proposals, the agreement to enter into HAP contract, and the HAP contract.

Vacancy Payments [24 CFR 983.352(b)]

At the discretion of the PHA, the HAP contract may provide for vacancy payments to the owner for a PHA-determined period of vacancy extending from the beginning of the first calendar month after the move-out month for a period not exceeding two full months following the move-out month. The amount of the vacancy payment will be determined by the PHA and cannot exceed the monthly rent to owner under the assisted lease, minus any portion of the rental payment received by the owner (including amounts available from the tenant's security deposit).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If an assisted family moves out of the unit, the owner may keep the housing assistance payment for the calendar month when the family moves out. However, the owner may not keep the payment if the AHA determines that the vacancy is the owner's fault.

The AHA will not provide any vacancy payments to the owner.

PART VI: SELECTION OF PBV PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

17-VI.A. OVERVIEW

Many of the provisions of the Tenant-Based Voucher regulations [24 CFR 982] also apply to the PBV Program. This includes requirements related to determining eligibility and selecting applicants from the waiting list. Even with these similarities, there are requirements that are unique to the PBV Program. This part describes the requirements and policies related to eligibility and admission to the PBV Program.

17-VI.B. ELIGIBILITY FOR PBV ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 983.251(a) and (b)]

The AHA may select families for the PBV Program from those who are participants in the AHA's Tenant-Based Voucher Program and from those who have applied for admission to the Voucher Program. For voucher participants, eligibility was determined at original admission to the Voucher Program and does not need to be redetermined at the commencement of PBV assistance. For all others, eligibility for admission must be determined at the commencement of PBV assistance.

Applicants for PBV assistance must meet the same eligibility requirements as applicants for the Tenant-Based Voucher Program. Applicants must qualify as a family as defined by HUD and the AHA, have income at or below HUD-specified income limits, and qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigration status of family members [24 CFR 982.201(a) and 24 CFR 983.2(a)]. In addition, an applicant family must provide social security information for family members [24 CFR 5.216 and 5.218] and consent to the AHA's collection and use of family information regarding income, expenses, and family composition [24 CFR 5.230]. The AHA may also not approve a tenancy if the owner (including a principal or other interested party) of the unit is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family, unless needed as a reasonable accommodation. An applicant family must also meet HUD requirements related to current or past criminal activity.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will determine an applicant family's eligibility for the PBV Program in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3.

In-Place Families [24 CFR 983.251(b)]

An eligible family residing in a proposed PBV contract unit on the date the proposal is selected by the AHA is considered an “in-place family.” These families are afforded protection from displacement under the PBV rule. If a unit to be placed under contract (either an existing unit or a unit requiring rehabilitation) is occupied by an eligible family on the date the proposal is selected, the in-place family must be placed on the AHA’s waiting list. Once the family’s continued eligibility is determined (the AHA may deny assistance to an in-place family for the grounds specified in 24 CFR 982.552 and 982.553), the family must be given an absolute selection preference and the AHA must refer these families to the project owner for an appropriately sized PBV unit in the project. Admission of eligible in-place families is not subject to income targeting requirements.

This regulatory protection from displacement does not apply to families that are not eligible to participate in the program on the proposal selection date.

17-VLC. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 983.251(c)]

The PHA may establish a separate waiting list for PBV units or it may use the same waiting list for both tenant-based and PBV assistance. The PHA may also merge the PBV waiting list with a waiting list for other assisted housing programs offered by the PHA. If the PHA chooses to offer a separate waiting list for PBV assistance, the PHA must offer to place applicants who are listed on the tenant-based waiting list on the waiting list for PBV assistance.

If a PHA decides to establish a separate PBV waiting list, the PHA may use a single waiting list for the PHA’s whole PBV Program, or it may establish separate waiting lists for PBV units in particular projects or buildings or for sets of such units.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will establish and manage separate waiting lists for individual projects or buildings that are receiving PBV assistance. The AHA currently has waiting lists for the following PBV projects:

17-VLD. SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 983.251(c)]

Applicants who will occupy units with PBV assistance must be selected from the AHA’s waiting list. The AHA may establish selection criteria or preferences for occupancy of particular PBV units. The AHA may place families referred by the PBV owner on its PBV waiting list.

Income Targeting [24 CFR 983.251(c)(6)]

At least 75 percent of the families admitted to the AHA’s Tenant-Based and Project-Based Voucher Programs during the AHA fiscal year from the waiting list must be extremely-low income families. The income targeting requirement applies to the total of admissions to both programs.

Units with Accessibility Features [24 CFR 983.251(c)(7)]

When selecting families to occupy PBV units that have special accessibility features for persons with disabilities, the AHA must first refer families who require such features to the owner.

Preferences [24 CFR 983.251(d), FR Notice 11/24/08]

The Augusta Housing Authority may use the same selection preferences that are used for the Tenant-Based Voucher Program, establish selection criteria or preferences for the PBV Program as a whole, or for occupancy of particular PBV developments or units. The AHA must provide an absolute selection preference for eligible in-place families as described in Section 17-VI.B. above.

The PHA may establish a selection preference for families who qualify for voluntary services, including disability-specific services, offered in conjunction with assisted units, provided that preference is consistent with the PHA plan. The PHA may not, however, grant a preference to a person with a specific disability [FR Notice 1/18/17].

In advertising such a project, the owner may advertise the project as offering services for a particular type of disability; however, the project must be open to all otherwise eligible disabled persons who may benefit from services provided in the project. In these projects, disabled residents may not be required to accept the particular services offered as a condition of occupancy.

If the AHA has projects with “excepted units” for elderly families or supportive services, the AHA must give preference to such families when referring families to these units [24 CFR 983.261(b); FR Notice 1/18/17].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will provide a selection preference when required by the regulation (e.g., eligible in-place families, elderly families or units with supportive services, or mobility impaired persons for accessible units). The AHA may offer any additional preferences for the PBV Program or for particular PBV projects or units.

In addition, the AHA will offer the tenant selection preference for admission for persons with specific disabilities in its PBV Program in order to assist the State of Georgia in fulfilling the requirements set forth in the State of Georgia Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) Settlement Agreement with the Department of Justice (Georgia Settlement Agreement), which stems from the *Olmstead v. L.C.* litigation. This tenant selection preference will apply only to the PBV Program entitled Legacy at Walton Greens 2. Additional information is found in Exhibit 17-1: Legacy at Walton Greens 2 Tenant Selection Preference.

17-VI.E. OFFER OF PBV ASSISTANCE

Refusal of Offer [24 CFR 983.251(e)(3)]

The AHA is prohibited from taking any of the following actions against a family who has applied for, received, or refused an offer of PBV assistance:

- Refuse to list the applicant on the waiting list for Tenant-Based Voucher assistance;
- Deny any admission preference for which the applicant qualifies;
- Change the applicant’s place on the waiting list based on preference, date, and time of application, or other factors affecting selection under the PHA’s selection policy;

- Remove the applicant from the Tenant-Based Voucher waiting list.

Disapproval by Landlord [24 CFR 983.251(e)(2)]

If a PBV owner rejects a family for admission to the owner's units, such rejection may not affect the family's position on the Tenant-Based Voucher waiting list.

Acceptance of Offer [24 CFR 983.252]

Family Briefing

When a family accepts an offer for PBV assistance, the Augusta Housing Authority must give the family an oral briefing (in person or remotely-phone, webcast, video call or other electronic communications). The briefing must include information on how the program works and the responsibilities of the family and owner. In addition to the oral briefing, the AHA must provide a briefing packet that explains how the AHA determines the total tenant payment for a family, the family obligations under the program, and applicable fair housing information.

Persons with Disabilities

If an applicant family's head or spouse is disabled, the AHA must assure effective communication, in accordance with 24 CFR 8.6, in conducting the oral briefing and in providing the written information packet. This may include making alternative formats available (see Chapter 2). In addition, the AHA must have a mechanism for referring a family that includes a member with a mobility impairment to an appropriate accessible PBV unit.

Persons with Limited English Proficiency

The AHA should take reasonable steps to assure meaningful access by persons with limited English proficiency in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166 (see Chapter 2).

17-VI.F. OWNER SELECTION OF TENANTS

The owner is responsible for developing written tenant selection procedures that are consistent with the purpose of improving housing opportunities for very low-income families and reasonably related to program eligibility and an applicant's ability to fulfill their obligations under the lease. An owner must promptly notify in writing any rejected applicant of the grounds for any rejection [24 CFR 983.253(a)(2) and (a)(3)].

Leasing [24 CFR 983.253(a)]

During the term of the HAP contract, the owner must lease contract units to eligible families that are selected and referred by the AHA from the AHA's waiting list. The contract unit leased to the family must be the appropriate size unit for the size of the family, based on the AHA's subsidy standards.

Filling Vacancies [24 CFR 983.254(a)]

The owner must promptly notify the AHA of any vacancy or expected vacancy in a contract unit. After receiving such notice, the AHA must make every reasonable effort to promptly refer a sufficient number of families for the owner to fill such vacancies. The AHA and the owner must make reasonable efforts to minimize the likelihood and length of any vacancy.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The owner must notify the AHA in writing (mail, fax, or e-mail) within 5 business days of learning about any vacancy or expected vacancy.

The AHA will make every reasonable effort to refer families to the owner within 10 business days of receiving such notice from the owner.

Reduction in HAP Contract Units Due to Vacancies [24 CFR 983.254(b)]

If any contract units have been vacant for 120 or more days since owner notice of the vacancy, the AHA may give notice to the owner amending the HAP contract to reduce the number of contract units by subtracting the number of contract units (according to the bedroom size) that have been vacant for this period.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If any contract units have been vacant for 120 days, the AHA will give notice to the owner that the HAP contract will be amended to reduce the number of contract units that have been vacant for this period. The AHA will provide the notice to the owner within 10 business days of the 120th day of the vacancy. The amendment to the HAP contract will be effective the 1st day of the month following the date of the AHA's notice.

17-VI.G. TENANT SCREENING [24 CFR 983.255]

AHA Responsibility

The AHA is not responsible or liable to the owner or any other person for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will not conduct screening to determine a PBV applicant family's suitability for tenancy.

The AHA must provide the owner with an applicant family's current and prior address (as shown in AHA records) and the name and address (if known by the AHA) of the family's current landlord and any prior landlords.

The AHA may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided in response to a request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking except at the written request or with the written consent of the individual providing the documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(a)(4)].

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The PHA will inform owners of their responsibility to screen prospective tenants, and will provide owners with the required known name and address information, at the time of the turnover HQS inspection or before. The AHA will not provide any additional information to the owner, such as tenancy history, criminal history, etc.

Upon written request, the AHA will provide the owner with an applicant family's current and prior address (as shown in AHA records) and the name and address (if known by the AHA) of the family's current landlord and any prior landlords.

Owner Responsibility

The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. When screening families the owner may consider a family's background with respect to the following factors:

- Payment of rent and utility bills;
- Caring for a unit and premises;
- Respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing;
- Drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety, or property of others; and
- Compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.

PART VII: OCCUPANCY

17-VII.A. OVERVIEW

After an applicant has been selected from the waiting list, determined eligible by the AHA, referred to an owner and determined suitable by the owner, the family will sign the lease and occupancy of the unit will begin.

17-VII.B. LEASE [24 CFR 983.256]

The tenant must have legal capacity to enter a lease under state and local law. *Legal capacity* means that the tenant is bound by the terms of the lease and may enforce the terms of the lease against the owner.

Form of Lease [24 CFR 983.256(b)]

The tenant and the owner must enter into a written lease agreement that is signed by both parties. If an owner uses a standard lease form for rental units to unassisted tenants in the locality or premises, the same lease must be used for assisted tenants, except that the lease must include a HUD-required tenancy addendum. The tenancy addendum must include, word-for-word, all provisions required by HUD.

If the owner does not use a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the owner may use another form of lease, such as a state model lease.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The Augusta Housing Authority will review the lease, particularly noting the approvability of optional charges and compliance with regulations and state and local laws. If the AHA determines that the lease does not comply with state or local law, the AHA will decline to approve the tenancy.

