Chapter 1 1

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM AND PLAN 1

PART I: MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY 2

1-I.A. OVERVIEW 2

1-I.B. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE PHA 2

1-I.C. MAINEHOUSING MISSION 2

1-I.D. MAINEHOUSING PROGRAMS 3

1-I.E. MAINEHOUSING COMMITMENT TO ETHICS AND SERVICE 3

PART II: THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM 4

1-II.A. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM 4

1-II.B. HCV PROGRAM BASICS 5

1-II.C. THE HCV PARTNERSHIPS 5

The HCV Relationships: 6

What Does HUD Do? 7

What Does the PHA Do? 7

What Does the Owner Do? 7

What Does the Family Do? 8

1-II.D. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS 8

PART III: THE HCV ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN 9

1-III.A. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN 9

1-III.B. CONTENTS OF THE PLAN [24 CFR 982.54] 9

1-III.C. ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN 11

1-III.D. UPDATING AND REVISING THE PLAN 11

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Chapter 2 ..... **12**

FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY **12**

PART I: NONDISCRIMINATION 13

2-I.A. OVERVIEW 13

2-I.B. NONDISCRIMINATION 13

Providing Information to Families and Owners 14

Discrimination Complaints 15

PART II: POLICIES RELATED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 17

2-II.A. OVERVIEW 17

2-II.B. DEFENITION OF REASONABLE ACCOMODATION 17

Types of Reasonable Accommodations 17

2-II.C. REQUEST FOR AN ACCOMODATION 18

2-II.D. VERIFICATION OF DISABILITY 19

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]. 20

2-II.F. PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH HEARING OR VISION IMPAIRMENTS 21

2-II.G. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY 22

2-II.H. DENIAL OR TERMINATIN OF ASSISTANCE 22

PART III: IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) 24

2-III.A. OVERVIEW 24

2-III.B. ORAL INTERPRETATION 24

2-III.C. WRITTEN TRANSLATION 25

2-III.D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 25

EXHIBIT 2-1: DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY UNDER FEDERAL AND STATE CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS [24 CFR Sections 8.3 and 100.201] 27

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Chapter 3 30

ELIGIBILITY 30

PART I: DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS 31

3-I.A. OVERVIEW 31

3-I.B. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 982.201(c); FR Notice 02/03/12; Notice PIH 2014-20] 31

Family 31

Household 31

3-I.C. FAMILY BREAKUP AND REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY 32

Family Breakup [24 CFR 982.315] 32

Remaining Member of a Tenant Family [24 CFR 5.403] 32

3-I.D. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 5.504(b)] 33

3-I.E. SPOUSE, COHEAD, AND OTHER ADULT 33

3-I.F. DEPENDENT [24 CFR 5.603] 33

Joint Custody of Dependents 33

3-I.G. FULL-TIME STUDENT [24 CFR 5.603; HCV GB, p. 5-29] 34

3-I.H. ELDERLY AND NEAR-ELDERLY PERSONS, AND ELDERLY FAMILY [24 CFR 5.100 and 5.403, FR Notice 02/03/12] 34

Elderly Persons 34

Near-Elderly Persons 34

Elderly Family 34

3-I.I. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND DISABLED FAMILY [24 CFR 5.403, FR Notice 02/03/12] 34

Persons with Disabilities 34

Disabled Family 34

3-I.J. GUESTS [24 CFR 5.100] 35

3-I.K. FOSTER CHILDREN AND FOSTER ADULTS 35

3-I.L. ABSENT FAMILY MEMBERS 36

Definitions of Temporarily and Permanently Absent 36

Absent Students 36

Absences Due to Placement in Foster Care [24 CFR 5.403] 36

Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead 37

Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons [HCV GB, p. 5-22] 37

Return of Permanently Absent Family Members 37

3-I.M. LIVE-IN AIDE 37

PART II: BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA 39

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3-II.A. INCOME ELIGIBILITY AND TARGETING 39
Income Limits 39
Definitions of the Income Limits [24 CFR 5.603(b)] 39
Using Income Limits for Eligibility [24 CFR 982.201] 39
Using Income Limits for Targeting [24 CFR 982.201] 40
3-II.B. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5, Subpart E] 40
Declaration [24 CFR 5.508] 40
Mixed Families 41
Ineligible Families [24 CFR 5.514(d), (e), and (f)] 41
Timeframe for Determination of Citizenship Status [24 CFR 5.508(g)] 42
3-II.C. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216 and 5.218, Notice PIH 2012-10] 42
3-II.D. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 5.230; HCV GB, p. 5-13] 43
3-II.E. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION [24 CFR 5.612, FR Notice 4/10/06, FR Notice 9/21/16] 43
Definitions 43
Determining Student Eligibility 46
PART III: DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE 48
3-III.A. OVERVIEW 48
Forms of Denial [24 CFR 982.552(a) (2); HCV GB, p. 5-35] 48
Prohibited Reasons for Denial of Program Assistance [24 CFR 982.202(b), 24 CFR 5.2005(b)] 48
3-III.B. MANDATORY DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.553(a)] 48
3-III.C. OTHER PERMITTED REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE 49
Criminal Activity [24 CFR 982.553] 49
Previous Behavior in Assisted Housing [24 CFR 982.552(c)] 50
3-III.D. SCREENING 52
Screening for Eligibility 52
Screening for Suitability as a Tenant [24 CFR 982.307] 52
3-III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO DENY ASSISTANCE 53
Evidence [24 CFR 982.553(c)] 53
Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 982.552(c) (2)] 53
Removal of a Family Member's Name from the Application 54
Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c) (2) (iv)] 55
3-III.F. NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY OR DENIAL 55
3-III.G. PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING 56
EXHIBIT 3-1: DETAILED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO DISABILITIES 58

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Person with Disabilities [24 CFR 5.403] 58

Individual with Handicaps [24 CFR 8.3] 59

EXHIBIT 3-2: DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION [20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002] 61

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] 61

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Chapter 4 66

APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION 66

PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS 67

4-I.A. OVERVIEW 67

4-I.B. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE [HCV GB, pp. 4-11 – 4-16, Notice PIH 2009-36] 67

4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS 68

Elderly and Disabled Populations [24 CFR 8 and HCV GB, pp. 4-11 – 4-13] 68

Limited English Proficiency 68

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST 68

Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List 68

Eligible for Placement on the Waiting List 68

PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST 70

4-II.A. OVERVIEW 70

4-II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204 and 205] 70

4-II.C. OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.206] 71

Closing the Waiting List 71

Reopening the Waiting List 71

4-II.D. FAMILY OUTREACH [HCV GB, pp. 4-2 to 4-4] 71

4-II.E. REPORTING CHANGES IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES 72

4-II.F. UPDATING THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204] 72

Purging the Waiting List 72

Removal from the Waiting List 74

PART III: SELECTION FOR HCV ASSISTANCE 75

4-III.A. OVERVIEW 75

4-III.B. SELECTION AND HCV FUNDING SOURCES 75

Special Admissions [24 CFR 982.203] 75

Targeted Funding [24 CFR 982.204(e)] 75

Regular HCV Funding 75

4-III.C. SELECTION METHOD 76

Local Preferences [24 CFR 982.207; HCV p. 4-16] 76

Income Targeting Requirement [24 CFR 982.201(b) (2)] 79

Order of Selection 79

4-III.D. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION 79

4-III.E. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW 80

4-III.F. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PROCESS 81

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Chapter 5 82

BRIEFINGS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE 82

PART I: BRIEFINGS AND FAMILY OBLIGATIONS 83

5-I.A. OVERVIEW 83

5-I.B. BRIEFING [24 CFR 982.301] 83

Notification and Attendance 83

Oral Briefing [24 CFR 982.301(a)] 84

Briefing Packet [24 CFR 982.301(b)] 84

Additional Items to Be Included in the Briefing Packet 85

5-I.C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS 86

Time Frames for Reporting Changes Required By Family Obligations 86

Family Obligations [24 CFR 982.551] 86

PART II: SUBSIDY STANDARDS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE 89

5-II.A. OVERVIEW 89

5-II.B. DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT (VOUCHER) SIZE [24 CFR 982.402] 89

5-II.C. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS 90

5-II.D. VOUCHER ISSUANCE [24 CFR 982.302] 90

5-II.E. VOUCHER TERM AND EXTENSIONS 91

Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303] 91

Extensions of Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303(b)] 91

Suspensions of Voucher Term [24 CFR 982.303(c)] 92

Expiration of Voucher Term 92

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Chapter 6 93

INCOME AND SUBSIDY DETERMINATIONS 93

[24 CFR Part 5, Subparts E and F; 24 CFR 982] 93

PART I: ANNUAL INCOME 94

6-I.A. OVERVIEW 94

6-I.B. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND INCOME 95

Summary of Income Included and Excluded by Person 95

Temporarily Absent Family Members 95

Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons 96

Joint Custody of Dependents 96

Caretakers for a Child 97

6-I.C. ANTICIPATING ANNUAL INCOME 97

Basis of Annual Income Projection 97

Projecting Income 99

6-I.D. EARNED INCOME 99

Types of Earned Income Included in Annual Income 99

Types of Earned Income Not Counted in Annual Income 100

6-I.E. EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES [24 CFR 5.617 Streamlining Final Rule (SFR) Federal Register 3/8/16] 102

Eligibility 102

Calculation of the Disallowance 103

6-I.F. BUSINESS INCOME [24 CFR 5.609(b)(2)] 104

Business Expenses 104

Business Expansion 105

Capital Indebtedness 105

Negative Business Income 105

Withdrawal of Cash or Assets from a Business 105

Co-owned Businesses 105

6-I.G. ASSETS [24 CFR 5.609(b) (3); and 24 CFR 5.603(b)] 106

Overview 106

General Policies 106

Types of Assets 109

6-I.H. PERIODIC PAYMENTS 113

Periodic Payments Included in Annual Income 113

Lump-Sum Payments for the Delayed Start of a Periodic Payment 113

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Treatment of Overpayment Deductions from Social Security Benefits 113
Periodic Payments Excluded from Annual Income 114
6-I.I. PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS 114
6-I.J. WELFARE ASSISTANCE 114
Overview 114
Sanctions Resulting in the Reduction of Welfare Benefits [24 CFR 5.615] 115
6-I.K. PERIODIC AND DETERMINABLE ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 5.609(b)(7)] 115
Alimony and Child Support 115
Regular Contributions or Gifts 116
6-I.L. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9); Notice PIH 2015-21] 116
Student Financial Assistance Included in Annual Income [24 CFR 5.609(b)(9); and FR 4/10/06; Notice PIH 2015-21] 116
Student Financial Assistance Excluded from Annual Income [24 CFR 5.609(c)(6)] 117
6-I.M. ADDITIONAL EXCLUSIONS FROM ANNUAL INCOME 117
PART II: ADJUSTED INCOME 121
6-II.A. INTRODUCTION 121
Overview 121
Anticipating Expenses 121
6-II.B. DEPENDENT DEDUCTION 122
6-II.C. ELDERLY OR DISABLED FAMILY DEDUCTION 122
6-II.D. MEDICAL EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(i)] 122
Definition of Medical Expenses 122
Summary of Allowable Medical Expenses from IRS Publication 502 122
Families That Qualify for Both Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses 123
6-II.E. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES DEDUCTION [24 CFR 5.603(b) and 24 CFR 5.611(a)(3)(ii)] 123
Earned Income Limit on the Disability Assistance Expense Deduction 123
Eligible Disability Expenses 123
Necessary and Reasonable Expenses 125
Families That Qualify for Both Medical and Disability Assistance Expenses 125
6-II.F. CHILD CARE EXPENSE DEDUCTION 125
Clarifying the Meaning of *Child* for This Deduction 126
Qualifying for the Deduction 126
Earned Income Limit on Child Care Expense Deduction 127
Eligible Child Care Expenses 127
PART III: CALCULATING FAMILY SHARE AND PHA SUBSIDY 129

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6-III.A. OVERVIEW OF RENT AND SUBSIDY CALCULATIONS....129
TTP Formula [24 CFR 5.628] 129
Family Share [24 CFR 982.305(a)(5)] 129
PHA Subsidy [24 CFR 982.505(b)]....129
Utility Reimbursement [24 CFR 982.514(b)]; 982.514(c)]....130
6-III.B. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AFFECTING MINIMUM RENT [24 CFR 5.630] 130
Overview....130
HUD-Defined Financial Hardship....130
Implementation of Hardship Exemption....131
6-III.C. APPLYING PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.505; 982.503(b); FR Notice 10/24/2016]....133
Overview....133
Changes in Payment Standards 134
Reasonable Accommodation....135
6-III.D. APPLYING UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517]....135
Overview....135
Reasonable Accommodation....135
Utility Allowance Revisions 135
6-III.E. PRORATED ASSISTANCE FOR MIXED FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.520]....136
EXHIBIT 6-1: ANNUAL INCOME INCLUSIONS 137
HHS DEFINITION OF "ASSISTANCE" 138
EXHIBIT 6-2: ANNUAL INCOME EXCLUSIONS - *1* 139
EXHIBIT 6-3: TREATMENT OF FAMILY ASSETS.... 142
EXHIBIT 6-4: EARNED INCOME DISALLOWANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 143
EXHIBIT 6-5: THE EFFECT OF WELFARE BENEFIT REDUCTION145
24 CFR 5.615 145

Chapter 7 147

VERIFICATION 147

[24 CFR 982.516, 24 CFR 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230, Notice PIH 2017-12] 147

PART I: GENERAL VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS 148

7-I.A. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 982.516 AND 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230] 148

Consent Forms 148

Penalties for Failing to Consent [24 CFR 5.232] 148

7-I.B. OVERVIEW OF VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS 148

HUD's Verification Hierarchy [Notice PIH 2017-12] 148

Requirements for Acceptable Documents 148

File Documentation 149

7-I.C. UP-FRONT INCOME VERIFICATION (UIV) 149

Upfront Income Verification Using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System (Mandatory) 149

Upfront Income Verification Using Non-HUD Systems (Optional) 151

7-I.D. THIRD-PARTY WRITTEN AND ORAL VERIFICATION 151

Written Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2017-12] 151

Written Third-Party Verification Form 152

Oral Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2017-12] 152

When Third-Party Verification is Not Required [Notice PIH 2017-12] 152

7-I.E. SELF-CERTIFICATION 153

Part II: Verifying FAMILY INFORMATION 155

7-II.A. VERIFICATION OF LEGAL IDENTITY 155

7-II.B. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216, Notice PIH 2012-10] 155

7-II.C. DOCUMENTATION OF AGE 157

7-II.D. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS 157

Marriage 158

Separation or Divorce 158

Absence of Adult Member 158

Foster Children and Foster Adults 158

7-II.E. VERIFICATION OF STUDENT STATUS 158

General Requirements 159

Restrictions on Assistance to Students Enrolled in Institutions of Higher Education 159

7-II.F. DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY 160

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Family Members Receiving SSA Disability Benefits 160
Family Members Not Receiving SSA Disability Benefits 161
7-II.G. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5.508] 161
Overview 161
U.S. Citizens and Nationals 161
Eligible Immigrants 161
7-II.H. VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCE STATUS 162
PART III: Verifying Income AND ASSETS 163
7-III.A. EARNED INCOME 163
Tips 163
7-III.B. BUSINESS AND SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME 163
7-III.C. PERIODIC PAYMENTS AND PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF EARNINGS 164
Social Security/SSI Benefits 164
7-III.D. ALIMONY OR CHILD SUPPORT 164
7-III.E. ASSETS AND INCOME FROM ASSETS 165
Assets Disposed of for Less than Fair Market Value 165
7-III.F. NET INCOME FROM RENTAL PROPERTY 165
7-III.G. RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS 166
7-III.H. INCOME FROM EXCLUDED SOURCES 166
7-III.I. ZERO ANNUAL INCOME STATUS 167
7-III.J. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE 167
7-III.K. PARENTAL INCOME OF STUDENTS SUBJECT TO ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTINS 167
PART IV: VERIFYING MANDATORY DEDUCTIONS 169
7-IV.A. DEPENDENT AND ELDERLY/DISABLED HOUSEHOLD DEDUCTIONS 169
Dependent Deduction 169
Elderly/Disabled Family Deduction 169
7-IV.B. MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION 169
Amount of Expense 169
Eligible Household 170
Qualified Expenses 170
Unreimbursed Expenses 170
Expenses Incurred in Past Years 170
7-IV.C. DISABILITY ASSISTANCE EXPENSES 170
Amount of Expense 170
Family Member is a Person with Disabilities 171

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Family Member(s) Permitted to Work 171
Unreimbursed Expenses 172
7-IV.D. CHILD CARE EXPENSES 172
Eligible Child 172
Unreimbursed Expense 172
Pursuing an Eligible Activity 172
Allowable Type of Child Care 173
Reasonableness of Expenses 173
EXHIBIT 7-1: SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NONCITIZENS [HCV GB, pp. 5-9 and 5-10] 175

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Chapter 8 176

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS AND RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS 176

[24 CFR 982 Subpart I and 24 CFR 982.507] 176

PART I: PHYSICAL STANDARDS 177

8-I.A. GENERAL HUD REQUIREMENTS 177

HUD Performance and Acceptability Standards 177

Tenant Preference Items 178

Modifications to Provide Accessibility 178

8-I.B. ADDITIONAL LOCAL REQUIREMENTS 178

Thermal Environment [HCV GB p.10-7] 178

Clarifications of HUD Requirements 179

8-I.C. LIFE-THREATENING CONDITIONS [24 CFR 982.404(a); FR Notice 1/18/17] 182

8-I.D. OWNER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.404] 184

Family Responsibilities 184

Owner Responsibilities 184

8-I.E. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL [24 CFR 35.1225; FR Notice 1/13/17 and Notice PIH 2017-13] 184

8-I.F. VIOLATION OF HQS SPACE STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.401, 24 CFR 982.403] 185

PART II: THE INSPECTION PROCESS 186

8-II.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.405] 186

Types of Inspections 186

Inspection of PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)] 186

Inspection Costs [Notice PIH 2016-05] 186

Notice and Scheduling 187

Owner and Family Inspection Attendance 187

8-II.B. INITIAL HQS INSPECTION [24 CFR 982.401(a)] 187

Timing of Initial Inspections 188

Inspection Results and Re-inspections 189

Utilities 189

Appliances [Form HUD-52580] 189

8-II.C. ANNUAL/BIENNIAL HQS INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405 and 982.406: Notice PIH 2016-05] 189

Scheduling the Inspection 190

8-II.D. SPECIAL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(g)] 190

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8-II.E. QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(b); HCV GB, p. 10-32] 190
8-II.F. INSPECTION RESULTS AND REINSPECTIONS FOR UNITS UNDER HAP CONTRACT 191
Notification of Corrective Actions 191
Extensions 192
Re-inspections 193
8-II.G. ENFORCING OWNER COMPLIANCE 193
HAP Abatement 193
HAP Contract Termination 194
8-II.H. ENFORCING FAMILY COMPLIANCE WITH HQS [24 CFR 982.404(b)] 194
PART III: RENT REASONABLENESS [24 CFR 982.507] 195
8-III.A. OVERVIEW 195
PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)] 195
8-III.B. WHEN RENT REASONABLENESS DETERMINATIONS ARE REQUIRED 195
Owner-Initiated Rent Determinations 195
PHA- and HUD-Initiated Rent Reasonableness Determinations 196
LIHTC- and HOME-Assisted Units [24 CFR 982.507(c)] 196
8-III.C. HOW COMPARABILITY IS ESTABLISHED 196
Factors to Consider 196
Units that must not be used as Comparable 197
Rents Charged for Other Units on the Premises 197
8-III.D. PHA RENT REASONABLENESS METHODOLOGY 197
How Market Data Is Collected 197
How Rents Are Determined 198
EXHIBIT 8-1: OVERVIEW OF HUD HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS 199
EXHIBIT 8-2: SUMMARY OF TENANT PREFERENCE AREAS RELATED TO HOUSING QUALITY 201

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Chapter 9 202

GENERAL LEASING POLICIES 202

9-I.A. TENANT SCREENING 203
9-I.B. REQUESTING TENANCY APPROVAL [Form HUD-52517] 203
9-I.C. OWNER PARTICIPATION 205
9-I.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS 205
Ineligible Units [24 CFR 982.352(a)] 205
PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 982.352(b)] 205
Special Housing Types [24 CFR 982 Subpart M] 205
Duplicative Assistance [24 CFR 982.352(c)] 206
Housing Quality Standards (HQS) [24 CFR 982.305 and 24 CFR 982.401] 206
Unit Size 206
Rent Reasonableness [24 CFR 982.305 and 24 CFR 982.507] 206
Rent Burden [24 CFR 982.508] 207
9-I.E. LEASE AND TENANCY ADDENDUM 207
Lease Form and Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR 982.308] 207
Lease Information [24 CFR 982.308(d)] 207
Term of Assisted Tenancy 208
Security Deposit [24 CFR 982.313 (a) and (b)] 208
Separate Non-Lease Agreements between Owner and Tenant 208
PHA Review of Lease 209
9-I.F. TENANCY APPROVAL [24 CFR 982.305] 209
9-I.G. HAP CONTRACT EXECUTION [24 CFR 982.305] 210
9-I.H. CHANGES IN LEASE OR RENT [24 CFR 982.308] 211