Lease Requirements [24 CFR 983.256(c)]

The lease for a PBV unit must specify all of the following information:

- The names of the owner and the tenant;
- The unit rented (address, apartment number, if any, and any other information needed to identify the leased contract unit);
- The term of the lease (initial term and any provision for renewal);
- The amount of the tenant rent to owner, which is subject to change during the term of the lease in accordance with HUD requirements;
- A specification of the services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities that will be provide by the owner; and
- The amount of any charges for food, furniture, or supportive services.

Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 983.256(d)]

The tenancy addendum in the lease must state:

- The program tenancy requirements;
- The composition of the household as approved by the AHA (the names of family members and any AHA-approved live-in aide);
- All provisions in the HUD-required tenancy addendum must be included in the lease. The terms of the tenancy addendum prevail over other provisions of the lease.

Initial Term and Lease Renewal [24 CFR 983.256(f)]

The initial lease term must be for at least one year. The lease must provide for automatic renewal after the initial term of the lease in either successive definitive terms (e.g. month-to-month or year-to-year) or an automatic indefinite extension of the lease term. For automatic indefinite extension of the lease term, the lease terminates if any of the following occur:

- The owner terminates the lease for good cause
- The tenant terminates the lease
- The owner and tenant agree to terminate the lease
- The AHA terminates the HAP contract
- The AHA terminates assistance for the family

Changes in the Lease [24 CFR 983.256(e)]

If the tenant and owner agree to any change in the lease, the change must be in writing, and the owner must immediately give the AHA a copy of all changes.

The owner must notify the AHA in advance of any proposed change in the lease regarding the allocation of tenant and owner responsibilities for utilities. Such changes may only be made if approved by the AHA and in accordance with the terms of the lease relating to its amendment. The AHA must redetermine reasonable rent, in accordance with program requirements, based on any change in the allocation of the responsibility for utilities between the owner and the tenant. The redetermined reasonable rent will be used in calculation of the rent to owner from the effective date of the change.

Owner Termination of Tenancy [24 CFR 983.257]

With two exceptions, the owner of a PBV unit may terminate tenancy for the same reasons an owner may in the Tenant-Based Voucher Program (see Section 12-III.B. and 24 CFR 982.310). In the PBV Program, terminating tenancy for “good cause” does not include doing so for a business or economic reason, or a desire to use the unit for personal or family use or other non-residential purpose.

Tenant Absence from the Unit [24 CFR 983.256(g) and 982.312(a)]

The lease may specify a maximum period of family absence from the unit that may be shorter than the maximum period permitted by AHA policy. According to program requirements, the family’s assistance must be terminated if they are absent from the unit for more than 60 consecutive days. AHA termination of assistance actions due to family absence from the unit are subject to 24 CFR 981.312, except that the unit is not terminated from the HAP contract if the family is absent for longer than the maximum period permitted.

Continuation of Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 982.258]

Housing assistance payments shall continue until the tenant rent equals the rent to owner. The cessation of housing assistance payments at such point will not affect the family's other rights under its lease, nor will such cessation preclude the resumption of payments as a result of later changes in income, rents, or other relevant circumstances if such changes occur within 180 days following the date of the last housing assistance payment by the AHA. After the 180-day period, the unit shall be removed from the HAP contract pursuant to 24 CFR 983.211.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If a participating family receiving zero assistance experiences a change in circumstances that would result in a HAP payment to the owner, the family must notify the AHA of the change and request an interim reexamination before the expiration of the 180-day period.

Security Deposits [24 CFR 983.259]

The owner may collect a security deposit from the tenant. The AHA may prohibit security deposits in excess of private market practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will allow the owner to collect a security deposit amount the owner determines is appropriate.

When the tenant moves out of a contract unit, the owner, subject to state and local law, may use the security deposit, including any interest on the deposit, in accordance with the lease, as reimbursement for any unpaid tenant rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the tenant under the lease.

The owner must give the tenant a written list of all items charged against the security deposit and the amount of each item. After deducting the amount used to reimburse the owner, the owner must promptly refund the full amount of the balance to the tenant.

If the security deposit does not cover the amount owed by the tenant under the lease, the owner may seek to collect the balance from the tenant. The AHA has no liability or responsibility for payment of any amount owed by the family to the owner.

17-VII.C. MOVES

Overcrowded, Under-Occupied, and Accessible Units [24 CFR 983.260]

If the Augusta Housing Authority determines that a family is occupying a wrong size unit, based on the AHA's subsidy standards, or a unit with accessibility features that the family does not require, and the unit is needed by a family that does require the features, the AHA must promptly notify the family and the owner of this determination, and the AHA must offer the family the opportunity to receive continued housing assistance in another unit.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will notify the family and the owner of the family's need to move based on the occupancy of a wrong-size or accessible unit within 10 business days of the AHA's determination. The AHA will offer the family the following types of continued assistance in the following order, based on the availability of assistance:

PBV assistance in the same building or project;

PBV assistance in another project; and

Tenant-Based Voucher assistance.

If the Augusta Housing Authority offers the family a Tenant-Based Voucher, the AHA must terminate the housing assistance payments for a wrong-sized or accessible unit at the earlier of the expiration of the term of the family's voucher (including any extension granted by the AHA) or the date upon which the family vacates the unit. If the family does not move out of the wrong-sized unit or accessible unit by the expiration of the term of the family's voucher, the AHA must remove the unit from the HAP contract.

If the AHA offers the family another form of assistance that is not a Tenant-Based Voucher, and the family does not accept the offer, does not move out of the PBV unit within a reasonable time as determined by the AHA, or both, the AHA must terminate the housing assistance payments for the unit at the expiration of a reasonable period as determined by the AHA and remove the unit from the HAP contract.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

When the AHA offers a family another form of assistance that is not a Tenant-Based Voucher, the family will be given 30 days from the date of the offer to accept the offer and move out of the PBV unit. If the family does not move out within this 30-day time frame, the AHA will terminate the housing assistance payments at the expiration of this 30-day period.

The AHA may make exceptions to this 30-day period if needed for reasons beyond the family's control such as death, serious illness, or other medical emergency of a family member.

Family Right to Move [24 CFR 983.261]

The family may terminate the lease at any time after the first year of occupancy. The family must give advance written notice to the owner in accordance with the lease and provide a copy of such notice to the AHA. If the family wishes to move with continued tenant-based assistance, the family must contact the AHA to request the rental assistance prior to providing notice to terminate the lease.

If the family terminates the lease in accordance with these requirements, the AHA is required to offer the family the opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance, in the form of a voucher or other comparable tenant-based rental assistance. If voucher or other comparable tenant-based assistance is not immediately available upon termination of the family's lease in the PBV unit, the AHA must give the family priority to receive the next available opportunity for continued Tenant-Based assistance.

If the family terminates the assisted lease before the end of the first year, the family relinquishes the opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance.

17-VII.D. EXCEPTIONS TO THE OCCUPANCY CAP [24 CFR 983.262]

The Augusta Housing Authority may not pay housing assistance under a PBV HAP contract for more than the greater of 25 units or 25 percent of the number of dwelling units in a project unless:

- The units are exclusively for elderly or disabled families
- The units are for households eligible for supportive services available to all families receiving PBV assistance in the project
- The project is located in a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or less, as determined in the most recent American Community Survey Five-Year estimates

If a family at the time of initial tenancy is receiving and while the resident of an excepted unit has received Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) supportive services or any other service as defined by the AHA and successfully completes the FSS contract of participation or the supportive

services requirement, the unit continues to count as an excepted unit for as long as the family resides in the unit. However, if the FSS family fails to successfully complete the FSS contract of participation or supportive services objective and consequently is no longer eligible for the supportive services, the family must vacate the unit within a reasonable period of time established by the AHA, and the AHA shall cease paying HAP on behalf of the family.

Further, when a family (or remaining members of a family) residing in an excepted unit no longer meets the criteria for a “qualifying family” because the family is no longer an elderly or disabled family due to a change in family composition, the AHA has the discretion to allow the family to remain in the excepted unit. If the AHA does not exercise this discretion, the family must vacate the unit within a reasonable period of time established by the AHA, and the AHA must cease paying housing assistance payments on behalf of the non-qualifying family.

Individuals in units with supportive services who choose to no longer participate in a service or who no longer qualify for services they qualified for at the time of initial occupancy cannot subsequently be denied continued housing opportunity because of this changed circumstance. A AHA or owner cannot determine that a participant’s needs exceed the level of care offered by qualifying services or require that individuals be transitioned to different projects based on service needs.

If the family fails to vacate the unit within the established time, the unit must be removed from the HAP contract unless the project is partially assisted, and it is possible for the HAP contract to be amended to substitute a different unit in the building in accordance with program requirements; or the owner terminates the lease and evicts the family. The housing assistance payments for a family residing in an excepted unit that is not in compliance with its family obligations to comply with supportive services requirements must be terminated by the AHA.

Under extenuating circumstances, the AHA may allow a family that initially qualified for occupancy of an excepted unit based on elderly or disabled family status to continue to reside in a unit, where through circumstances beyond the control of the family (e.g., death of the elderly family member or medical emergency of a family member), the elderly family member no longer resides in the unit. In this case, the unit may continue to be counted as an excepted unit for as long as the family resides in that unit. Once the family vacates the unit, in order to continue as an excepted unit under the HAP contract, the unit must be made available to and occupied by a qualified family.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will provide written notice to the family and owner within 10 business days of making the determination that a family no longer qualifies to live in an excepted unit. The family will be given 30 days from the date of the notice to move out of the PBV unit. If the family does not move out within this 30-day time frame, the AHA will terminate the housing assistance payments at the expiration of this 30-day period.

The AHA may make exceptions to this 30-day period if needed for reasons beyond the family’s control such as death, serious illness, or other medical emergency of a family member.

PART VIII: DETERMINING RENT TO OWNER

17-VIII.A. OVERVIEW

The amount of the initial rent to an owner of units receiving PBV assistance is established at the beginning of the HAP contract term. Although for rehabilitated or newly constructed housing, the Agreement to enter into HAP Contract (Agreement) states the estimated amount of the initial rent to owner, the actual amount of the initial rent to owner is established at the beginning of the HAP contract term.

During the term of the HAP contract, the rent to owner is redetermined at the owner's request in accordance with program requirements, and at such time that there is a five percent or greater decrease in the published FMR.

17-VIII.B. RENT LIMITS [24 CFR 983.301]

Except for certain tax credit units (discussed below), the rent to owner must not exceed the lowest of the following amounts:

- An amount determined by the AHA, not to exceed 110 percent of the applicable fair market rent (or any HUD-approved exception payment standard) for the unit bedroom size minus any utility allowance;
- The reasonable rent; or
- The rent requested by the owner.

Certain Tax Credit Units [24 CFR 983.301(c)]

For certain tax credit units, the rent limits are determined differently than for other PBV units. Different limits apply to contract units that meet all of the following criteria:

- The contract unit receives a low-income housing tax credit under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
- The contract unit is not located in a qualified census tract;
- There are comparable tax credit units of the same bedroom size as the contract unit in the same project, and the comparable tax credit units do not have any form of rental assistance other than the tax credit; and
- The tax credit rent exceeds 110 percent of the fair market rent or any approved exception payment standard;

For contract units that meet all of these criteria, the rent to owner must not exceed the lowest of:

- The tax credit rent minus any utility allowance;
- The reasonable rent; or
- The rent requested by the owner.

Definitions

A *qualified census tract* is any census tract (or equivalent geographic area defined by the Bureau of the Census) in which at least 50 percent of households have an income of less than 60 percent of Area Median Gross Income (AMGI), or where the poverty rate is at least 25 percent and where the census tract is designated as a qualified census tract by HUD.

Tax credit rent is the rent charged for comparable units of the same bedroom size in the project that also receive the low-income housing tax credit but do not have any additional rental assistance (e.g., tenant-based voucher assistance).