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Chapter 10 213

MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE AND PORTABILITY... 213

PART I: MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE 214

10-I.A. ALLOWABLE MOVES 214

10-I.B. RESTRICTIONS ON MOVES 215

Denial of Moves 215

Restrictions on Elective Moves [24 CFR 982.35(c)] 216

10-I.C. MOVING PROCESS 217

Notification 217

Approval 217

Reexamination of Family Income and Composition 217

Voucher Issuance and Briefing 217

Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 982.311(d)] 218

PART II: PORTABILITY 219

10-II.A. OVERVIEW 219

10-II.B. INITIAL PHA ROLE 219

Allowable Moves under Portability 219

Determining Income Eligibility 221

Reexamination of Family Income and Composition 221

Briefing 221

Voucher Issuance and Term 222

Voucher Extensions and Expiration 222

Preapproval Contact with the Receiving PHA 223

Initial Notification to the Receiving PHA 223

Sending Documentation to the Receiving PHA 223

Initial Billing Deadline [Notice PIH 2016-19,] 224

Monthly Billing Payments [24 CFR 982.355(e), Notice PIH 2016-09] 224

Annual Updates of Form HUD-50058 225

Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.355(c)(17)] 225

10-II.C. RECEIVING PHA ROLE 225

Responding to Initial PHA's Request [24 CFR 982.355(c)] 226

Initial Contact with Family 226

Briefing 226

Income Eligibility and Reexamination 226

Voucher Issuance 227

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Notifying the Initial PHA 228
Administering a Portable Family's Voucher 228
Absorbing a Portable Family 231

Chapter 11.....233

REEXAMINATIONS.....233

PART I: ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516]..... 234

11-I.A. OVERVIEW.....234

11-I.B STREAMLINED ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516(b)] 234

11-I.C. SCHEDULING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS 235

Notification of and Participation in the Annual Reexamination Process 235

11-I.D. CONDUCTING ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS.....235

11-I.E. DETERMINING ONGOING ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN STUDENTS [24 CFR 982.552(b) (5)].....236

11-I.F. EFFECTIVE DATES 237

PART II: INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516] 239

11-II.A. OVERVIEW 239

11-II.B. CHANGES IN FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION.....239

New Family Members Not Requiring PHA Approval.....239

New Family and Household Members Requiring Approval.....239

Departure of a Family or Household Member.....240

11-II.C. CHANGES AFFECTING INCOME OR EXPENSES.....241

PHA-Initiated Interim Reexaminations.....241

Family-Initiated Interim Reexaminations 241

11-II.D. PROCESSING THE INTERIM REEXAMINATION 242

Method of Reporting.....242

Effective Dates 243

PART III: RECALCULATING FAMILY SHARE AND SUBSIDY AMOUNT..... 244

11-III.A. OVERVIEW.....244

11-III.B. CHANGES IN PAYMENT STANDARDS AND UTILITY ALLOWANCES 244

Payment Standards [24 CFR 982.505].....244

Subsidy Standards [24 CFR 982.505(c)(5)] 244

Utility Allowances [24 CFR 982.517(d)] 245

11-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF NEW FAMILY SHARE AND HAP AMOUNT 245

11-III.D. DISCREPANCIES 245

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Chapter 12 246

TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE AND TENANCY 246

PART I: GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE 247

12-I.A. OVERVIEW.....247

12-I.B. FAMILY NO LONGER REQUIRES ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.455] 247

12-I.C. FAMILY CHOOSES TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE 247

12-I.D. MANDATORY TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE.....247

Eviction [24 CFR 982.552(b)(2), 24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)] 247

Failure to Provide Consent [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)].....248

Failure to Document Citizenship [24 CFR 982.552(b)(4) and [24 CFR 5.514(c)] 248

Failure to Disclose and Document Social Security Numbers [24 CFR 5.218(c), Notice PIH 2012-10].....248

Methamphetamine Manufacture or Production [24 CFR 982.553(b)(1)(ii)].....249

Lifetime Registered Sex Offenders [Notice PIH 2012-28].....249

Failure of Students to Meet Ongoing Eligibility Requirements [24 CFR 982.552(b)(5) and FR 4/10/06].....249

Death of the Sole Family Member [24 CFR 982.311(d) and Notice PIH 2010-9] 250

12-I.E. MANDATORY POLICIES AND OTHER AUTHORIZED TERMINATIONS 250

Mandatory Policies [24 CFR 982.553(b) and 982.551(l)] 250

Other Authorized Reasons for Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.552(c), 24 CFR 5.2005(c)] 251

PART II: APPROACH TO TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE..... 254

12-II.A. OVERVIEW 254

12-II.B. METHOD OF TERMINATION [24 CFR 982.552(a)(3)].....254

12-II.C. ALTERNATIVES TO TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE.....254

Change in Household Composition.....254

Repayment of Family Debts 254

12-II.D. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE.....254

Evidence.....254

Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(i)].....255

Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(iv)] 256

12-II.E. TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING 256

VAWA Protections against Termination.....256

Limitations on VAWA Protections [24 CFR 5.2005(d) and (e)].....257

Documentation of Abuse [24 CFR 5.2007] 258

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Terminating the Assistance of a Domestic Violence Perpetrator 258
12-II.F. TERMINATION NOTICE 259
PART III: TERMINATION OF TENANCY BY THE OWNER 261
12-III.A. OVERVIEW 261
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] 261
Serious or Repeated Lease Violations 261
Violation of Federal, State, or Local Law 261
Criminal Activity or Alcohol Abuse 261
Other Good Cause 262
12-III.C. EVICTION [24 CFR 982.310(e) and (f) and Form HUD-52641-A, Tenancy Addendum] 262
12-III.D. DECIDING WHETHER TO TERMINATE TENANCY [24 CFR 982.310(h), 24 CFR 982.310(h) (4)] 263
12-III.E. EFFECT OF TENANCY TERMINATION ON THE FAMILY'S ASSISTANCE 264
EXHIBIT 12-1: STATEMENT OF FAMILY OBLIGATIONS 265

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Chapter 13 268

OWNERS 268

PART I. OWNERS IN THE HCV PROGRAM 269

13-I.A. OWNER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION [HCV GB, pp. 2-4 to 2-6] 269

Recruitment 269

Retention 269

13-I.B. BASIC HCV PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS 270

13-I.C. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.452] 271

13-I.D. OWNER QUALIFICATIONS 272

Owners Barred from Participation [24 CFR 982.306(a) and (b)] 272

Leasing to Relatives [24 CFR 982.306(d), HCV GB p. 11-2] 272

Conflict of Interest [24 CFR 982.161; HCV GB p. 8-19] 272

Owner Actions That May Result in Disapproval of a Tenancy Request [24 CFR 982.306(c)] 273

Legal Ownership of Unit 274

13-I.E. NON-DISCRIMINATION [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641] 275

PART II. HAP CONTRACTS 276

13-II.A. OVERVIEW 276

13-II.B. HAP CONTRACT CONTENTS 276

13-II.C. HAP CONTRACT PAYMENTS 277

General 277

Owner Certification of Compliance 278

Late HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.451(a)(5)] 278

Termination of HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.311(b)] 278

13-II.D. BREACH OF HAP CONTRACT [24 CFR 982.453] 279

13-II.E. HAP CONTRACT TERM AND TERMINATIONS 280

13-II.F. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP / ASSIGNMENT OF THE HAP CONTRACT [HUD-52641] 281

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Chapter 14 283

PROGRAM INTEGRITY 283

PART I: PREVENTING, DETECTING, AND INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE 284

14-I.A. PREVENTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE.....284

14-I.B. DETECTING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE.....285

Quality Control and Analysis of Data.....285

Independent Audits and HUD Monitoring.....285

Individual Reporting of Possible Errors and Program Abuse.....285

14-I.C. INVESTIGATING ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE 286

When the PHA Will Investigate.....286

Consent to Release of Information [24 CFR 982.516].....286

Analysis and Findings 286

Consideration of Remedies.....286

Notice and Appeals.....287

PART II: CORRECTIVE MEASURES AND PENALTIES..... 288

14-II.A. SUBSIDY UNDER- OR OVERPAYMENTS.....288

Corrections 288

Reimbursement.....288

14-II.B. FAMILY-CAUSED ERRORS AND PROGRAM ABUSE.....288

Family Reimbursement to PHA [HCV GB pp. 22-12 to 22-13].....288

PHA Reimbursement to Family [HCV GB p. 22-12] 289

Prohibited Actions.....289

Penalties for Program Abuse.....289

14-II.C. OWNER-CAUSED ERROR OR PROGRAM ABUSE 290

Owner Reimbursement to the PHA.....290

Prohibited Owner Actions.....290

Remedies and Penalties.....291

14-II.D. PHA-CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE 291

Repayment to the PHA 291

PHA Reimbursement to Family or Owner.....291

Prohibited Activities.....291

14-II.E. CRIMINAL PROSECUTION 292

14-II.F . FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE RECOVERIES 292

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Chapter 15 293

SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES.....293

[24 CFR 982 Subpart M] 293

PART I: SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY..... 294

[24 CFR 982.602 through 982.605]..... 294

15-I.A. OVERVIEW.....294

15-I.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION 294

15-I.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS).....294

PART II: CONGREGATE HOUSING 296

[24 CFR 982.606 through 982.609]..... 296

15-II.A. OVERVIEW 296

15-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION.....296

15-II.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS 296

PART III: GROUP HOME..... 297

[24 CFR 982.610 through 982.614 and HCV GB p. 7-4]..... 297

15-III.A. OVERVIEW.....297

15-III.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION 297

15-III.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS.....298

PART IV: SHARED HOUSING..... 299

[24 CFR 982.615 through 982.618]..... 299

15-IV.A. OVERVIEW.....299

15-IV.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION 299

15-IV.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS.....300

PART V: COOPERATIVE HOUSING 301

[24 CFR 982.619]..... 301

15-V.A. OVERVIEW 301

15-V.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION.....301

15-V.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS.....301

PART VI: MANUFACTURED HOMES 302

[24 CFR 982.620 through 982.624; FR Notice 1/18/17]..... 302

15-VI.A. OVERVIEW.....302

15-VI.B. SPECIAL POLICIES FOR MANUFACTURED HOME OWNERS WHO LEASE A SPACE.....302

Family Income 302

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Lease and HAP Contract 302
15-VI.C. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION [FR Notice 1/18/17] 302
Payment Standards 302
Utility Allowance 302
Space Rent 303
Amortization Costs 303
Housing Assistance Payment 303
Rent Reasonableness 303
15-VI.D. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS 303
PART VII: HOMEOWNERSHIP 305
[24 CFR 982.625 through 982.643] 305
15-VII.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.625] 305
15-VII.B. FAMILY ELIGIBILITY [24 CFR 982.627] 305
15-VII.C. SELECTION OF FAMILIES [24 CFR 982.626] 306
15-VII.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS [24 CFR 982.628] 307
15-VII.E. ADDITIONAL PHA REQUIREMENTS FOR SEARCH AND PURCHASE [24 CFR 982.629] 308
15-VII.F. HOMEOWNERSHIP COUNSELING [24 CFR 982.630] 308
15-VII.G. HOME INSPECTIONS, CONTRACT OF SALE, AND PHA DISAPPROVAL OF SELLER [24 CFR 982.631] 309
Home Inspections 309
Contract of Sale 309
Disapproval of a Seller 310
15-VII.H. FINANCING [24 CFR 982.632] 310
15-VII.I. CONTINUED ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS; FAMILY OBLIGATIONS [24 CFR 982.633] 311
15-VII.J. MAXIMUM TERM OF HOMEOWNER ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.634] 312
15-VII.K. HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS AND HOMEOWNERSHIP EXPENSES [24 CFR 982.635] 313
15-VII.L. PORTABILITY [24 CFR 982.636, 982.637, 982.353(b) and (c), 982.552, 982.553] 314
15-VII.M. MOVING WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.637] 314
15-VII.N. DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.638] 315

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Chapter 16 316

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION 316

PART I: ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE [24 CFR 982.155] 317

PART II: SETTING PROGRAM STANDARDS AND SCHEDULES 318

16-II.A. OVERVIEW 318

16-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.503; HCV GB, Chapter 7] 318

Updating Payment Standards 319

Unit-by-Unit Exceptions [24 CFR 982.503(b), 24 CFR 982.505(d), Notice PIH 2010-26] 320

"Success Rate" Payment Standard Amounts [24 CFR 982.503(e)] 320

Decreases in the Payment Standard below the Basic Range [24 CFR 982.503(d)] 321

16-II.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517] 321

Air Conditioning 322

Reasonable Accommodation 322

Utility Allowance Revisions 322

PART III: INFORMAL REVIEWS AND HEARINGS 323

16-III.A. OVERVIEW 323

16-III.B. INFORMAL REVIEWS 323

Decisions Subject to Informal Review 323

Notice to the Applicant [24 CFR 982.554(a)] 324

Scheduling an Informal Review 324

Informal Review Procedures [24 CFR 982.554(b)] 324

Informal Review Decision [24 CFR 982.554(b)] 324

16-III.C. INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS [24 CFR 982.555] 325

Decisions Subject to Informal Hearing 325

Informal Hearing Procedures 326

16-III.D. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR NONCITIZENS [24 CFR 5.514] 332

Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 5.514(d)] 332

USCIS Appeal Process [24 CFR 5.514(e)] 333

Informal Hearing Procedures for Applicants [24 CFR 5.514(f)] 333

Informal Hearing Procedures for Residents [24 CFR 5.514(f)] 335

Retention of Documents [24 CFR 5.514(h)] 335

PART IV: OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PHA 336

16-IV.A. OVERVIEW 336

16-IV.B. REPAYMENT POLICY 336

Owner Debts to the PHA 336

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Family Debts to the PHA 337
Repayment Agreement [24 CFR 792.103] 337
General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families 337
Repayment Agreements Involving Improper Payments 338
PART V: SECTION 8 MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (SEMAP) 340
16-V.A. OVERVIEW 340
16-V.B. SEMAP CERTIFICATION [24 CFR 985.101] 340
HUD Verification Method 340
16-V.C. SEMAP INDICATORS [24 CFR 985.3 and form HUD-52648] 341
SEMAP Indicators Chart 341
PART VI: RECORD KEEPING 345
16-VI.A. OVERVIEW 345
16-VI.B. RECORD RETENTION [24 CFR 982.158] 345
16-VI.C. RECORDS MANAGEMENT 345
Privacy Act Requirements [24 CFR 5.212 and Form-9886] 346
Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Records 346
Criminal Records 346
Medical/Disability Records 347
Documentation of Domestic Violence, Dating violence, sexual assault, or Stalking 347
PART VII: REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL 348
16-VII.A. OVERVIEW 348
16-VII.B. REPORTING REQUIREMENT [24 CFR 35.1225(e) Notice PIH 2017-13] 348
16-VII.C. DATA COLLECTION AND RECORD KEEPING [24 CFR 35.1225(f)] 348
PART VIII: DETERMINATION OF INSUFFICIENT FUNDING 349
16-VIII.A. OVERVIEW 349
16-VIII.B. METHODOLOGY 349
PART IX: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, CONFIDENTIALITY 350
16-IX.A. OVERVIEW 350
16-IX.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003, 42 USC 13925] 350
16-IX.C. NOTIFICATION [24 CFR 5.2005(a)] 351
Notification to Public 351
Notification to Program Applicants and Participants [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(1)] 351
Notification to Owners and Managers 352
16-IX.D. DOCUMENTATION [24 CFR 5.2007] 352

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Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(e)] 353
Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(d)] 353
Failure to Provide Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(c)] 353
16-IX.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)] 353
EXHIBIT 16-1: Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence against Women Act, Form HUD-5380 355
EXHIBIT 16-2: Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Alternate Documentation, Form HUD-5382 360
EXHIBIT 16-3: EMERGENCY TRANSFER PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, or STALKING (HCV VERSION) 362
EXHIBIT 16-4: Emergency Transfer Request for Certain Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking, form HUD-5383 365
EXHIBIT 16-5: MAINEHOUSING NOTICE TO HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER OWNERS AND MANAGERS REGARDING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) 368

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Chapter 17 371

PROJECT-BASED VOUCHERS 371

PART I: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS 372

17-I.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR §983.5 FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21] 372

17-I.B. TENANT-BASED VS. PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER ASSISTANCE [24 CFR §983.2] 373

17-I.C. RELOCATION REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR §983.7] 373

17-I.D. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR §983.8] 373

PART II: PBV OWNER PROPOSALS 374

17-II.A. OVERVIEW 374

17-II.B. OWNER PROPOSAL SELECTION PROCEDURES [24 CFR §983.51(b)] 374

Units Selected Non-Competitively [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21] 374

Solicitation and Selection of PBV Proposals [24 CFR §983.51 and §983.6] 374

PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.51(e) 983.59, FR Notice 1/18/17 and Notice PIH 2017-21] 375

PHA Notice of Owner Selection [24 CFR 983.51(d)] 376

Maximum amount of PBV assistance [24 CFR §983.6][Notice PIH-2015-5] 376

17-II.C. HOUSING TYPE [24 CFR §983.52] 377

17-II.D. PROHIBITION OF ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN UNITS 377

Ineligible Housing Types [24 CFR §983.53] 377

Subsidized Housing [24 CFR §983.54] 377

17-II.E. SUBSIDY LAYERING REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR §983.55] 378

17-II.F. CAP ON NUMBER OF PBV UNITS IN EACH PROJECT 379

25 Percent per Project Cap [24 CFR §983.56, FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-21] 379

Exceptions to 25 Percent per Project Cap [FR Notice 1/18/17, Notice PIH 2017-21] 379

As of April 18, 2017 units are not counted against the 25 percent per project cap if: 379

Projects not Subject to a Project Cap [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21] 380

Promoting Partially-Assisted Projects [24 CFR §983.56(c)] 380

17-II.G. SITE SELECTION STANDARDS 380

Compliance with PBV Goals, Civil Rights Requirements, and HQS Site Standards [24 CFR §983.57(b)] 380

Existing and Rehabilitated Housing Site and Neighborhood Standards [24 CFR §983.57(d)] 381

New Construction Site and Neighborhood Standards [24 CFR §983.57(e)] 382

17-II.H. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW [24 CFR §983.58] 382

PART III: DWELLING UNITS 384

17-III.A. OVERVIEW 384

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17-III.B. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS [24 CFR §983.101] 384
Lead-based Paint [24 CFR §983.101(c)] 384
17-III.C. HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 384
17-III.D. INSPECTING UNITS 384
Pre-selection Inspection [24 CFR §983.103(a)] 384
The PHA 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 PHA may not execute the HAP contract until the units fully comply with HQS. 384
Pre-HAP Contract Inspections [24 CFR §983.103(b)] 384
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 384
Annual/Biennial Inspections [24 CFR §983.103(d); FR Notice 6/25/14] 385
Other Inspections [24 CFR §983.103(e)] 385
Inspecting PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR §983.103(f)] 385
PART IV: REHABILITATED AND NEWLY CONSTRUCTED UNITS 386
17-IV.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR §983.151] 386
17-IV.B. AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO HAP CONTRACT 386
Content of the Agreement [24 CFR §983.152(d)] 386
Execution of the Agreement [24 CFR 983.153] 387
17-IV.C. CONDUCT OF DEVELOPMENT WORK 387
Labor Standards [24 CFR §983.154(b)] 387
Equal Opportunity [24 CFR §983.154(c)] 387
Owner Disclosure [24 CFR §983.154(d) and (e)] 387
17-IV.D. COMPLETION OF HOUSING 388
Evidence of Completion [24 CFR §983.155(b)] 388
PHA Acceptance of Completed Units [24 CFR §983.156] 388
PART V: HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS CONTRACT (HAP) 389
17-V.A. OVERVIEW 389
17-V.B. HAP CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS 389
Contract Information [24 CFR §983.203] 389
Execution of the HAP Contract [24 CFR §983.204] 389
Term of HAP Contract [24 CFR §983.205; FR Notice 1/18/17 and Notice PIH 2017-21] 390
Statutory Notice Requirements: Contract Termination or Expiration [24 CFR §983.206; FR Notice 1/18/17 and Notice PIH 2017-21] 391
Remedies for HQS Violations [24 CFR §983.208(b)] 392
17-V.C. AMENDMENTS TO THE HAP CONTRACT 392

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Substitution of Contract Units [24 CFR §983.207(a)] 392
Addition of Contract Units [FR Notice 1/18/17 and Notice PIH 2017-21] 392
Removal of unit from HAP contract [24 CFR §983.211] 392
17-V.D. HAP CONTRACT YEAR, ANNIVERSARY AND EXPIRATION DATES [24 CFR 983.207(B) and 983.302(e)] 393
17-V.E. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE HAP [24 CFR §983.210] 393
17-V.F. ADDITIONAL HAP REQUIREMENTS 394
Housing Quality and Design Requirements [24 CFR §983.101(e) and §983.208(a)] 394
Vacancy Payments [24 CFR §983.352(b)] 394
PART VI: SELECTION OF PBV PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS 395
17-VI.A. OVERVIEW 395
17-VI.B. ELIGIBILITY FOR PBV ASSISTANCE [24 CFR §983.251(a) and (b)] 395
In-Place Families [24 CFR §983.251(b)] 395
17-VI.C. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR §983.251(c)] 396
17-VI.D. SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR §983.251(c)] 396
Income Targeting [24 CFR §983.251(c)(6)] 396
Units with Accessibility Features [24 CFR §983.251(c) (7)] 396
Preferences [24 CFR §983.251(d), FR Notice 11/24/08] 396
17-VI.E. OFFER OF PBV ASSISTANCE 397
Refusal of Offer [24 CFR §983.251(e) (3)] 397
Disapproval by Landlord [24 CFR §983.251(e)(2)] 397
Acceptance of Offer [24 CFR §983.252] 397
17-VI.F. OWNER SELECTION OF TENANTS 398
Leasing [24 CFR §983.253(a)] 398
Filling Vacancies [24 CFR §983.254(a)] 398
17-VI.G. TENANT SCREENING [24 CFR §983.255] 398
PHA Responsibility 399
Owner Responsibility 399
PART VII: OCCUPANCY 400
17-VII.A. OVERVIEW 400
17-VII.B. LEASE [24 CFR §983.256] 400
Form of Lease [24 CFR §983.256(b)] 400
Lease Requirements [24 CFR §983.256(c)] 400
Tenancy Addendum [24 CFR §983.256(d)] 401
Lease Term and Renewal [24 CFR §983.256(f)] 401
Changes in the Lease [24 CFR §983.256(e)] 401