Reasonable Rent [24 CFR 983.301(e) and 983.302(c)(2)]

The Augusta Housing Authority must determine reasonable rent in accordance with 24 CFR 983.303. The rent to owner for each contract unit may at no time exceed the reasonable rent, except in cases where the AHA has elected within the HAP contract not to reduce rents below the initial rent to owner and, upon redetermination of the rent to owner, the reasonable rent would result in a rent below the initial rent. However, the rent to owner must be reduced in the following cases:

- To correct errors in calculations in accordance with HUD requirements
- If additional housing assistance has been combined with PBV assistance after the execution of the initial HAP contract and a rent decrease is required pursuant to 24 CFR 983.55
- If a decrease in rent to owner is required based on changes in the allocation of the responsibility for utilities between owner and tenant

If the AHA has not elected within the HAP contract to establish the initial rent to owner as the rent floor, the rent to owner shall not at any time exceed the reasonable rent.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will elect within the HAP contract not to reduce rents below the initial level, with the exception of circumstances listed in 24 CFR 983.302(c)(2). If, upon redetermination of the rent to owner, the reasonable rent would result in a rent below the initial rent, the AHA will use the higher initial rent to owner amount.

Use of FMRs, Exception Payment Standards, and Utility Allowances [24 CFR 983.301(f)]

When determining the initial rent to owner, the PHA must use the most recently published FMR in effect and the utility allowance schedule in effect at execution of the HAP contract. When redetermining the rent to owner, the PHA must use the most recently published FMR and the utility allowance schedule in effect at the time of redetermination. At its discretion, the AHA may for initial rent, use the amounts in effect at any time during the 30-day period immediately before the beginning date of the HAP contract, or for redeterminations of rent, the 30-day period immediately before the redetermination date.

Any HUD-approved exception payment standard amount under the Tenant-Based Voucher Program also applies to the Project-Based Voucher Program. HUD will not approve a different exception payment stand amount for use in the PBV Program.

Likewise, the AHA may not establish or apply different utility allowance amounts for the PBV Program. In most cases, the same utility allowance schedule applies to both the Tenant-Based and Project-Based Voucher Programs. However, if it is determined that circumstance of a PBV project requires a separate utility allowance schedule, the AHA will consider allowing a project specify utility allowance schedule.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

Upon written request by the owner, the AHA will consider using the FMR or utility allowances in effect during the 30-day period before the start date of the HAP, or redetermination of rent. The owner must explain the need to use the previous FMRs or utility allowances and include documentation in support of the request. The AHA will review and make a decision based on the circumstances and merit of each request.

In addition to considering a written request from an owner, the AHA may decide to use the FMR or utility allowances in effect during the 30-day period before the start date of the HAP, or redetermination of rent, if the AHA determines it is necessary due to AHA budgetary constraints.

Redetermination of Rent [24 CFR 983.302]

The AHA must redetermine the rent to owner upon the owner's request or when there is a 10 percent or greater decrease in the published FMR.

Rent Increase

If an owner wishes to request an increase in the rent to owner from the Augusta Housing Authority, it must be requested at the annual anniversary of the HAP contract (see Section 17-V.D.). The request must be in writing and in the form and manner required by the AHA. The AHA may only make rent increases in accordance with the rent limits described previously. There are no provisions in the PBV Program for special adjustments (e.g., adjustments that reflect increases in the actual and necessary expenses of owning and maintaining the units which have resulted from substantial general increases in real property taxes, utility rates, or similar costs).

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

An owner's request for a rent increase must be submitted to the AHA at least 60 days prior to the annual anniversary date of the HAP contract and must include the new rent amount the owner is proposing.

The AHA may not approve and the owner may not receive any increase of rent to owner until and unless the owner has complied with requirements of the HAP contract, including compliance with HQS. The owner may not receive any retroactive increase of rent for any period of noncompliance.

Rent Decrease

If there is a decrease in the rent to owner, as established in accordance with program requirements such as a change in the FMR or exception payment standard, or reasonable rent amount, the rent to owner must be decreased regardless of whether the owner requested a rent adjustment, except where the AHA has elected within the HAP contract to not reduce rents below the initial rent under the initial HAP contract.

Notice of Rent Change

The rent to owner is redetermined by written notice by the Augusta Housing Authority to the owner specifying the amount of the redetermined rent. The AHA notice of rent adjustment constitutes an amendment of the rent to owner specified in the HAP contract. The adjusted amount of rent to owner applies for the period of 12 calendar months from the annual anniversary of the HAP contract.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will provide the owner with at least 30 days written notice of any change in the amount of rent to owner.

AHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.301(g)]

For AHA-owned PBV units, the initial rent to owner and the annual redetermination of rent at the anniversary of the HAP contract are determined by the independent entity approved by HUD. The AHA must use the rent to owner established by the independent entity.

17-VIII.C. REASONABLE RENT [24 CFR 983.303]

At the time, the initial rent is established and all times during the term of the HAP contract, the rent to owner for a contract unit may not exceed the reasonable rent for the unit as determined by the Augusta Housing Authority, except where the AHA has elected within the HAP contract to not reduce rents below the initial rent under the initial HAP contract.

When Rent Reasonable Determinations Are Required

The AHA must redetermine the reasonable rent for a unit receiving PBV assistance whenever any of the following occur:

- There is a 10 percent or greater decrease in the published FMR in effect 60 days before the contract anniversary (for the unit sizes specified in the HAP contract) as compared with the FMR that was in effect one year before the contract anniversary date;
- The AHA approves a change in the allocation of responsibility for utilities between the owner and the tenant;
- The HAP contract is amended to substitute a different contract unit in the same building or project; or
- There is any other change that may substantially affect the reasonable rent.

How to Determine Reasonable Rent

The reasonable rent of a unit receiving PBV assistance must be determined by comparison to rent for other comparable unassisted units. When making this determination, the AHA must consider factors that affect market rent. Such factors include the location, quality, size, type and age of the unit, as well as the amenities, housing services maintenance, and utilities to be provided by the owner.

Comparability Analysis

For each unit, the comparability analysis must use at least three comparable units in the private unassisted market. This may include units in the premises or project that is receiving project-based assistance. The analysis must show how the reasonable rent was determined, including major differences between the contract units and comparable unassisted units, and must be retained by the AHA. The comparability analysis may be performed by AHA staff or by another qualified person or entity. Those who conduct these analyses or are involved in determining the housing assistance payment based on the analyses may not have any direct or indirect interest in the property.

AHA-Owned Units

For AHA-owned units, the amount of the reasonable rent must be determined by an independent agency approved by HUD in accordance with PBV Program requirements. The independent entity must provide a copy of the determination of reasonable rent for AHA-owned units to the AHA and to the HUD field office where the project is located.

Owner Certification of Reasonable Rent

By accepting each monthly housing assistance payment, the owner certifies that the rent to owner is not more than rent charged by the owner for other comparable unassisted units in the premises. At any time, the Augusta Housing Authority may require the owner to submit information on rents charged by the owner for other units in the premises or elsewhere.

17-VIII.D. EFFECT OF OTHER SUBSIDY AND RENT CONTROL

In addition to the rent limits discussed in Section 17-VIII.B above, other restrictions may limit the amount of rent to owner in a PBV unit. In addition, certain types of subsidized housing are not eligible to receive PBV assistance (see Section 17-II.D).

Other Subsidy [24 CFR 983.304]

To comply with HUD subsidy layering requirements, at the discretion of HUD or its designee, the AHA shall reduce the rent to owner because of other governmental subsidies, including tax credits or tax exemptions, grants, or other subsidized funding.

For units receiving assistance under the HOME Program, rents may not exceed rent limits as required by that program.

For units in any of the following types of federally subsidized projects, the rent to owner may not exceed the subsidized rent (basic rent) or tax credit rent as determined in accordance with requirements for the applicable federal program:

- An insured or non-insured Section 236 project;
- A formerly insured or non-insured Section 236 project that continues to receive Interest Reduction Payment following a decoupling action;
- A Section 221(d)(3) below market interest rate (BMIR) project;
- A Section 515 project of the Rural Housing Service;
- Any other type of federally subsidized project specified by HUD.

Combining Subsidy

Rent to owner may not exceed any limitation required to comply with HUD subsidy layering requirements.

Rent Control [24 CFR 983.305]

In addition to the rent limits set by PBV Program regulations, the amount of rent to owner may also be subject to rent control or other limits under local, state, or federal law.

PART IX: PAYMENTS TO OWNER

17-IX.A. HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS [24 CFR 983.351]

During the term of the HAP contract, the Augusta Housing Authority must make housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract. During the term of the HAP contract, payments must be made for each month that a contract unit complies with HQS and is leased to and occupied by an eligible family. The housing assistance payment must be paid to the owner on or about the first day of the month for which payment is due, unless the owner and the AHA agree on a later date.

The Augusta Housing Authority may not make any housing assistance payment to the owner for any month after the month when the family moves out of the unit (even if household goods or property are left in the unit).

The amount of the housing assistance payment by the AHA is the rent to owner minus the tenant rent (total tenant payment minus the utility allowance).

In order to receive housing assistance payments, the owner must comply with all provisions of the HAP contract. Unless the owner complies with all provisions of the HAP contract, the owner does not have a right to receive housing assistance payments.

17-IX.B. VACANCY PAYMENTS [24 CFR 983.352]

If an assisted family moves out of the unit, the owner may keep the housing assistance payment for the calendar month when the family moves out. However, the owner may not keep the payment if the AHA determines that the vacancy is the owner's fault.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

If the AHA determines that the owner is responsible for a vacancy and, as a result, is not entitled to keep the housing assistance payment, the AHA will notify the landlord of the amount of housing assistance payment that the owner must repay. The AHA will require the owner to repay the amount owed in accordance with the policies in Section 16-IV.B.

17-IX.C. TENANT RENT TO OWNER [24 CFR 983.353]

The tenant rent is the portion of the rent to owner paid by the family. The amount of tenant rent is determined by the Augusta Housing Authority in accordance with HUD requirements. Any changes in the amount of tenant rent will be effective on the date stated in the AHA notice to the family and owner.

The family is responsible for paying the tenant rent (total tenant payment minus the utility allowance). The amount of the tenant rent determined by the Augusta Housing Authority is the maximum amount the owner may charge the family for rental of a contract unit. The tenant rent covers all housing services, maintenance, equipment, and utilities to be provided by the owner. The owner may not demand or accept any rent payment from the tenant in excess of the tenant rent as determined by the AHA. The owner must immediately return any excess payment to the tenant.

Tenant and AHA Responsibilities

The family is not responsible for the portion of rent to owner that is covered by the housing assistance payment and the owner may not terminate the tenancy of an assisted family for nonpayment by the Augusta Housing Authority.

Likewise, the Augusta Housing Authority is responsible only for making the housing assistance payment to the owner in accordance with the HAP contract. The Augusta Housing Authority is not responsible for paying tenant rent, or any other claim by the owner, including damage to the unit. The Augusta Housing Authority may not use housing assistance payments or other program funds (including administrative fee reserves) to pay any part of the tenant rent or other claim by the owner.

Utility Reimbursements

If the amount of the utility allowance exceeds the total tenant payment, the Augusta Housing Authority must pay the amount of such excess to the tenant as a reimbursement for tenant-paid utilities, and the tenant rent to the owner must be zero.

The Augusta Housing Authority may pay the utility reimbursement directly to the family or to the utility supplier on behalf of the family. If the Augusta Housing Authority chooses to pay the utility supplier directly, the AHA must notify the family of the amount paid to the utility supplier.

Augusta Housing Authority Policy

The AHA will make utility reimbursements to the family.

17-IX.D. OTHER FEES AND CHARGES [24 CFR 983.354]

Meals and Supportive Services

With the exception of PBV assistance in assisted living developments, the owner may not require the tenant to pay charges for meals or supportive services. Non-payment of such charges is not grounds for termination of tenancy.

In assisted living developments receiving PBV assistance, the owner may charge for meals or supportive services. These charges may not be included in the rent to owner, nor may the value of meals and supportive services be included in the calculation of the reasonable rent. However, non-payment of such charges is grounds for termination of the lease by the owner in an assisted living development.

Other Charges by Owner

The owner may not charge extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises.