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Owner Termination of Tenancy [24 CFR §983.257] 401
Continuation of Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 983.258] 402
Security Deposits [24 CFR §983.259] 402
17-VII.C. MOVES 402
Overcrowded, Under-Occupied, and Accessible Units [24 CFR §983.260] 402
Family Right to Move [24 CFR §983.261] 403
17-VII.D. EXCEPTIONS TO THE OCCUPANCY CAP [24 CFR §983.262] 404
PART VIII: DETERMINING RENT TO OWNER 406
17-VIII.A. OVERVIEW 406
17-VIII.B. RENT LIMITS [24 CFR §983.301] 406
Certain Tax Credit Units [24 CFR §983.301(c)] 406
Reasonable Rent [24 CFR 983.301(e) and 983.302(c) (2)] 407
Use of FMRs, Exception Payment Standards, and Utility Allowances [24 CFR §983.301(f)] 407
Use of Small Area FMRs (SAFMRs) [24 CFR 888.113(h)] 408
PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR §983.301(g)] 409
17-VIII.C. REASONABLE RENT [24 CFR §983.303] 409
When Rent Reasonable Determinations Are Required 409
How to Determine Reasonable Rent 410
PHA-Owned Units 410
Owner Certification of Reasonable Rent 410
17-VIII.D. EFFECT OF OTHER SUBSIDY AND RENT CONTROL 410
Other Subsidy [24 CFR 983.304] 410
Rent Control [24 CFR §983.305] 411
PART IX: PAYMENTS TO OWNER 412
17-IX.A. HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS [24 CFR §983.351] 412
17-IX.B. VACANCY PAYMENTS [24 CFR §983.352] 412
17-IX.C. TENANT RENT TO OWNER [24 CFR §983.353] 413
Tenant and PHA Responsibilities 413
Utility Reimbursements 413
17-IX.D. OTHER FEES AND CHARGES [24 CFR §983.354] 413
Meals and Supportive Services 413
Other Charges by Owner 414
GLOSSARY i

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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM AND PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) receives its funding for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project Based Voucher programs from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. MaineHousing is not a federal department or agency. MaineHousing is a governmental or public body, created and authorized by state law to develop and operate housing and housing programs for low-income families. MaineHousing enters into an Annual Contributions Contract with HUD to administer the program requirements on behalf of HUD. MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing and its programs with emphasis on the Housing Choice Voucher (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: MaineHousing. This part includes a description of MaineHousing, 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.

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PART I: MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY

1-I.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

The Section 8 tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance program is funded by the federal government and administered by the **Maine State Housing Authority** for the jurisdiction of **the State of Maine.**

The officials of MaineHousing are known as Commissioners or, collectively, as the Board of Commissioners. Commissioners are appointed in accordance with state housing law and generally serve in the same capacity as the directors of a corporation, establishing policies under which MaineHousing conducts business, ensuring that policies are followed by MaineHousing staff and ensuring that MaineHousing is successful in its mission. The board is responsible for preserving and expanding the agency's resources and assuring the agency's continued viability.

Formal actions of MaineHousing are taken through written resolutions, adopted by the board of commissioners and entered into the official records of MaineHousing

The principal staff member of MaineHousing is the director, hired and appointed by the board of commissioners. The director is directly responsible for carrying out the policies established by the board and is delegated the responsibility for hiring, training and supervising MaineHousing's staff in order to manage the day-to-day operations of the agency. The director is responsible for ensuring compliance with federal and state laws and, regulations, and directives for the programs managed. In addition, the director's duties include budgeting and financial planning for the agency.

1-I.C. MAINEHOUSING 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 guiding direction for developing strategy, defining critical success factors, searching out key opportunities, making resource allocation choices, satisfying clients and stakeholders, and making decisions.

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **MaineHousing's mission is to assist Maine people in obtaining and maintaining quality affordable housing and services suitable to their housing needs. Housing Choice Vouchers assist very low income individuals and families to choose and lease decent, safe and affordable privately owned rental housing and to achieve and maintain housing stability and self-sufficiency.**

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1-I.D. MAINEHOUSING PROGRAMS

The following programs are included under this administrative plan:

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
MaineHousing's administrative plan is applicable to the operation of the Housing Choice Voucher and Project Based Voucher programs.

1-I.E. MAINEHOUSING COMMITMENT TO ETHICS AND SERVICE

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

- 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.
- 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.
- Encourage self-sufficiency of participant families and assist in the expansion of family opportunities which address educational, socio-economic, and other human service 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 MaineHousing'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 MaineHousing's support systems and a high level of commitment to our employees and their development.

MaineHousing 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.

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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.

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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.

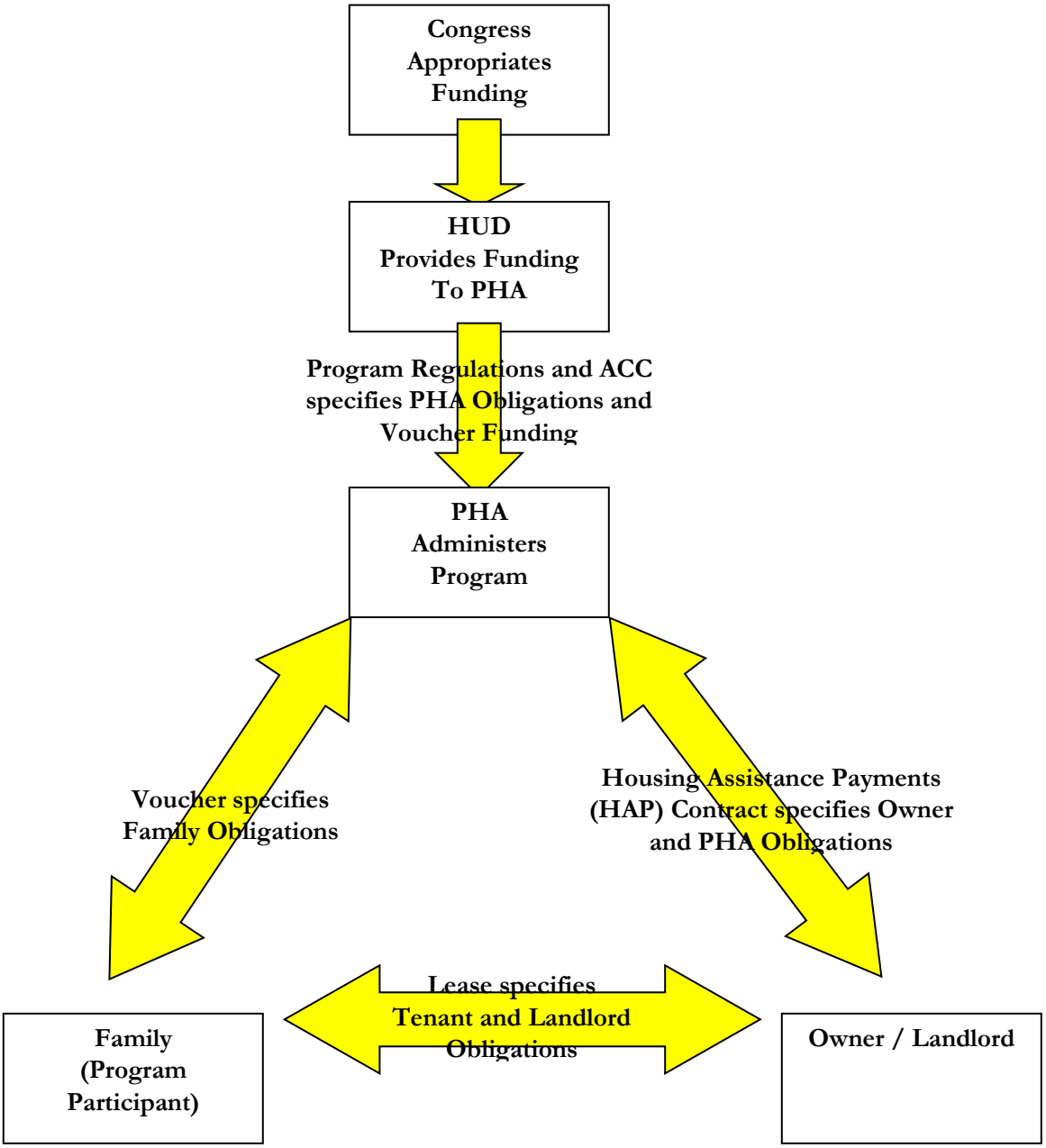
Even though the family is determined to be eligible for the program, the owner has the responsibility of approving the family as a suitable renter. The PHA continues to make payments to the owner as long as the family is eligible and the housing unit continues to qualify under the program.

1-II.C. THE HCV PARTNERSHIPS

To administer the HCV program, the PHA enters into a contractual relationship with HUD (Consolidated Annual Contribution 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:



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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 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.

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- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments contract, executed with the PHA;
- Comply with all applicable fair housing laws and 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, 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)

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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 PHA'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 PHA'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 PHA 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 PHA staff shall be in compliance with the PHA'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 follows:

- 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);

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- 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 adopt local policies and procedures that are consistent with mandatory policies in areas where HUD gives the PHA discretion. The PHA's administrative plan is the foundation of those policies and procedures. HUD's directions require PHAs to make policy choices that provide guidance to staff and ensure consistency to program applicants and participants.

Creating policies based upon HUD guidance is not mandatory, but provides a PHA with a "safe harbor." HUD has already determined that the recommendations and suggestions it makes are consistent with mandatory policies. If a PHA adopts an alternative strategy, it must make its own determination that the alternative approach 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 HUD's safe harbor, but PHAs should carefully think through those decisions.

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 PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will review and update the plan at least once every five years, and more often if needed, to reflect changes in regulations, agency operations, or when needed to ensure staff consistency in operation.**

Chapter 2

FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the laws and 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 PHA's housing choice voucher (HCV) operations.

This chapter describes the legal requirements and PHA policies related to these topics in three parts:

Part I: Nondiscrimination. This part describes the laws and regulations governing the responsibilities of the PHA regarding nondiscrimination.

Part II: Policies Related to Persons with Disabilities. This part describes 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 describes the obligations of the PHA 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*.

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PART I: NONDISCRIMINATION

2-I.A. OVERVIEW

Federal laws require PHAs 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 PHA 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)
- Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA)
- 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
- Maine Human Rights Act

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.

2-I.B. NONDISCRIMINATION

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

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

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MaineHousing Policy
State law prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation (including gender identity), physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry or national origin, familial status and receipt of federal, state or local public assistance.

MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of any of the protected classes identified in Federal and State laws and regulations in the admission or access to or participation, treatment or employment in any of its programs and activities.