EXHIBIT 17-1

Legacy at Walton Green 2

Additional Tenant Selection Preference

In addition to the tenant selection preferences described in Chapter 4 of this Administrative Plan, the Project Based Voucher Program – Legacy at Walton Green 2 has an additional tenant selection preference.

The Augusta Housing Authority (AHA) requested and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determined that there was good cause to waive the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program regulations 24 CFR 982.207(b)(3) and 24 CFR 983.251(d), to allow AHA to implement a tenant selection preference for persons with specific disabilities pursuant to the provisions stated in the Office of General Counsel for Fair Housing’s (OGC-FH) letter dated February 8, 2016. The approval of the waiver is case-specific. The waiver does not permit the AHA to apply the preference outside the scope of the Georgia Settlement Agreement as described in this Administrative Plan.

Targeted Group Preferences

- Persons covered under the state of Georgia Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) Settlement Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice (Georgia Settlement Agreement), which stems from the *Olmstead v. L.C.* litigation. The covered individuals are people with serious and persistent mental illness and severe chronic developmental disabilities who are chronically homeless, leaving institutions or who are at risk of institutionalization.

Targeted Group Preferences

AHA has established a waiting list preference for persons meeting the criteria under the Americans with Disabilities Act Settlement Agreement (#1:10-CV-249-CAP between the Department of Justice and the State of Georgia in order to assist the Department of Behavioral Health and Development Disabilities (DBHDD) in carrying out the remedy required by the Settlement Agreement. To qualify for this preference an applicant must be receiving or be eligible to receive continuous voluntary highly targeted community based supportive services through DBHDD. The eligible individual must be referred by DBHDD or Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The preference will cover persons specified in the Settlement Agreement. In particular, the preference extends to persons with developmental disabilities and persons with severe and persistent mental illness who are currently institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization. For people with mental illness, factors that indicate risk of institutionalization include people who are frequently readmitted to State hospitals, who are frequently seen in emergency rooms, who are chronically homeless, and/or who are being released from jails or prisons. The preference will also cover persons specified in the Settlement Agreement who are currently receiving temporary housing assistance through Georgia’s DBHDD Voucher Program.

Persons eligible for the Targeted Group Preferences will be placed on the Project Based Voucher Programs – Legacy at Walton Green 2 waiting list. The individuals will be eligible for immediate assistance based on the availability of funding or a Project Based Voucher Unit. The waiting list for the Target Group Preference will be ranked based upon the date and time of their application.

General Description of Georgia Settlement Agreement Housing Program

The State of Georgia is a party to a lawsuit brought by the U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ), namely, United States v. Georgia under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the decision of the Supreme Court in Olmstead v. L.C. The lawsuit resulted in a Settlement Agreement with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). Consistent with the expansion of DBHDD funded community based services required by the Settlement Agreement, to qualify for this preference, an applicant must have written third party DBHDD verification that DBHDD will make continuous highly targeted and voluntary supportive services readily available to the applicant. The preference will cover persons specified in the Settlement Agreement. In particular, the preference extends to persons with developmental disabilities and persons with severe and persistent mental illness who are currently institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization. For people with mental illness, factors that indicate risk of institutionalization include people who are frequently readmitted to State hospitals, who are frequently seen in emergency rooms, who are chronically homeless, and/or who are being released from jails or prisons. The preference will also cover persons specified in the Settlement Agreement who are currently receiving temporary housing assistance through Georgia's DBHDD Voucher Program.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognized the necessity of offering tenant selection preferences within certain programs for specific populations in order to facilitate greater access to affordable housing for persons living with disabilities who are transitioning into community-based settings. On February 15, 2012 HUD issued guidance to the State of Georgia's Department of Community Affairs (DCA) that allowed for the implementation of remedial measures in response to the State's Settlement Agreement. HUD authorized DCA and other public housing agencies in Georgia to utilize a tenant selection preference in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program to carry out the housing remedy of the Settlement Agreement for persons who currently reside in institutions, are at risk of being institutionalized or are chronically homeless due to their disabilities.

AHA has established a waiting list preference for persons meeting the criteria under the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement with the State of Georgia. This additional preference is designed to make rental assistance in the AHA Project Based Voucher Program – Legacy at Walton Green 2 more readily accessible to the target population identified in the Georgia Settlement Agreement. The objective is to provide those individuals an opportunity to live in integrated community-based settings.

The waiting list will be populated through an application referral system from DBHDD or DCA to AHA. AHA will accept referrals from DBHDD or DCA that meet all of the following criteria:

1. Persons identified as a member of the Settlement Class;
2. Applicant must have written third party DBHDD verification that DBHDD will make continuous highly targeted and voluntary supportive services readily available; and
3. Persons who agree to reside in integrated housing.

Additionally, persons agreed to by DCA and DBHDD as being members of the Settlement Class who are currently receiving temporary housing assistance through DBHDD's state-funded voucher program are also eligible for the preference provided they meet conditions #2 and #3 outlined above.

This program will be in effect for a time limit through **September 1, 2020**. If necessary, after this time limit, the AHA may request an extension from HUD for ongoing remedial purposes.

An Applicant or participant of this program must meet these basic program eligibility criteria:

- Referred to AHA by DBHCC or DCA with written verification that DBHDD will make continuous highly targeted and voluntary supportive services readily available.
- The applicant's income must not exceed the applicable income limit.
- The applicant must furnish proof of citizenship or eligible immigration status.
- The applicant or family member must not be a registered sex offender.
- The applicant or family member must not have been convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine.

AHA will check eligibility requirements. Applicants meeting the program's eligibility will be coded as an "immediate handling." A Project Based Voucher Unit will be offered to the eligible person based on availability of funding or Project Based Voucher Unit. Where funding or a Project Based Voucher, Units is not readily available, the applicants will remain on the list until availability of assistance becomes available.

DBHDD's case managers and/or service providers specifically designated by DBHDD will coordinate with AHA and assist applicants and participants with the search for accessible units. DBHDD will also provide support; and have case managers present during the initial and biennial inspection of units, as well as during the execution of the contracts on approved units. Service providers will be expected to offer appropriate client support on a continuing basis.

Chapter 18

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program helps families in the HCV Program to increase their earned income and reduce their dependency on welfare assistance and rental subsidies. The Augusta Housing Authority (AHA) works in collaboration with a Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) to secure commitments of public and private resources for the operation of the FSS Program, to develop a policy framework through an Action Plan and to implement the FSS Program. The program has two key features:

Key Feature I. A financial incentive for participant to increase their earnings in the form of an escrow savings account that increases as participants' earnings increase. The escrow account helps participants build savings that they can use to improve their quality of life and advance their personal goals.

Key Feature II. Case management or coaching to help participants access services they may need to overcome barriers to employment, strengthen their financial capability, and address other challenges holding them back from achieving their goals.

18.A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Families who choose to enroll in the FSS program work with the FSS/Homeownership Coordinator (FSS Coordinator) or FSS case manager who helps them identify a series of short-term, intermediate and long-term goals and the steps they plan to take to achieve these goals. These steps may include services such as job training, basic skills education, and pre-purchase counseling. The goals for each participant and steps to achieve these goals are recorded in the Individual Services and Training Plan (ITSP). The ITSP is a part of the Contract of Participation (COP). Both the ITSP and the COP are signed by the FSS Coordinator and the participant. The COP records the commitments of the family and the FSS program to work together to achieve the identified goals.

All FSS participants are required to include the following two goals in their ITSP.

- All members of the family must be free of welfare cash assistance for at least 12 months prior to completing the FSS program.
- The head of household must seek and maintain suitable employment

Participants may also identify other goals and steps to achieve those goals. The FSS program is completely voluntary.

18.B. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The FSS Program participants will be selected from the HCV program participants. HCV participants may receive a written request from the FSS Coordinator or an FSS Case Manager when slots are available. The HCV participant may also be referred by his/her assisted housing case manager. A family's decision to not participate in the FSS program will not affect the family's HCV program assistance.

The HCV participants who attend a scheduled meeting for the FSS program and is interested in the program, may enroll at that time. Once all slots are filled, the remaining interested HCV participants will be placed on a waiting list. The work and commitment involved will be explained prior to enrollment. It will be explained that they will not lose their housing assistance if they choose not to participate in the FSS program.

Solicitation for FSS participation will be accomplished by mailing letter/flyers/emails, regular meetings with service providers and providing information to HCV assisted housing case managers.

18.C. CONTRACT OF PARTICIPATION [24 CFR 984.303]

General

Each family that chooses to participate in the FSS program must enter a contract of participation (COP) with the AHA. The COP shall be signed by the head of the FSS family and the FSS coordinator. The COP shall provide that each FSS family will be required to fulfill those obligations to which the participating family has committed to under the COP. The COP is a five-year contract and incorporates the individual training and services plan (ITSP) and explains the principal terms and conditions governing participation in the FSS program including the rights and responsibilities of the FSS family and the AHA, the services to be provided and the activities to be completed by the head of the FSS family and each adult member of the family who elects to participate in the program.

Form and Content of the Contract of Participation

The ITSP incorporated in the contract of participation shall establish specific interim and final goals by which the AHA and the family may measure the family's progress toward fulfilling its obligations under the COP and becoming self-sufficient. These goals will include:

- Establishing as an interim goal that the family become independent from welfare assistance and remain independent from welfare assistance at least one year before the expiration of the term of the COP, including any extensions thereof.
- Complying with the terms and conditions of the HCV assisted lease.
- Seeking and maintaining suitable employment during the term of the contract and any extensions thereof

Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the COP without good cause may result in:

- Withholding the supportive
- Termination from the FSS program or
- Termination or withholding the family's HCV assistance, except in the case where the only basis for noncompliance with the COP is noncompliance with the lease, or failure to become independent from welfare assistance.

Contract Terms

The contract of participation terms shall provide each FSS family will be required to fulfill those obligations to which the participating family has committed itself under the COP. The Contract of Participation (CoP) will go into effect on the first day of the month following the execution of the CoP. The initial term of the CoP will run the effective date through the five-year anniversary of the first reexamination of income that follows the execution date.

Contract Extension

The AHA shall, in writing, extend the term of the contract of participation for a period not to exceed two (2) years for any FSS family that requests, in writing, an extension of the contract, provided that the AHA finds that a good cause exists for granting the extension. The family's written request for an extension must include a description of the need for the extension. Good cause means:

- i) Circumstances beyond the control of the FSS family, as determined by the AHA, such as a serious illness or involuntary loss of employment.
- ii) Active pursuit of a current or additional goal that will result in furtherance of self-sufficiency during the period of the extension as determined by the AHA or
- iii) Any other circumstances that the AHA determines warrants an extension (further defined by AHA Policy in Section 5-I.D of the Action Plan).

Extension of the contract of participation will entitle the FSS family to continue to have amounts credited to the family's FSS account in accordance with 24 CFR 984.305.

Unavailability of Supportive Services

Each participant in the FSS program will complete an application and an Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP). The application and ITSP will identify areas of need that must be worked on to enhance the participant's opportunity to successfully complete the program. Additionally, goals and activities are established within the ITSP and the dates and time in which such goal and activities should be completed.

Some of the needs and supportive services anticipated of the participants in the FSS Program are:

- Transportation;
- Child care;
- Remedial, secondary and post-secondary education;
- Job training, preparation, counseling, job development and placement;
- Substance/alcohol abuse treatment and counseling;
- Counseling in the responsibilities of home ownership, and on available rental and home ownership opportunities and counseling in the private housing market; and
- Money management
- Budget and credit repair
- Pre-purchase counseling

The FSS Program must involve the supportive service agencies that have committed to participation with the AHA in the program. If any participant is to successfully complete the program the participant will require the collaborative efforts of all the participating agencies to mainstream the participant.

The FSS Program has the potential for participants to be involved up to seven years and during

that time, will have both successes and failures. Consequently, FSS case managers will identify problems that could prevent success and will intervene and assist the participant in maintaining their progress toward accomplishing set goals.

The services listed on the ITSP will be provided by agencies who have agreed to work with AHA and any other agencies as needed. If supportive service agencies cannot meet needs of a participant, a procedure will be developed to access another agency to provide that need. The participant's case manager will assist with the coordination of these efforts. The focus is to enhance the participant's chance of successfully completing the FSS program to achieve self-sufficiency.

In the event that the AHA is unable to obtain the services from another agency, AHA shall reassess the family member's needs, and determine whether other available services would achieve the same purpose. If other available services would not achieve the same purpose, AHA shall determine whether the unavailable services are integral to the FSS family's advancement or progress toward self-sufficiency. If the unavailable services are necessary for the family's advancement toward self-sufficiency, AHA shall declare the COP null and void. Unavailable supportive service shall not be grounds for termination of the HCV assistance.

Modifications

The AHA and the FSS family may mutually agree to modify the COP. These modifications may include the deletion of unavailable supportive services that are not integral to the FSS family's advancement toward self-sufficiency.

Completion

The COP is considered to be completed and the family's participation in the FSS program concluded when one of the following occurs:

- The FSS family has fulfilled all its obligations under the COP on or before the expiration of the contract term, including any extension thereof; or
- 30 percent of the monthly adjusted income of the FSS family equals or exceeds the published existing housing fair market rent for the size of the unit for which the FSS family qualifies based on AHA occupancy standards.

Termination of the Contract

The COP is automatically terminated if the family's HCV assistance is terminated in accordance with HUD requirements. The COP may be terminated before the expiration date and any extension thereof, by:

- Mutual consent of the parties
- The failure of the FSS family to meet its obligations under the contract without good cause including failure to comply with the contract requirements because the family has moved outside the jurisdiction of AHA.
- The family's withdrawal from the FSS program
- Such other act as is deemed inconsistent with the purpose of the FSS program or
- Operation of law

Termination of HCV Assistance and Supportive Services

AHA may terminate or withhold HCV housing assistance, the supportive services and the FSS family's participation in the FSS program, if AHA determines, in accordance with the hearing procedures provided in 24 CFR 982.555 that the FSS family has failed to comply without good cause with the requirements of the COP as provided in 24 CFR 984.305 (b) (5)

Transitional Support Services Assistance

The Augusta Housing Authority may continue to offer to a former FSS family who has completed its COP and whose head of household is employed, appropriate FSS supportive services in becoming self-sufficient, if the family still receives HCV assistance, or in remaining self-sufficient, if the family no longer receives HCV assistance.

18.D. CALCULATION OF FAMILY RENT [24 CFR 984.304]

The amount of housing assistance for a family participating in the housing choice voucher FSS program is determined in accordance with the regulations set forth in 24 CFR Section 982.505 and Chapter 11 of this administrative plan. Any increase in the earned income of an FSS family during its participation in the FSS program may not be considered as income or a resource for purposes of eligibility of the FSS family for other benefits, or amount of benefits payable to the FSS family under any other program administered by HUD, unless the income of the FSS family equals or exceeds 80 percent of the median income of the area (as determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families).

18.E. ESCROW ACCOUNT [24 CFR 984.305]

Establishment of FSS Account

The Augusta Housing Authority will deposit the FSS account funds of all families participating in the FSS program into a single depository account. The FSS account funds will be invested in one or more of the HUD-approved investments.

The AHA will credit periodically, but not less than annually, to each family's FSS account, the amount of the FSS credit. The FSS account fund will be supported by a subsidiary ledger showing the balance applicable to each FSS family. Investment income for funds in the FSS account will be prorated and credited to each family's FSS account based on the balance in each family's FSS account at the end of each investment period. If the FSS family has not paid the family contribution towards rents, due under the HCV assisted lease, the balance in the family's FSS account shall be reduced by that amount before prorating the interest income. If the FSS family has fraudulently underreported income, the amount credited to the FSS account will be based on the income amounts originally reported by the FSS family.

In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations Section 984.305 (a) (3), the AHA will make a report to each FSS family annually on the status of the family's FSS Escrow Account. The report will be made for the period beginning January 1st and ending December 31st of every year. The report will be mailed to the FSS participants no later than March 31st after the end of the reporting period. The report will include the following:

- Name, address, and client number of the FSS participant.
- The reporting period for the escrow account.
- The balance at the beginning of the reporting period excluding interest earned.
- Any deductions made from the account for amounts due to AHA before interest is distributed

- The amount of the family's rent payment that was credited to the FSS escrow account during the reporting period.

- The total in the escrow account excluding earned interest at the end of the reporting period.

The FSS escrow account information will be provided to the head of the household. An AHA standard form will be used to report the FSS escrow account information to the family.

Computation of FSS Credits

The FSS credit shall be computed as follows:

1. For FSS families who are very low-income families, the FSS credit shall be the amount which is the lesser of:
 - a. Thirty percent of current monthly adjusted income less the family rent which is obtained by disregarding any increases in earned income (as defined in 984.103) from the effective date of the COP; or
 - b. The current family rent less the family rent at the time of the effective date of the COP
2. For FSS families who are low-income families but not very low-income families, the FSS credit shall be the amount determined according to 24 CFR 984.305 (b) (1) (i). The FSS credit shall not exceed the amount computed for 50 percent of median income.

FSS families who are not low income families shall not be entitled to any FSS credit. Upon the completion of the COP or when the COP has been terminated or nullified, all FSS credits shall cease.

Disbursement of FSS Funds

The amount in the FSS account, less any amount owed to AHA by the FSS family shall be paid to the head of the FSS family when the COP has been completed and it has been verified that no member of the FSS family is a recipient of welfare assistance.

Succession to FSS Account

If the head of the FSS family ceases to reside with other family members under the HCV assisted unit, the remaining members of the FSS family, after consultation with AHA, shall have the right to designate another family member to receive the funds.

FSS Account Funds for Homeownership

The FSS family may use its FSS account funds for the purchase of a home, including the purchase of a home under one of HUD's homeownership programs, or other federal, state, or local homeownership programs unless such use is prohibited by the statute or regulation governing the particular homeownership program

Forfeiture of FSS Account Funds

Family Self-Sufficiency participants escrow account funds will be forfeited to the AHA HCV housing assistance program upon the occurrence of the following:

- The Contract of Participation is terminated, as provided in Section 984.303 (e) (2) (ii) of the 24 Code of Federal Register, or
- The Contract of Participation is completed, as provided in Section 984.303 (g) of 24 Code of

Federal Regulations, but the family is receiving TANF assistance at the time of expiration of the term of the Contract of Participation, including any extension thereof.

The FSS account funds forfeited by the FSS participant will remain the property of the AHA HCV housing assistance program. The forfeited funds will be treated as program receipts for payment of program expenses under the AHA budget for the applicable HCV program, and will be used in accordance with HUD requirements governing the use of program funds.

18.F. FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PORTABILITY [24 CFR 984.306]

Relocating FSS Family

The Augusta Housing Authority will accept a HCV Family Self-Sufficiency participant from another public housing agency's jurisdiction to enroll in the AHA Family Self-Sufficiency program under the portability provisions which include:

- The family must abide by the minimum period of residency by living in the jurisdiction of the initial PHA for one year.
- The terms of the COP can be met in the community to which the family moves. The COP may be modified to make allowance for the utilization of the services in the receiving PHA's area.

Relocation but Continued Participation in the FSS Program of the Initial PHA

A relocating family may continue in the FSS program of the initial PHA if the family demonstrates to the satisfaction of the AHA that, the FSS family will be able to fulfill its responsibilities under the initial or modified COP at its new place of residence.

If the relocating family remains in the FSS program of the initial PHA, there will only be one COP which shall be the COP executed by the initial PHA.

Relocation and Participation in the FSS Program of the Receiving PHA

A relocating FSS family may participate in the FSS program of the receiving PHA, if the receiving PHA allows the family to participate in its program. The receiving PHA is not obligated to enroll a relocating FSS family in its FSS program.

If the receiving PHA allows the relocating FSS family to participate in the FSS program, the receiving PHA will enter a new COP with the FSS family for the term of the remaining contract with the initial PHA. The initial PHA will terminate its COP with the family.

There will be a single FSS account which will be maintained by the initial PHA. When an FSS family will be absorbed by the receiving PHA, the initial PHA will transfer the family's FSS account to the receiving PHA.

The policies outlined throughout this Administrative Plan regarding portability will apply to the FSS program participants interested in porting to or porting from another PHA.

18.G. RECERTIFICATIONS

Annual and Interims Certifications

The policies outlined in the chapter entitled “Recertification” are applicable in the FSS Program.

The FSS case manager will complete an annual or interim certification for the FSS participant. The FSS case manager should make the necessary changes in the participant's FSS files. The changes should include, but are not limited to completing an escrow worksheet, completing Form HUD-50058 Addendum, printing any program notes with regards to FSS program and place in the contact information section, and updating the ITSP. In addition, the FSS case manager must prepare an escrow worksheet to be submitted to the Finance Department for review and approval.

The annual and interim recertification for each month should be reviewed by the FSS coordinator and the FSS case manager to ensure that all appropriate FSS participants has an escrow worksheet completed for the appropriate month. Once completed, the escrow worksheet. will be submitted to the Finance Department for review and approval.

In the event the FSS participant is determined to be over income, escrow credits will cease at the beginning of the month in which the participant became over income. The FSS case manager will complete an escrow worksheet and will send a copy to the Finance Department stating that the escrow credit has ceased effective the date on the escrow worksheet. In addition, if all goals have been completed, or if the participant is eligible to complete FSS because of his/her over income status, the participant's escrow funds should be released to him/her. The FSS case manager will complete all required FSS documents and checklist and submit them to the FSS coordinator, the Director of Administration and the Finance Department. If the participant has completed the FSS Program, he/she will be removed from the FSS Program active list.

GLOSSARY

A. ACRONYMS USED IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

AAF	Annual adjustment factor (published by HUD in the <i>Federal Register</i> and used to compute annual rent adjustments)
ACC	Annual contributions contract
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BR	Bedroom
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant (Program)
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations (published federal rules that define and implement laws; commonly referred to as “the regulations”)
CPI	Consumer price index (published monthly by the Department of Labor as an inflation indicator)
EID	Earned income disallowance
EIV	Enterprise Income Verification
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
FHA	Federal Housing Administration (HUD Office of Housing)
FHEO	Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (HUD Office of)
FICA	Federal Insurance Contributions Act (established Social Security taxes)
FMR	Fair market rent
FR	Federal Register
FSS	Family Self-Sufficiency (Program)
FY	Fiscal year
FYE	Fiscal year end
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GR	Gross rent
HA	Housing authority or housing agency
HAP	Housing assistance payment
HCV	Housing choice voucher
HQS	Housing quality standards
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
HUDCLIPS	HUD Client Information and Policy System

IPA	Independent public accountant
IRA	Individual retirement account
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
LBP	Lead-based paint
LEP	Limited English proficiency
MSA	Metropolitan statistical area (established by the U.S. Census Bureau)
MTCS	Multi-family Tenant Characteristics System (now the Form HUD-50058 submodule of the PIC system)
MTW	Moving to Work
NOFA	Notice of funding availability
OGC	HUD's Office of General Counsel
OIG	HUD's Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PASS	Plan to Achieve Self-Support
PHA	Public housing agency
PIC	PIH Information Center
PIH	(HUD Office of) Public and Indian Housing
PS	Payment standard
QC	Quality control
REAC	(HUD) Real Estate Assessment Center
RFP	Request for proposals
RFTA	Request for tenancy approval
RIGI	Regional inspector general for investigation (handles fraud and program abuse matters for HUD at the regional office level)
SEMAP	Section 8 Management Assessment Program
SRO	Single room occupancy
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSI	Supplemental security income
SWICA	State wage information collection agency

TANF	Temporary assistance for needy families
TPV	Tenant protection vouchers
TR	Tenant rent
TTP	Total tenant payment
UA	Utility allowance
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
UIV	Upfront income verification
URP	Utility reimbursement payment
VAWA	Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013

B. GLOSSARY OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSING TERMS

Absorption. In portability (under subpart H of this part 982): the point at which a receiving PHA stops billing the initial PHA for assistance on behalf of a portability family. The receiving PHA uses funds available under the receiving PHA consolidated ACC.