The PHA will not use any of these factors to:

- Deny to any family the opportunity to apply for housing assistance, nor deny to any qualified applicant the opportunity to participate in the housing choice voucher program
- Provide housing assistance 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

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will not inquire about a person's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, familial status or receipt of public assistance, unless it is necessary to determine a person's eligibility for a preference or other program benefit for a particular protected class or as may be required by law for data collection purposes provided that MaineHousing notifies the person of the purpose of the inquiry and that the person's response is voluntary.

Providing Information to Families and Owners
The PHA 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 PHA must provide information to HCV applicant families about civil rights requirements and the opportunity to rent in a broad range of

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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, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status in connection with the contract.

Discrimination Complaints

If an applicant or participant believes that any family member has been discriminated against by the PHA or an owner, the family should advise the PHA. HUD requires the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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]

MaineHousing Policy

Applicants or participants who believe that they have been subject to unlawful discrimination may notify MaineHousing either orally or in writing. MaineHousing has designated the following person responsible for coordinating compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination requirements and addressing grievances:

Louise Patenaude
Maine State Housing Authority
353 Water Street
Augusta, ME 04330-4633
Telephone Numbers: 1-800-452-4668 (voice in state only), (207) 626-4600 (voice), or 711 (Maine Relay)

Within 10 business days of receiving the complaint, MaineHousing will provide a written notice to those alleged to have violated the rule. MaineHousing will also send a written notice to the complainant informing them that notice was sent to those alleged to have violated the rule, as well as information on how to complete and submit a housing discrimination complaint form to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO).

MaineHousing will attempt to remedy discrimination complaints made against it and will conduct an investigation into all allegations of discrimination.

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Within 10 business days following the conclusion MaineHousing's investigation, MaineHousing will provide the complainant, and those alleged to have violated the rule, with findings and either a proposed corrective action plan or an explanation of why corrective action is not warranted.

MaineHousing will keep a record of all complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions. (See Chapter 16).

MaineHousing will refer the family to outside resources if they feel they have been discriminated against by a landlord.

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PART II: POLICIES RELATED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

2-II.A. OVERVIEW

One type of disability discrimination prohibited by the Fair Housing Act and the Maine Human Rights Act is the refusal to make a 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 PHA must ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to the PHA's programs and services. This responsibility begins with the first contact by of an interested family and continues through every aspect of the program.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will inform all applicants and participants of their right to request an accommodation if they require one, in writing, on the intake application, reexamination documents, and notices of adverse action by MaineHousing, 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 your occupancy specialist"**

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

The PHA will display posters and other housing information and signage in locations throughout the PHA's office in such a manner as to be easily readable from a wheelchair.

2-II.B. DEFENITION OF REASONABLE ACCOMODATION

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 PHA, 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 PHA will modify its policies and procedures to accommodate the needs of a person with disabilities. Examples include:

- 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 PHA range) if the PHA 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 PHA staff
- Approving a live-in aide that is necessary for the care and well-being of a person with a disability
- Allowing an additional bedroom (e.g. to accommodate medical equipment or a live-in aide)
- Rent from a relative
- Port a voucher to live near necessary services or a caregiver
- Extend or reinstate a voucher
- Waive a stated deadline to provide information, make a request or a file an appeal of a decision regarding housing assistance

2-II.C. REQUEST FOR AN ACCOMODATION

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 PHA 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 person with a disability does not have to be the person making the request. The request can be made by a family member or someone else acting on the person's behalf.

The person requesting the accommodation must explain what type of accommodation is needed to provide the person with the disability full access to the PHA's programs and services.

If the need for the accommodation is not readily apparent or known to the PHA, the person requesting the accommodation 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 disability.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will encourage a request for accommodation to be made in writing using MaineHousing's reasonable accommodation request form. However, MaineHousing will consider an accommodation any time there is any indication that an accommodation is needed whether or not MaineHousing's form is used or a formal written request is submitted.**

2-II.D. VERIFICATION OF DISABILITY

The definitions of disability under Federal and State civil rights laws are provided in Exhibit 2-1 at the end of this chapter. The definition of a disability for the purpose of obtaining a reasonable accommodation under these laws is much broader than the HUD definition of disability that is used for waiting list preferences and income allowances. Even though a person does not meet the definition of disability under the HCV Program, the person may be entitled to an accommodation to provide equal opportunity to participate in the Program.

Before providing an accommodation, the PHA must determine that the person meets the definition of a person with a disability, and that the accommodation is necessary the family's access to the PHA's programs and services.

If a person's disability is obvious or otherwise known to the PHA, 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 PHA, the PHA 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 PHA 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:

- In most cases, proof that a person who is 62 years of age or less and receives Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits is verification that a person has 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 PHA must request only information that is necessary to evaluate the disability-related need for the accommodation. The PHA 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 PHA does receive confidential information about a person's specific diagnosis, treatment, or the nature or severity of the disability, the PHA will dispose of it. In place of the information, the PHA 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].

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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 PHA must approve a request for an accommodation if the following conditions are met:

- The request was made by or on behalf of a person with a disability.
- There is a relationship between the requested accommodation and the disability.
- The requested accommodation is necessary for the person with the disability to have full access to the program and its benefits or to use and enjoy the housing.
- The requested accommodation does not impose an undue financial and administrative burden on the PHA or fundamentally alter the nature of the PHA'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 PHA's program with respect to the number of employees, type of facilities and overall size of the PHA's 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 PHA may enter into discussion and negotiation with the family, request more information from the family, or may request the family to sign a consent form so that the PHA may verify the need for the requested accommodation. The family's refusal to provide a consent form may result in the PHA's inability to verify the need for the requested accommodation and a denial thereof.

MaineHousing Policy

After a request for an accommodation is made, MaineHousing will respond, in writing, within 30 days.

If the requested accommodation requires a waiver of a HUD requirement or regulation, MaineHousing will contact the HUD program office for interpretation and/or waiver of the regulation.

If MaineHousing denies a request for an accommodation because it would impose an undue financial and administrative burden or fundamentally alter the nature of MaineHousing's operations, MaineHousing will discuss with the family whether an alternative accommodation could effectively address the family's disability-related needs without a fundamental alteration to the HCV program and without imposing an undue financial and administrative burden.

If MaineHousing believes that the family has failed to identify a reasonable alternative accommodation after interactive discussion and negotiation, MaineHousing will notify the family, in writing, of its determination within 30 days from the date of the most recent discussion or communication with the family.

The family may appeal any determination to the Equal Access Coordinator or its designee within 30 calendar days after the determination is issued. The appeal

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should be in writing. Alternative means of filing an appeal, such as personal interviews or tape recordings, may be made upon request. The Equal Access Coordinator or its designee will conduct an informal review, including a conference with the family and the family's representative if requested, by telephone or other equally effective method of communication to accommodate the family. The Equal Access Coordinator or its designee will issue a written decision within 30 calendar days of completing the informal review.

The family may appeal the decision of the Equal Access Coordinator or its designee to MaineHousing's Director within 20 calendar days after the decision is issued. MaineHousing will expeditiously provide the family with a written decision on the appeal.

MaineHousing will notify the family of other available remedies, such as filing a complaint with HUD or the Maine Human Rights Commission.

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

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

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

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>

To meet the needs of persons with hearing impairments Maine Relay is 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 MaineHousing staff, one-on-one assistance will be provided upon request.

Additional examples of alternative forms of communication are having material explained orally by staff; upon request, sign language interpretation by a qualified interpreter at no cost to the person with a hearing impairment; or having an advocate to receive, interpret and explain materials and be present at all meetings. MaineHousing strongly discourages the use of friends or relatives to interpret and explain materials because of issues with confidentiality, privacy and conflict of interest. If the person with a hearing impairment uses a friend or relative to interpret and explain the materials, MaineHousing reserves the right to have an interpreter of its choice present.

MaineHousing will make its best effort to provide timely communication assistance. In the event that an alternative form of communication is not requested in advance or the requested assistance is not available when needed, the process may be delayed.

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2-II.G. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

The PHA must comply with Federal and State laws and regulations pertaining to physical accessibility, including the following:

- Notice PIH 2010-26
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
- The Fair Housing Act of 1988
- Maine Human Rights Act

The PHA'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 PHA'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 PHA Plan provides information about self-evaluation, needs assessment, and transition plans.

The design, construction, or alteration of the PHA's facilities must conform to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) and the 2010 Standards of Accessible Design. When issuing a voucher to a family that includes an individual with disabilities, the PHA will include a current list of available accessible units known to the PHA and will assist the family in locating an available accessible unit, if necessary.

In general, owners must 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 TERMINATIN OF ASSISTANCE

A PHA's decision to deny or terminate the assistance of a family that includes a person with a disability is subject to the reasonable accommodation requirements [24 CFR 982.552 (2) (iv)].

When applicants with disabilities are denied assistance, the notice of denial must inform them of the PHA'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 fully participate in the informal review process.

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

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

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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 PHA will take affirmative steps to communicate with persons 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 PHA 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 PHA and costs. Balancing these four factors will ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on the PHA.

2-III.B. ORAL INTERPRETATION

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

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **MaineHousing will utilize a language line for telephone interpreter services. MaineHousing will provide oral interpretation upon request. MaineHousing uses the Language Line, competent bilingual staff if available and in-person interpretation through community-based organizations depending on the situation. MaineHousing uses the "I Speak" cards provided by HUD to identify the language the LEP person speaks.**
>
> **MaineHousing does not specifically hire bilingual interpreters, but where feasible, MaineHousing will train and/or hire bilingual staff to be available to act as interpreters and translators, will pool resources with other PHAs, and will standardize documents.**

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LEP persons may 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 MaineHousing. MaineHousing strongly discourages the use of friends or relatives to interpret because of issues with confidentiality, privacy and conflict of interest. If the LEP person uses a friend or relative to interpret and explain the materials, MaineHousing reserves the right to have an interpreter of its choice present.

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 PHA. The interpreter may be a family member or friend.

The PHA will analyze the various kinds of contact 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 and possible, according to its language assistance plan (LAP), the PHA will train and hire bilingual staff to be available to act as interpreters and translators, will pool resources with other PHAs, and will standardize documents.

2-III.C. WRITTEN TRANSLATION

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

In order to comply with written-translation obligations, the PHA should take the following steps:

1. The PHA should provide a written translation 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
2. If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the 5 percent trigger, the PHA is not required to translate vital written materials, but should provide 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will use the forms translated by HUD on www.hudclips.org. Also, MaineHousing will translate vital documents upon request by an LEP person free of charge. MaineHousing will provide a written notice, translated in all of the languages on the *I Speak* card, with all vital documents informing LEP persons of their right to have the document translated in their language upon request at no cost to them.

2-III.D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

After completing the four-factor analysis and deciding what language assistance services are appropriate, the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA's Housing Choice Voucher program and services.

MaineHousing will analyze the various kinds of contacts it has with the public, to assess language needs and decide what reasonable steps should be taken to achieve a balance that ensures meaningful access by LEP persons to critical benefits and services without incurring costs that substantially exceed the benefits.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing conducted the four-factor analysis. Based on available data, there are very few LEP persons in the State. MaineHousing prepared a written plan that describes the analysis that was conducted and how MaineHousing will ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to the MaineHousing's programs and services. The plan (1) identifies the LEP persons in the State based on available data and MaineHousing's experience; (2) describes available language assistance measures; (3) describes how notice is provided to LEP person; (4) describes monitoring efforts; and (5) requires periodic updating of the plan.