Accessible. The facility or portion of the facility can be approached, entered, and used by persons with disabilities.

Adjusted income. Annual income, less allowable HUD deductions and allowances.

Administrative fee. Fee paid by HUD to the PHA for administration of the program. See §982.152.

Administrative plan. The plan that describes PHA policies for administration of the tenant-based programs. The Administrative Plan and any revisions must be approved by the PHA's board and included as a supporting document to the PHA Plan. See §982.54.

Admission. The point when the family becomes a participant in the program. The date used for this purpose is the effective date of the first HAP contract for a family (first day of initial lease term) in a tenant-based program.

Affiliated individual. With respect to an individual, a spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in loco parentis (in the place of a parent), or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual

Amortization payment. In a manufactured home space rental: The monthly debt service payment by the family to amortize the purchase price of the manufactured home.

Annual. Happening once a year.

Annual contributions contract (ACC). The written contract between HUD and a PHA under which HUD agrees to provide funding for a program under the 1937 Act, and the PHA agrees to comply with HUD requirements for the program.

Annual income. The anticipated total income of an eligible family from all sources for the 12-month period following the date of determination of income, computed in accordance with the regulations.

Applicant (applicant family). A family that has applied for admission to a program but is not yet a participant in the program.

Area exception rent. An amount that exceeds the published FMR. See 24 CFR 982.504(b).

As-paid states. States where the welfare agency adjusts the shelter and utility component of the welfare grant in accordance with actual housing costs.

Assets. (See *net family assets*.)

Auxiliary aids. Services or devices that enable persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Biennial. Happening every two years.

Bifurcate. With respect to a public housing or Section 8 lease, to divide a lease as a matter of law such that certain tenants can be evicted or removed while the remaining family members' lease and occupancy rights are allowed to remain intact.

Budget authority. An amount authorized and appropriated by the Congress for payment to PHAs under the program. For each funding increment in a PHA program, budget authority is the maximum amount that may be paid by HUD to the PHA over the ACC term of the funding increment.

Child. A member of the family other than the family head or spouse who is under 18 years of age.

Child care expenses. Amounts anticipated to be paid by the family for the care of children under 13 years of age during the period for which annual income is computed, but only where such care is necessary to enable a family member to actively seek employment, be gainfully employed, or to further his or her education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. The amount deducted shall reflect reasonable charges for child care. In the case of child care necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.

Citizen. A citizen or national of the United States.

Cohead. An individual in the household who is equally responsible for the lease with the head of household. A family may have a cohead or spouse but not both. A cohead never qualifies as a dependent. The cohead must have legal capacity to enter into a lease.

Common space. In shared housing, the space available for use by the assisted family and other occupants of the unit.

Computer match. The automated comparison of databases containing records about individuals.

Confirmatory review. An on-site review performed by HUD to verify the management performance of a PHA.

Consent form. Any consent form approved by HUD to be signed by assistance applicants and participants to obtain income information from employers and SWICAs; return information from the Social Security Administration (including wages, net earnings from self-employment, and retirement income); and return information for unearned income from the IRS. Consent forms expire after a certain time and may authorize the collection of other information to determine eligibility or level of benefits.

Congregate housing. Housing for elderly persons or persons with disabilities that meets the HQS for congregate housing. A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.606–609.

Contiguous MSA. In portability (under subpart H of part 982): An MSA that shares a common boundary with the MSA in which the jurisdiction of the initial PHA is located.

Continuously assisted. An applicant is continuously assisted under the 1937 Act if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program when the family is admitted to the voucher program.

Contract authority. The maximum annual payment by HUD to a PHA for a funding increment.

Cooperative (term includes mutual housing). Housing owned by a nonprofit corporation or association, and where a member of the corporation or association has the right to reside in a particular apartment, and to participate in management of the housing. A special housing type (see 24 CFR 982.619).

Covered families. Statutory term for families who are required to participate in a welfare agency economic self-sufficiency program and who may be subject to a welfare benefit sanction for noncompliance with this obligation. Includes families who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance under a program for which federal, state or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for the assistance.

Dating violence. Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- The length of the relationship
- The type of relationship
- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

Dependent. A member of the family (except foster children and foster adults) other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability, or is a full-time student.

Dependent child. In the context of the student eligibility restrictions, a dependent child of a student enrolled in an institution of higher education. The dependent child must also meet the definition of *dependent* as specified above.

Disability assistance expenses. Reasonable expenses that are anticipated, during the period for which annual income is computed, for attendant care and auxiliary apparatus for a disabled family member, and that are necessary to enable a family member (including the disabled member) to be employed, provided that the expenses are neither paid to a member of the family nor reimbursed by an outside source.

Disabled family. A family whose head, cohead, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities; two or more persons with disabilities living together; or one or more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides.

Disabled person. See *person with disabilities*.

Disallowance. Exclusion from annual income.

Displaced family. A family in which each member, or whose sole member, is a person displaced by governmental action, or a person whose dwelling has been extensively damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster declared or otherwise formally recognized pursuant to federal disaster relief laws.

Domestic violence. The term 'domestic violence' includes felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant funding and, in the case of victim services, includes the use or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim, including verbal, psychological, economic, or technological

abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior, by a person who—

- (A) is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, or person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim;
- (B) is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
- (C) shares a child in common with the victim; or
- (D) commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction.

Domicile. The legal residence of the household head or spouse as determined in accordance with state and local law.

Drug-related criminal activity. The illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use the drug.

Economic Abuse. The term 'economic abuse', in the context of domestic violence, dating violence, and abuse in later life, means behavior that is coercive, deceptive, or unreasonably controls or restrains a person's ability to acquire, use, or maintain economic resources to which they are entitled, including using coercion, fraud, or manipulation to—(A) restrict a person's access to money, assets, credit, or financial information; (B) unfairly use a person's personal economic resources, including money, assets, and credit, for one's own advantage; or (C) exert undue influence over a person's financial and economic behavior or decisions, including forcing default on joint or other financial obligations, exploiting powers of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship, or failing or neglecting to act in the best interests of a person to whom one has a fiduciary duty.

Economic self-sufficiency program. Any program designed to encourage, assist, train or facilitate the economic independence of assisted families, or to provide work for such families. Can include job training, employment counseling, work placement, basic skills training, education, English proficiency, Workfare, financial or household management, apprenticeship, or any other program necessary to ready a participant to work (such as treatment for drug abuse or mental health treatment). Includes any work activities as defined in the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 607(d)). Also see 24 CFR 5.603(c).

Elderly family. A family whose head, cohead, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age; two or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living together; or one or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living with one or more live-in aides.

Elderly person. An individual who is at least 62 years of age.

Eligible family A family that is income eligible and meets the other requirements of the 1937 Act and Part 5 of 24 CFR. See also *family*.

Employer identification number (EIN). The nine-digit taxpayer identifying number that is assigned to an individual, trust, estate, partnership, association, company, or corporation.

Evidence of citizenship or eligible status. The documents which must be submitted as evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status. See 24 CFR 5.508(b).

Extremely low-income family. A family whose annual income does not exceed the federal poverty level or 30 percent of the median income for the area, whichever number is higher. Area median income is determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30 percent of median

income if HUD finds such variations are necessary due to unusually high or low family incomes. See 24 CFR 5.603.

Facility. All or any portion of buildings, structures, equipment, roads, walks, parking lots, rolling stock, or other real or personal property or interest in the property.

Fair Housing Act. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

Fair market rent (FMR). The rent, including the cost of utilities (except telephone), as established by HUD for units of varying sizes (by number of bedrooms), that must be paid in the housing market area to rent privately owned, existing, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities. See periodic publications in the *Federal Register* in accordance with 24 CFR Part 888.

Family. Includes but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, and can be further defined in PHA policy.

- A family with or without children (the temporary absence of a child from the home due to placement in foster care is not considered in determining family composition and family size)
- An elderly family or a near-elderly family
- A displaced family
- The remaining member of a tenant family
- A single person who is not an elderly or displaced person, or a person with disabilities, or the remaining member of a tenant family.

Family rent to owner. In the voucher program, the portion of rent to owner paid by the family.

Family self-sufficiency program (FSS program). The program established by a PHA in accordance with 24 CFR part 984 to promote self-sufficiency of assisted families, including the coordination of supportive services (42 U.S.C. 1437u).

Family share. The portion of rent and utilities paid by the family. For calculation of family share, see 24 CFR 982.515(a).

Family unit size. The appropriate number of bedrooms for a family, as determined by the PHA under the PHA subsidy standards.

Federal agency. A department of the executive branch of the federal government.

Foster child care payment. A payment to eligible households by state, local, or private agencies appointed by the state to administer payments for the care of foster children.

Full-time student. A person who is attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis (carrying a subject load that is considered full-time for day students under the standards and practices of the educational institution attended). See 24 CFR 5.603.

Funding increment. Each commitment of budget authority by HUD to a PHA under the consolidated annual contributions contract for the PHA program.

Gender identity. Actual or perceived gender-related characteristics.

Gross rent. The sum of the rent to owner plus any utility allowance.

Group home. A dwelling unit that is licensed by a state as a group home for the exclusive

residential use of two to twelve persons who are elderly or persons with disabilities (including any live-in aide). (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.610–614.)

Handicap. Any condition or characteristic that renders a person an individual with handicaps. (See *person with disabilities*.)

HAP contract. The housing assistance payments contract. A written contract between the PHA and an owner for the purpose of providing housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of an eligible family.

Head of household. The adult member of the family who is the head of the household for purposes of determining income eligibility and rent.

Household. A household includes additional people other than the family who, with the PHA's permission, live in an assisted unit, such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults.

Housing assistance payment. The monthly assistance payment by a PHA, which includes: (1) A payment to the owner for rent to the owner under the family's lease; and (2) An additional payment to the family if the total assistance payment exceeds the rent to owner.

Housing agency (HA). See *public housing agency*.

Housing quality standards (HQS). The HUD minimum quality standards for housing assisted under the voucher program.

HUD. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Imputed asset. An asset disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years preceding examination or reexamination.

Imputed asset income. The PHA-established passbook rate multiplied by the total cash value of assets. The calculation is used when net family assets exceed \$5,000.

Imputed welfare income. An amount of annual income that is not actually received by a family as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction, but is included in the family's annual income and therefore reflected in the family's rental contribution.

Income. Income from all sources of each member of the household, as determined in accordance with criteria established by HUD.

Income for eligibility. Annual income.

Income information means information relating to an individual's income, including:

- All employment income information known to current or previous employers or other income sources
- All information about wages, as defined in the state's unemployment compensation law, including any social security number; name of the employee; quarterly wages of the employee; and the name, full address, telephone number, and, when known, employer identification number of an employer reporting wages under a state unemployment compensation law
- Whether an individual is receiving, has received, or has applied for unemployment compensation, and the amount and the period received
- Unearned IRS income and self-employment, wages, and retirement income
- Wage, social security, and supplemental security income data obtained from the

Social Security Administration.

Individual with handicaps. See *person with disabilities*.

Initial PHA. In portability, the term refers to both: (1) A PHA that originally selected a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the selecting PHA; and (2) A PHA that absorbed a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the absorbing PHA.

Initial payment standard. The payment standard at the beginning of the HAP contract term.

Initial rent to owner. The rent to owner at the beginning of the HAP contract term.

Institution of higher education. An institution of higher education as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002. See Exhibit 3-2 in this Administrative Plan.

Jurisdiction. The area in which the PHA has authority under state and local law to administer the program.

Landlord. Either the owner of the property or his/her representative, or the managing agent or his/her representative, as shall be designated by the owner.

Lease. A written agreement between an owner and a tenant for the leasing of a dwelling unit to the tenant. The lease establishes the conditions for occupancy of the dwelling unit by a family with housing assistance payments under a HAP contract between the owner and the PHA.

Live-in aide. A person who resides with one or more elderly persons, or near-elderly persons, or persons with disabilities, and who:

- Is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the persons;
- Is not obligated for the support of the persons; and
- Would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services.