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

The definition of disability under State and Federal civil rights laws are broader than the HUD definition for purposes of the HCV Program. The definition of disability is much broader under the State's civil rights laws than the Federal's civil rights laws.

A person with a disability is any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the person, 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, tuberculosis, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic), drug addiction (other than current addiction caused by current, illegal use of drugs) and alcoholism.

"Major life activities" includes, but is not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, 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.

State Law

A person with a disability is any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities;
- Has a physical or mental impairment that significantly impairs physical or mental health, which means having an actual or expected duration of more than 6 months and impairing health to a significant extent as compared to what is ordinarily experienced in the general population;
- Has a physical or mental impairment that requires special education, vocational rehabilitation or related services;
- Has without regard to severity unless otherwise indicated, absent, artificial or replacement limbs, hands, feet or vital organs; alcoholism; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; bipolar disorder; blindness or abnormal vision loss; cancer; cerebral palsy; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; Crohn's disease; cystic fibrosis; deafness or abnormal hearing loss; diabetes; substantial disfigurement; epilepsy; heart disease; HIV or AIDS; kidney or renal diseases; lupus; major depressive disorder; mastectomy; mental retardation; multiple sclerosis; muscular dystrophy; paralysis; Parkinson's disease; pervasive development disorders; rheumatoid arthritis; schizophrenia; and acquired brain injury; or
- Has a record of any of the physical or mental impairments described in the foregoing clauses (1) through (4); or (6) is regarded as having or is likely to develop any of the physical or mental impairments described in the foregoing clauses (1) through (4).

The existence of a physical or mental disability is determined without regard to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures such as medication, auxiliary aids or prosthetic devices.

A physical or mental disability or impairment does **not** include pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual behavior disorders, compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, tobacco smoking, or any condition covered under 5 M.R.S.A. §4553, sub-§9-C . It does **not** include psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from current illegal use of drugs, although this may not be construed to exclude an individual who has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in such use; is participating in a supervised rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in such use; is erroneously regarded as engaging in such use, but is not engaging in such use; or in the context of a reasonable accommodation in employment is seeking treatment or has successfully completed treatment.

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

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Chapter 3

ELIGIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA.
  - 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 PHA's collection and use of family information as provided for in PHA-provided consent forms.
- The PHA must determine that the current or past behavior of household members does not include activities that are prohibited by HUD or the PHA.

This chapter contains three parts:

Part I: Definitions of Family and Household Members. This part contains HUD and PHA 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 PHA to deny assistance.

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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.

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **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 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 notify MaineHousing in writing if the family's composition changes.**

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.

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

Family Breakup [24 CFR 982.315]

Except under the following conditions, the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA is bound by the court's determination of which family members continue to receive assistance.

MaineHousing Policy

When a family on the waiting list breaks up into two otherwise eligible families, both of the new families may retain the original application date.

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 MaineHousing will determine which family will retain their placement on the waiting list or continue to receive assistance. In making its determination, MaineHousing 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.

> **MaineHousing 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **A *marriage partner* includes the partner in a "common law" marriage as recognized in state law. 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.

> **MaineHousing 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

> **MaineHousing 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. The custody arrangement may be verified through court documentation, IRS records, 3rd party certification from parents or other documentation as MaineHousing sees fit.**

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, MaineHousing will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, an IRS return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes, DHHS documentation, or school records.

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 PHA 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.

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Even though persons with drug or alcohol dependencies are considered persons with disabilities, this does not prevent the PHA from denying assistance for reasons related to alcohol and drug abuse in accordance with 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.

> **MaineHousing 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.**
>
> **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.**
>
> **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 40 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.**
>
> **The burden of proof that an individual is a visitor and not an unauthorized household member, will rest upon the household. In the absence of such proof, the individual will be considered an unauthorized member of the household and MaineHousing may terminate assistance since prior approval was not requested for the addition.**

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 PHA 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].

> **MaineHousing 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.**

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If the addition of a foster child would result in an HQS violation, MaineHousing may approve an increase in the family's voucher size based on the existing subsidy standards.

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.

MaineHousing Policy

Temporary absences of individual family members for more than 30 days within a 45 day period must be approved by MaineHousing.

Definitions of Temporarily and Permanently Absent

MaineHousing Policy

Generally an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for 180 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 180 consecutive days is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

Absent Students

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household. MaineHousing does not consider dorms or student designated housing as separate households. Marriage, dependent children, and individual filing of taxes would also be considered the establishment of 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.

MaineHousing Policy

If a child has been placed in foster care, MaineHousing 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. As long as the case plan indicates family reunification, the absence will not be considered permanent.

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Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **An employed head, spouse, or cohead absent from the unit more than 180 consecutive days due to employment will continue to be considered a family member. This can include military deployment.**

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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing will consider, any additional documentation or evidence.**

Return of Permanently Absent Family Members

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The family must request MaineHousing approval for the return of any adult family members that MaineHousing previously determined to be permanently absent. The individual is subject to the eligibility and screening requirements discussed elsewhere in this chapter.**

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 PHA 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 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.

> **MaineHousing 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. For continued approval, the**

family must indicate through self-certification that the live in aide remains in the unit. MaineHousing may request a new, written certification from the knowledgeable professional at each annual reexamination. If 3rd party certification is not returned by the family MaineHousing may reduce the voucher size and payment standard as a result.

MaineHousing will not approve a particular person as a live-in aide, if that person does not meet applicant eligibility criteria with the exception of income eligibility.

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.**

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

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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]

  <u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
  MaineHousing 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 issued a voucher by MaineHousing if the voucher was issued due to demolition or displacement.

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

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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 PHA's program during a PHA fiscal year must be extremely low-income families. HUD may approve exceptions to this requirement if the PHA 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 PHA'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 PHA to request additional documentation of their status, such as a passport.

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
Family members who declare citizenship or national status will be required to provide a birth certificate or passport.

Eligible Noncitizens

In addition to providing a signed declaration, those declaring eligible noncitizen status must sign a verification consent form and cooperate with PHA 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 non-contending family members listing, signed by the head, spouse, or cohead (regardless of citizenship status), indicating their ineligible immigration status. The PHA 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)]

A PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 5.512(a)].

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will not provide assistance to a family before the verification of at least one family member.

When MaineHousing 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, that the family may be eligible for proration 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 review with MaineHousing. The informal review with MaineHousing 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 review process.

Informal review 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 PHA 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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. 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.

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The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>

MaineHousing 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 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 the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act or a designee of the director

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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 MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing will verify that a student meets the above criteria in accordance with the policies in Section 7-II.E.

Institution of Higher Education

The PHA 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

MaineHousing 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 PHA 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

MaineHousing 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.

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Vulnerable Youth

MaineHousing 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 the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act or a designee of the director**
> >
> > **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 PHA 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy

For any student who is subject to the 5.612 restrictions, MaineHousing 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**

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If MaineHousing determines that the student, the student's parents (if applicable), or the student's "family" is not eligible, MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will determine the income eligibility of the student's parents as follows:

- **If the student's parents are married and living together, MaineHousing will obtain a joint income declaration and certification of joint income from the parents.**
- **If the student's parent is widowed or single, MaineHousing will obtain an income declaration and certification of income from that parent.**
- **If the student's parents are divorced or separated, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will use the income limits for the jurisdiction in which the parents live.

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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 PHA, and those in which denial of assistance is optional for the PHA.

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, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status (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 PHA'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 PHA 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 PHA to admit an otherwise-eligible family if the household member has completed a PHA-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).

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

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

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

  MaineHousing Policy
  MaineHousing will deny assistance to any current user of Medical Marijuana in accordance with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, 42 U.S.C. §13661. MaineHousing will also deny assistance where it 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.

  In determining reasonable cause, MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing 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 PHA to deny assistance for the reasons discussed in this section.

Criminal Activity [24 CFR 982.553]

HUD permits, but does not require, the PHA to deny assistance if the PHA 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.

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MaineHousing Policy

If any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in any of the following criminal activities, within the past three 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 MaineHousing as any 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.**

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 MaineHousing (including a MaineHousing employee or a MaineHousing contractor, subcontractor, or agent).

***Immediate vicinity* means within a half mile radius of the premises.**

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

- **Any conviction for 1) Homicide including but not limited to Murder, Felony Murder or Manslaughter or 2) Sexual offenses against children where the victim is under the age of 18, Gross Sexual Assault, Aggravated or Felonious Sexual Assault or Sexual Assault or comparable offenses for which the sentence is still active or has been completed within the past 15 years, excluding probation.**
- **Any conviction for drug-related or violent criminal activity for which the sentence is still active or has been completed within the past 3 years, excluding probation.**
- **Records of arrests for drug-related or violent criminal activity within the past 3 years, although a record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole 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 3 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, MaineHousing will consider the factors discussed in Section 3-III.E. Upon consideration of such factors, MaineHousing 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 PHA to deny assistance based on the family's previous behavior in assisted housing:

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MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing will deny assistance to an applicant family if:

> **The family does not provide information that MaineHousing or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program.**
>
> **The family does not provide complete and true information to MaineHousing.**
>
> **Any family member has been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last three years.**
>
> **Any PHA has terminated assistance under the program in the last three years 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 owes rent or other amounts to any PHA 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.**
>
> **If 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, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.**
>
> **The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with the any PHA, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt covered in the repayment agreement prior to being selected from the waiting list.**
>
> **If the debt owed to any PHA is six years or older, the three criteria listed immediately above are not applicable.**
>
> **A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward MaineHousing personnel.**
>
>> ***Abusive or violent behavior towards MaineHousing 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.**

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

3-III.D. SCREENING

Screening for Eligibility

PHAs are authorized to obtain criminal conviction records from law enforcement agencies to screen applicants for admission to the HCV program. This authority assists the PHA in complying with HUD requirements and PHA 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 PHA must require every applicant family to submit a consent form signed by each adult household member [24 CFR 5.903].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will perform a criminal background check through 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, MaineHousing may request information from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

PHAs 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to screen applicants for admission.

Additionally, PHAs 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 PHA proposes to deny assistance based on a criminal record or 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 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 PHA has no liability or responsibility to the owner for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. The PHA has the authority to conduct additional screening to determine whether an applicant is likely to be a suitable tenant.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA to provide prospective owners with the family's current and prior address (as shown in PHA records) and the name and address (if known) of the owner at the family's current and prior addresses. HUD permits the PHA 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 PHA may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided to the PHA by the family in response to a PHA 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)].

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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 initial HQS inspection or before. MaineHousing 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)]

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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 PHA 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).