Living/sleeping room. A living room may be used as sleeping (bedroom) space, but no more than two persons may occupy the space. A bedroom or living/sleeping room must have at least one window and two electrical outlets in proper operating condition. See HCV GB p. 10-6 and 24 CFR 982.401.

Local preference. A preference used by the PHA to select among applicant families.

Low-income family. A family whose income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area as determined by HUD with adjustments for smaller or larger families, except that HUD may establish income limits higher or lower than 80 percent for areas with unusually high or low incomes.

Manufactured home. A manufactured structure that is built on a permanent chassis, is designed for use as a principal place of residence, and meets the HQS. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.620 and 982.621.)

Manufactured home space. In manufactured home space rental: A space leased by an owner to a family. A manufactured home owned and occupied by the family is located on the space. See 24 CFR 982.622 to 982.624.

Medical expenses. Medical expenses, including medical insurance premiums, that are anticipated during the period for which annual income is computed, and that are not covered by insurance (a deduction for elderly or disabled families only). These allowances are given when calculating adjusted income for medical expenses in excess of 3 percent of

annual income.

Minor. A member of the family household other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age.

Mixed family. A family whose members include those with citizenship or eligible immigration status, and those without citizenship or eligible immigration status.

Monthly adjusted income. One twelfth of adjusted income.

Monthly income. One twelfth of annual income.

Mutual housing. Included in the definition of *cooperative*.

National. A person who owes permanent allegiance to the United States, for example, as a result of birth in a United States territory or possession.

Near-elderly family. A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62; or two or more persons, who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62, living together; or one or more persons who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62 living with one or more live-in aides.

Net family assets. (1) Net cash value after deducting reasonable costs that would be incurred in disposing of real property, savings, stocks, bonds, and other forms of capital investment, excluding interests in Indian trust land and excluding equity accounts in HUD homeownership programs. The value of necessary items of personal property such as furniture and automobiles shall be excluded.

- In cases where a trust fund has been established and the trust is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household, the value of the trust fund will not be considered an asset so long as the fund continues to be held in trust. Any income distributed from the trust fund shall be counted when determining annual income under §5.609.
- In determining net family assets, PHAs or owners, as applicable, shall include the value of any business or family assets disposed of by an applicant or tenant for less than fair market value (including a disposition in trust, but not in a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale) during the two years preceding the date of application for the program or reexamination, as applicable, in excess of the consideration received therefore. In the case of a disposition as part of a separation or divorce settlement, the disposition will not be considered to be for less than fair market value if the applicant or tenant receives important consideration not measurable in dollar terms.

Noncitizen. A person who is neither a citizen nor national of the United States.

Notice of funding availability (NOFA). For budget authority that HUD distributes by competitive process, the *Federal Register* document that invites applications for funding. This document explains how to apply for assistance and the criteria for awarding the funding.

Office of General Counsel (OGC). The General Counsel of HUD.

Overcrowded. A unit that does not meet the following HQS space standards: (1) Provide adequate space and security for the family; and (2) Have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.

Owner. Any person or entity with the legal right to lease or sublease a unit to a participant.

PHA Plan. The annual plan and the 5-year plan as adopted by the PHA and approved by HUD.

PHA's quality control sample. An annual sample of files or records drawn in an unbiased manner and reviewed by a PHA supervisor (or by another qualified person other than the person who performed the original work) to determine if the work documented in the files or records conforms to program requirements. For minimum sample size see CFR 985.3.

Participant (participant family). A family that has been admitted to the PHA program and is currently assisted in the program. The family becomes a participant on the effective date of the first HAP contract executed by the PHA for the family (first day of initial lease term).

Payment standard. The maximum monthly assistance payment for a family assisted in the voucher program (before deducting the total tenant payment by the family).

Person with disabilities. *For the purposes of program eligibility.* A person who has a disability as defined under the Social Security Act or Developmental Disabilities Care Act, or a person who has a physical or mental impairment expected to be of long and indefinite duration and whose ability to live independently is substantially impeded by that impairment but could be improved by more suitable housing conditions. This includes persons with AIDS or conditions arising from AIDS but excludes persons whose disability is based solely on drug or alcohol dependence. *For the purposes of reasonable accommodation.* A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person regarded as having such an impairment, or a person with a record of such an impairment.

Portability. Renting a dwelling unit with a Section 8 housing choice voucher outside the jurisdiction of the initial PHA.

Premises. The building or complex in which the dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

Previously unemployed. With regard to the earned income disallowance, a person with disabilities who has earned, in the 12 months previous to employment, no more than would be received for 10 hours of work per week for 50 weeks at the established minimum wage.

Private space. In shared housing, the portion of a contract unit that is for the exclusive use of an assisted family.

Processing entity. The person or entity that, under any of the programs covered, is responsible for making eligibility and related determinations and any income reexamination. In the HCV program, the "processing entity" is the "responsible entity."

Project owner. The person or entity that owns the housing project containing the assisted dwelling unit.

Public assistance. Welfare or other payments to families or individuals, based on need, which are made under programs funded, separately or jointly, by federal, state, or local governments.

Public housing agency (PHA). Any state, county, municipality, or other governmental entity or public body, or agency or instrumentality of these entities, that is authorized to engage or assist in the development or operation of low-income housing under the 1937 Act.

Qualified family (under the earned income disallowance). A family participating in an applicable assisted housing program or receiving HCV assistance:

- Whose annual income increases as a result of employment of a family member who is a person with disabilities and who was previously unemployed for one or more years prior to employment;
- Whose annual income increases as a result of increased earnings by a family member who is a person with disabilities during participation in any economic self-sufficiency or other job training program; or
- Whose annual income increases, as a result of new employment or increased earnings of a family member who is a person with disabilities, during or within six months after receiving assistance, benefits or services under any state program for temporary assistance for needy families funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, as determined by the responsible entity in consultation with the local agencies administering temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) and Welfare-to-Work (WTW) programs. The TANF program is not limited to monthly income maintenance, but also includes such benefits and services as one-time payments, wage subsidies and transportation assistance--provided that the total amount over a six-month period is at least \$500.

Qualified census tract. With regard to certain tax credit units, any census tract (or equivalent geographic area defined by the Bureau of the Census) in which at least 50 percent of households have an income of less than 60 percent of Area Median Gross Income (AMGI), or where the poverty rate is at least 25 percent, and where the census tract is designated as a qualified census tract by HUD.

Reasonable rent. A rent to owner that is not more than rent charged: (1) For comparable units in the private unassisted market; and (2) For comparable unassisted units in the premises.

Reasonable accommodation. A change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service to allow a person with disabilities to fully access the PHA's programs or services.

Receiving PHA. In portability: A PHA that receives a family selected for participation in the tenant-based program of another PHA. The receiving PHA issues a voucher and provides program assistance to the family.

Recertification. Sometimes called *reexamination*. The process of securing documentation of total family income used to determine the rent the tenant will pay for the next 12 months if there are no additional changes to be reported.

Remaining member of the tenant family. The person left in assisted housing who may or may not normally qualify for assistance on their own circumstances (i.e., an elderly spouse dies, leaving widow age 47 who is not disabled).

Remote Briefing. Refers to the oral briefing PHAs are required to provide to every new HCV program applicant, including project-based voucher applicants and TPV family briefing that is conducted using phone, webcast, video call, or other electronic communications.

Remote Hearing. Refers to the informal review for denial of assistance and informal hearing for a participant that is conducted using phone, webcast, video call, or other electronic communications.

Rent to owner. The total monthly rent payable to the owner under the lease for the unit (also

known as contract rent). Rent to owner covers payment for any housing services, maintenance, and utilities that the owner is required to provide and pay for.

Residency preference. A PHA preference for admission of families that reside anywhere in a specified area, including families with a member who works or has been hired to work in the area (See *residency preference area*).

Residency preference area. The specified area where families must reside to qualify for a residency preference.

Responsible entity. For the public housing and the Section 8 tenant-based assistance, project-based voucher assistance, and moderate rehabilitation programs, the responsible entity means the PHA administering the program under an ACC with HUD. For all other Section 8 programs, the responsible entity means the Section 8 owner.

Secretary. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Section 8. Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

Section 8 covered programs. All HUD programs which assist housing under Section 8 of the 1937 Act, including Section 8 assisted housing for which loans are made under Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959.

Section 214. Section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980, as amended.

Section 214 covered programs. The collective term for the HUD programs to which the restrictions imposed by Section 214 apply. These programs are set forth in 24 CFR 5.500.

Security deposit. A dollar amount (maximum set according to the regulations) which can be used for unpaid rent or damages to the owner upon termination of the lease.

Set-up charges. In a manufactured home space rental, charges payable by the family for assembling, skirting, and anchoring the manufactured home.

Sexual assault. Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)).

Sexual orientation. Homosexuality, heterosexuality or bisexuality.

Shared housing. A unit occupied by two or more families. The unit consists of both common space for shared use by the occupants of the unit and separate private space for each assisted family. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.615–982.618.)

Single person. A person living alone or intending to live alone.

Single room occupancy housing (SRO). A unit that contains no sanitary facilities or food preparation facilities, or contains either, but not both, types of facilities. (A special housing type: see 24 CFR 982.602–982.605.)

Social security number (SSN). The nine-digit number that is assigned to a person by the Social Security Administration and that identifies the record of the person's earnings reported to the Social Security Administration. The term does not include a number with a letter as a suffix that is used to identify an auxiliary beneficiary.

Special admission. Admission of an applicant that is not on the PHA waiting list or without considering the applicant's waiting list position.

Special housing types. See subpart M of part 982. Subpart M states the special regulatory requirements for: SRO housing, congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, cooperatives (including mutual housing), and manufactured homes (including manufactured home space rental).

Specified welfare benefit reduction. Those reductions of welfare benefits (for a covered family) that may not result in a reduction of the family rental contribution. A reduction of welfare benefits because of fraud in connection with the welfare program, or because of welfare sanction due to noncompliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

Spouse. The marriage partner of the head of household.

Stalking. To follow, pursue, or repeatedly commit acts with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate; or to place under surveillance with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person; and in the course of, or as a result of, such following, pursuit, surveillance, or repeatedly committed acts, to place a person in reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to, or to cause substantial emotional harm to (1) that person, (2) a member of the immediate family of that person, or (3) the spouse or intimate partner of that person.

State wage information collection agency (SWICA). The state agency, including any Indian tribal agency, receiving quarterly wage reports from employers in the state, or an alternative system that has been determined by the Secretary of Labor to be as effective and timely in providing employment-related income and eligibility information.

Subsidy standards. Standards established by a PHA to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms and amount of subsidy for families of different sizes and compositions.

Suspension. The term on the family's voucher stops from the date the family submits a request for PHA approval of the tenancy, until the date the PHA notifies the family in writing whether the request has been approved or denied. This practice is also called *tolling*.

Tax credit rent. With regard to certain tax credit units, the rent charged for comparable units of the same bedroom size in the building that also receive the low-income housing tax credit but do not have any additional rental assistance (e.g., tenant-based voucher assistance).

Technological Abuse. The term 'technological abuse' means an act or pattern of behavior that occurs within domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking and is intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor, except as otherwise permitted by law, another person, that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to: internet enabled devices, online spaces and platforms, computers, mobile devices, cameras and imaging programs, apps, location tracking devices, or communication technologies, or any other emerging technologies.

Tenancy addendum. For the housing choice voucher program, the lease language required by HUD in the lease between the tenant and the owner.

Tenant. The person or persons (other than a live-in aide) who executes the lease as lessee of the dwelling unit.

Tenant rent to owner. See *family rent to owner*.

Term of lease. The amount of time a tenant agrees in writing to live in a dwelling unit.

Total tenant payment (TTP). The total amount the HUD rent formula requires the tenant to pay toward rent and utilities.

Unit. Residential space for the private use of a family. The size of a unit is based on the number of bedrooms contained within the unit and generally ranges from zero (0) bedrooms to six (6) bedrooms.

Utilities. Water, electricity, gas, other heating, refrigeration, cooking fuels, trash collection, and sewage services. Telephone service is not included.

Utility allowance. If the cost of utilities (except telephone) and other housing services for an assisted unit is not included in the tenant rent but is the responsibility of the family occupying the unit, an amount equal to the estimate made or approved by a PHA or HUD of the monthly cost of a reasonable consumption of such utilities and other services for the unit by an energy-conservative household of modest circumstances consistent with the requirements of a safe, sanitary, and healthful living environment.

Utility reimbursement. In the voucher program, the portion of the housing assistance payment which exceeds the amount of rent to owner.

Utility hook-up charge. In a manufactured home space rental: Costs payable by a family for connecting the manufactured home to utilities such as water, gas, electrical and sewer lines.

Very low-income family. A low-income family whose annual income does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income limits higher or lower than 50 percent of the median income for the area on the basis of its finding that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes. This is the income limit for the housing choice voucher program.

Veteran. A person who has served in the active military or naval service of the United States at any time and who shall have been discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013. Prohibits denying admission to the program to an otherwise qualified applicant or terminating assistance on the basis that the applicant or program participant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Violent criminal activity. Any illegal criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another.

Voucher (housing choice voucher). A document issued by a PHA to a family selected for admission to the housing choice voucher program. This document describes the program and the procedures for PHA approval of a unit selected by the family. The voucher also states obligations of the family under the program.

Voucher holder. A family holding a voucher with an unexpired term (search time).

Voucher program. The housing choice voucher program.

Waiting list. A list of families organized according to HUD regulations and PHA policy who are waiting for a unit to become available.

Waiting list admission. An admission from the PHA waiting list.

Welfare assistance. Income assistance from federal or state welfare programs, including assistance provided under TANF and general assistance. Does not include assistance directed solely to meeting housing expenses, nor programs that provide health care, child care or other

services for working families. For the FSS program (984.103(b)), *welfare assistance* includes only cash maintenance payments from federal or state programs designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs, but does not include food stamps, emergency rental and utilities assistance, SSI, SSDI, or social security.

SUPPLEMENTAL ADDENDUM FOR HOTMA PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

Effective January 1, 2024

The Final Rule implementing Sections 102, 103, and 104 of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA)

INTRODUCTION

The Final Rule implementing Sections 102, 103, and 104 of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) made a number of changes to the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 that affect the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), Multifamily Housing (MFH), and Community Development and Planning (CPD), Public Housing, Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA), Section 202/811, HOPWA, HOME, and the Housing Trust Fund programs. Of these, five sections of the Act became effective immediately upon enactment. All the other sections in HOTMA that impact the HCV programs will be effective January 1, 2024. Until the applicable notices or regulations become effective, the Public Housing Authority (PHA) may not implement those additional sections.

In preparation for the HOTMA changes, PHAs will need to update their administrative policies, procedures, and forms to reflect the changes in HOTMA. PHAs need to plan to be ready to implement the new policies for transactions effective January 1, 2024, and later. For annual reexaminations, this means having policies, forms, and processes ready by October or November to apply to January 1, 2024, Annual Reexaminations. Updates to the HUD-50058 are required in order to implement HOTMA. The new HUD-50058 will only be programmed into Housing Information Portal (HIP), so PHAs will need to be able to submit transactions effective January 1, 2024, to HIP.

Relevant sections immediately effective are:

- **Changes related to Sections 102 and 104 (effective January 1, 2024):** Modifies the rules for determining household income and assets in HUD's HCV, Public Housing, PBRA, Section 202/811, HOPWA, HOME, and Housing Trust Fund programs. These changes affect household eligibility and rent payments. These sections also set limits on assets for families assisted under the HCV, Public Housing, and Section 8 PBRA programs.
- **Section 102: Income Reviews:**
 - Fewer Interim Reexaminations: HOTMA creates a 10% adjusted income increase/decrease threshold for conducting Interim Reexaminations, and in most cases requires that increases in earned income are not processed until the next Annual Reexamination, allowing families to keep more of their earnings before receiving a rent

increase. The new requirements should lead to fewer Interim Reexaminations overall, alleviating burden for both participants and PHAs.

- Streamlined Verifications: Several provisions will streamline the verification process for housing providers.
- Adults Only Need to Sign Consent Form Once: HOTMA revises the required consent form that all adult household members sign, allowing them to sign the form only once instead of annually.
- Use of Income Determinations from Other Programs: HOTMA allows PHAs to use income determinations made under other federal benefits programs for reexaminations.
- Review of EIV Not Required at Interim Reexamination: HOTMA eliminates the requirement for PHAs to use EIV to verify tenant employment and income information during an interim reexamination, significantly reducing administrative burden.
- Increased Standard Deduction for Elderly/Disabled Households: HOTMA increases standard deductions for families with a head, co-head, or spouse who is elderly or a person with a disability.
- Additional Income Exclusions: The rule codifies additional income and asset exclusions, including:
 - Amounts received from Medicaid or other state/local programs meant to keep a family member with a disability living at home
 - Veterans' aide and attendant care
 - Distributions of principal from non-revocable trusts, including Special Needs Trusts.
- Threshold for Claiming Medical/Disability Expenses Increased: HOTMA increases the allowance for unreimbursed health and medical care expenses from 3% of annual income to 10%, phased-in over two years.
- Higher Threshold for Imputing Asset Income: HOTMA raises the imputed asset threshold from \$5,000 to \$50,000, incentivizing families to build wealth without imputing income on those assets.
- Hardship Relief: HOTMA provides hardship relief for expense deductions, lessening the impact of the increased threshold for medical expenses. HOTMA permits PHAs to grant hardship relief to families unable to pay rent because of unanticipated medical/disability expenses and families who are no longer eligible for the childcare expense deduction.
- **Section 104: Asset Limits**
 - Asset Limitation: HOTMA imposes a \$100,000 asset limit for eligibility and continued assistance. Families are also ineligible for assistance if they own real property suitable for occupancy. PHAs have the option of delaying enforcement/termination for up to six months if the family is over the asset threshold at the time of annual reexamination.

- Exclusion of Retirement and Educational Savings Accounts: Retirement accounts and educational savings accounts will not be considered a net family asset. This is a major benefit to families, incentivizing savings for important life milestones and opportunities. This will also provide significant administrative relief to PHAs by allowing them to stop verifying and calculating these assets altogether.
- Self-Certification of Assets under \$50,000: HOTMA allows self-certification of net assets if estimated to be at or below \$50,000. This will be a time-savings for families and lower administrative burden for PHAs recertifying income.
- Cross-Cutting
- Adjustments for Inflation: Deductions and the asset limitation will be adjusted for inflation annually, ensuring that deductions do not lose value over time and that families are able to build more wealth without losing program assistance. The current deduction amounts have never been adjusted.

HOTMA streamlines the rules for determining household income and rent payments. Specifically, the new rules will:

- Only require each adult household member to sign a consent form one time, instead of annually.
- Enable PHAs/owners to use income determinations made under other federal benefit programs, which will eliminate redundant work.
- Simplify income deductions and allow families to self-certify assets up to \$50,000.
- Reduce the frequency of interim income recertifications.

A. Definitions

New and Revised Definitions

HUD edits the definition of “**earned income**” in § 5.100. In this final rule, HUD expands the proposed definition of “earned income” to explain that “transfer payments” (which are not included in earned income) mean payments made or income received in which no goods or services are being paid for, such as welfare, social security, and governmental subsidies for certain benefits.

The proposed rule definition of “**earned income**” in § 5.100 largely mirrored the definition of “earned income” currently in § 984.103; however, unlike the definition of “earned income” in § 984.103, the proposed rule did not specify that “funds deposited in or accrued interest on the FSS program escrow account established by a PHA on behalf of a participating family” is excluded from “earned income.” In the context of both the proposed rule and in this final rule, HUD determined it would be inappropriate to define Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) escrow deposits as either earned or unearned income because FSS participants do not actually receive FSS escrow funds until the PHA disburses the funds to the family in accordance with FSS requirements. Income earned on amounts placed in a family’s FSS account are excluded from family income pursuant to a new exclusion at 24 CFR 5.609(b)(27). Additionally, the value of FSS accounts is excluded by 24 CFR 5.603 from the calculation of net family assets.

HUD has also added the corresponding definition of “**unearned income**” in § 5.100. The definition of unearned income specifies that the term is broad, encompassing any annual income, as calculated under § 5.609, that is not earned income. The definition of “Real property” in § 5.100 is also slightly modified from the proposed rule to have the same meaning as real property as provided under the State law in which the property is located.

HUD is revising the definition “**medical expenses**” in § 5.603 to be “health and medical care expenses” consistent with the language used in HOTMA. HUD is also revising the definition to reflect the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) definition of the term and provide additional clarity without using the term to define itself. In addition, this final rule then adds “long-term care premiums” as an example of what is included in the definition of health and medical care expenses. The prior regulation in § 5.603(b) specifically included “medical insurance premiums” as an example of health and medical care expenses, and the proposed rule did not propose to alter this existing example of what counts as health and medical care expenses. In this final rule, HUD is adding a reference to long-term care in the regulatory language to conform with existing practices and policies and to add clarity. For example, the HUD Handbook Occupancy Requirements of Subsidized Multifamily Housing Programs (4350.3) (“Multifamily Occupancy Handbook”) states that “long-term care premiums (not prorated)” are examples of deductible health and medical care expenses (see exhibit 5-3 of that Handbook).

HUD also amends the definition of “**net family assets**” in § 5.603 in response to questions and requests for clarification submitted in public comments. Initially, HUD clarifies that net family assets do not include the value of all non-necessary items of personal property with a total combined value of \$50,000 or less, as adjusted annually by an inflationary factor. HUD will issue guidance for PHAs, owners, and grantees to determine whether an item is a “necessary item of personal property” or whether the value of the item should be included in calculating the value of all non-necessary items of personal property for the \$50,000 threshold. In addition, HUD is specifying that because negative equity in real property does not preclude a family from selling the property, negative equity alone does not justify excluding such a property from net family assets. The definition of “net family assets” also excludes Federal tax refunds or refundable tax credits for a period of 12 months after receipt by the family. HUD adds this language to align with 26 U.S.C. 6409, which states that any Federal tax refund (or advance payment with respect to a refundable credit) made to any individual “shall not be taken into account as resources for a period of 12 months from receipt, for purposes of determining the eligibility of such individual” for benefits or assistance under any Federal program or State or local program financed with Federal funds. HUD also clarifies the definition of “net family assets” to provide that in cases where a trust fund has been established and the trust is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household, the trust fund is not a family asset and the value of the trust is not included in the calculation of net family assets, so long as the fund continues to be held in a trust that is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household. Finally, as explained later in this preamble, HUD excludes from the calculation of “net family assets” the value of any “baby bond” account created, authorized, or funded by Federal, State, or local government.

As a result of adding a new income exclusion for “nonrecurring income” (see below), HUD is including definitions for “day laborer,” “independent contractor,” and “seasonal worker” in § 5.603, all of which are referenced in the new income exclusion. HUD expects that adding these new definitions will help PHAs and owners better determine what income must be included when determining the family’s rent for the upcoming year by narrowing the definition of nonrecurring income.

Foster Children and Adults

In § 5.603, HUD is amending the definition of “foster adults” from what was proposed. HUD also adds a definition of “foster child” and is revising the definition of “dependent.” These definitions provide additional details on the characteristics of foster adults and foster children for purposes of determining members of a household. However, while foster adults and foster children are members of the household (and therefore will be considered when determining appropriate unit size and utility allowance), they are not considered members of the family for purposes of determining either annual and adjusted income or net family assets, nor are the assets of foster adults or foster children taken into consideration for purposes of the asset limitations in HUD programs covered by these definitions.

HUD’s CONVERSION FROM PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING INFORMATION CENTER (IMS/PIC) PIC TO THE HOUSING INFORMATION PORTAL (HIP):

- HUD will replace IMS/PIC with the HIP.
- Changes to the HUD-50058 will be finalized by summer 2023.
- PHAs must use the new HIP to implement HOTMA changes. This means PHAs will need to have software that is ready to submit transactions with an effective date of January 1, 2024, to HIP.