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will consider the following factors prior to making its decision:

- **The seriousness of the case, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents' safety or property**

- **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**
- **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**
- **The length of time since the violation occurred, including the age of the individual at the time of 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 sole basis for denial, an arrest may, however, trigger an investigation to determine whether the applicant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, MaineHousing may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. MaineHousing may also consider:**

  Any statements made by witnesses or the applicant 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 applicant 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 provides documentation from a qualified professional that states that they have been successfully rehabilitated**

MaineHousing 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 PHA's screening process reveal that an applicant's household includes an individual subject to state lifetime registered sex offender registration, the PHA 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 PHA must deny admission to the family [Notice PIH 2012-28].

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For other criminal activity, the PHA may permit the family to exclude the culpable family members as a condition of eligibility. HUD permits PHAs to impose as a condition of admission, a requirement that family members who participated in or were culpable for an action or failure to act which results in the denial of assistance, to not reside in the unit [24 CFR 982.552(c) (2) (ii)].

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

> **MaineHousing 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, to stay as a guest or reside in the assisted unit. In the case that the head of household is the culpable family member, the spouse, cohead or other adult must certify that the HOH 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 MaineHousing request.**

Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c) (2) (iv)]
If the family includes a person with disabilities, the PHA's decision concerning denial of admission is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **If the family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for the proposed denial of assistance, MaineHousing will determine whether the behavior is related to the stated disability. If so, upon the family's request, MaineHousing will determine whether admitting the family as a reasonable accommodation is appropriate. The PHA will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed denial of assistance and its potential reoccurrence. 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 PHA will notify the family in writing and schedule a tenant briefing, as discussed in Chapter 5.

If the PHA 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.

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

If a PHA 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

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opportunity for the applicant to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before the PHA 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 PHA 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

If based on a criminal record or sex offender registration information, an applicant family appears to be ineligible MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing to dispute the information within that 10-day period, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing's policies. Therefore, if MaineHousing makes a determination to deny assistance to an applicant family, MaineHousing will include in its notice of denial the VAWA information described in section 16-IX.C of this plan as well as including a copy of the form HUD-5382. MaineHousing will request in writing that an

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applicant wishing to claim protection under VAWA notify MaineHousing within 14 business days.

Documentation

Victim Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007]

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will request in writing that the applicant provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with section 16-IX.D of this plan.

Perpetrator Documentation

MaineHousing 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**

In order to reinstate the perpetrator or not initially remove them from the application, MaineHousing may request 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.

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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.

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- 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* means 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

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(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 pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation 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.

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Chapter 4

APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

> Part I: The Application Process. This part provides an overview of the application process, and discusses how applicants can obtain and submit applications. It also specifies how the PHA will handle the applications it receives.
>
> Part II: Managing the Waiting List. This part presents the policies that govern how the PHA's waiting list is structured, when it is opened and closed, and how the public is notified of the opportunity to apply for assistance. It also discusses the process the PHA will use to keep the waiting list current.
>
> Part III: Selection for HCV Assistance. This part describes the policies that guide the PHA in selecting families for HCV assistance as such assistance becomes available. It also specifies how in-person interviews will be used to ensure that the PHA has the information needed to make a final eligibility determination.

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PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

4-I.A. OVERVIEW

This part describes the PHA policies for making applications available, accepting applications, making preliminary determinations of eligibility and the placement of applicants on the waiting list. This part also describes the PHA's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process to elderly persons, 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 PHA to determine the format and content of HCV applications, as well how such applications will be made available to interested families and how applications will be accepted by the PHA. The PHA must include Form HUD-92006, Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing, as part of the PHA's application.

MaineHousing Policy

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

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

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

Applications for the HCV Program will be placed on the Maine State Centralized Waiting List System which is owned by Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC. Families will be encouraged to apply on-line on the designated secure website; however, the family may obtain application forms from MaineHousing's office during normal business hours. Families may also request – by telephone, by email or by mail – an application be mailed to them via first class mail. The application can also be printed from MaineHousing's website.

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

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4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

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

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

Limited English Proficiency

PHAs are 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 PHA's policies related to ensuring access to people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **To provide specific accommodations for persons with disabilities, a staff person may complete the information for the applicant by hand or online. Interpreter services will be provided for applicants with limited English proficiency upon request.**

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST

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

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

Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **MaineHousing will not deny receipt of an HCV preliminary application unless MaineHousing has knowledge the person is registered on a Life-Time Sex Offender List or has been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the manufacture of methamphetamines on the premises of federally assisted housing.**

Eligible for Placement on the Waiting List

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **The applicant confirmation of receipt of application may be sent by MaineHousing by mail, or by email from Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC as a result of the applicant utilizing the online Centralized Waiting List System. Placement on the waiting list does not indicate that the family is, in fact, eligible for assistance. A final**

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determination of eligibility will be made when the family is selected from the waiting list.

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

PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

4-II.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program.**

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

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

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

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MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will not merge the HCV waiting list with the waiting list for any other program that MaineHousing operates.

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

Closing the Waiting List

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

MaineHousing Policy

The Centralized Waiting List for the HCV Program cannot be closed by MaineHousing. That function is decided by the owner of the system in consultation with all participating housing authorities.

Where MaineHousing has particular preferences or funding criteria that require a specific category of family, MaineHousing 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 PHA publishes a notice in local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable media outlets. The notice must comply with HUD fair housing requirements and must specify who may apply, and where and when applications will be received.

MaineHousing Policy

The Centralized Waiting List for the HCV Program cannot be opened by MaineHousing. That function is decided by the owner of the system in consultation with all participating housing authorities.

The owner 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 notices may be made in an accessible format if requested. They will provide potential applicants with information that includes housing authorities' addresses and phone numbers, how to submit an application, information on eligibility requirements, and the availability of local preferences.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will monitor the characteristics of the population being served and the characteristics of the population as a whole in MaineHousing'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

MaineHousing Policy

While the family is on the Centralized Waiting List for the HCV Program, the family must immediately inform any participating housing authority of changes in contact information, including current residence, mailing address, email address, and phone number. The changes may be submitted to that participating housing authority in writing by completing a Change of Information form or entered by the family on the designated secure website for applications.

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

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

Purging the Waiting List

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

MaineHousing Policy

The Maine Centralized Section 8/HCV Waiting List will be updated and purged by Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC. The purge is necessary to ensure that the pool of applicants reasonably represents families still actively interested in Section 8 HCV assistance. Purging also enables the family to update applicant information regarding address, family composition, income category and preferences.

Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC will purge the waiting list, at a minimum, every three (3) years. Purge notices will ask for current household/applicant information and confirmation of continued interest.

The purge notice will be sent via first class mail to the most recent mailing address that the family has on record with the Maine Centralized Section 8/HCV Waiting List.

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. The deadline for responses will be 30 days from the date of the mailing.

The family's response must be submitted in writing and delivered in person, by mail or by fax to Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC at the address indicated on the notice. Responses may also be submitted online through the use of the applicant portal on the Maine Centralized Section 8/HCV Waiting List website.

If a family fails to respond to a mailed written notice within the established response time, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

If the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, this will be used as proof that the applicant has moved without notice and the applicant will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

If the notice is returned by the post office with a forwarding address, the update request will be re-sent to the forwarding address indicated. The update request will provide a new 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. The deadline for a response will be 30 days from the date of the re-mailing.

If an applicant family responds to a purge request within 90 days of the initial deadline for responses, Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC shall reinstate the application with the original date/time stamp.

Following the 90-day grace period above, requests for reinstatement will be considered for the following reasons only:

- **The applicant was removed in error - Application will be reinstated if there is evidence of the error. Example: Letter was returned as undeliverable but**

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applicant remained at that address and provided a copy of a recent mailing that was successfully sent to them at that address. Requests received without supporting documentation *(evidence of the error)* will not be reviewed.

- **The applicant was unable to respond due to the applicant's disability and requests a reasonable accommodation - Application will be reinstated if a qualified medical professional verifies in writing that the applicant was unable to respond to the update request in a timely manner due to their disability.**

  If the Reasonable Accommodation is denied, the applicant family may appeal the decision within 14 calendar days after the determination is issued. The appeal should be in writing and mailed to Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC. An Advisory Group to Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC (consisting of designees from participating housing authorities) will conduct an informal review, including a conference with the family and the family's representative if requested, by telephone or other equally effective method of communication to accommodate the family. Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC will issue the Advisory Group's written decision to the applicant family, within 30 calendar days of completing the informal review.

- **The applicant was unable to respond due to their status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking or sexual assault (VAWA) - Application will be reinstated if the applicant can document that they are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking or sexual assault *and* were unable to respond due to their status as a victim.**

Requests for Reinstatement must be submitted in writing to Housing Data Link of Maine, LLC.

Applicants who are approved for reinstatement to the waiting list will retain their original date and time of application. However, all applications in progress as of the date of reinstatement shall have priority for funding over the reinstated application.

Removal from the Waiting List

MaineHousing Policy

If at any time an applicant family is on the waiting list, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing's decision (see Chapter 16) [24 CFR 982.201(f)].

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PART III: SELECTION FOR HCV ASSISTANCE

4-III.A. OVERVIEW

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

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

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

4-III.B. SELECTION AND HCV FUNDING SOURCES

Special Admissions [24 CFR 982.203]

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

Targeted Funding [24 CFR 982.204(e)]

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

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>

MaineHousing administers the following types of targeted funding:

- **Mainstream- Non-Elderly Disabled**
- **Family Unification Program**
- **Veterans Assistance Supportive Housing - MaineHousing may provide regular vouchers to participants in this program who no longer require case management services**

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.

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4-III.C. SELECTION METHOD

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

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

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

MaineHousing Policy

It is MaineHousing policy that a priority and/or preference, as well as date and time of the application, establish placement position on a waiting list. Families who have also applied for Project Based Vouchers will be selected according to Chapter 17.

Priority and Local Preference Admissions

1. **Priority**
   a. **MaineHousing will offer a priority to any family that has been terminated from the HCV program due to insufficient program funding.**
   b. **Homeless Priority**

      MaineHousing will set aside 60% of available funding for undedicated vouchers for any applicant family that:

      1) **Is homeless, and**
      2) **Is referred by a provider receiving Stabilization Share funds under the MaineHousing Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program and receiving additional case management follow-up from the provider's navigator under the Home to Stay Program; or**
      3) **is referred by a Bridging Rental Assistance Program caseworker, or homeless shelter or domestic violence provider that is not receiving Stabilization Share funds under the MaineHousing Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program and meets MaineHousing's jurisdictional preference. MaineHousing maintains a list of approved providers.**

Homeless is defined as:

i. **An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:**
ii. **An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a**

regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport or camping ground;

iii. An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by federal, state or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing of 24 months or less);

iv. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

v. Any individual or family who:

1) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence;

2) Has no other residence; and

3) Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

If an individual or family is homeless, to qualify for a MaineHousing residency preference, the individual or family must have had a permanent residence in MaineHousing's jurisdiction within 6 months prior to becoming homeless or be referred by a shelter located in MaineHousing's jurisdiction.

c. Priority for People with Disabilities receiving Medicaid waiver services under Sections 18, 19, 20, 21 and 29

MaineHousing will set aside 33 vouchers for leveraged funding under HUD's 811 Program. MaineHousing pledged these vouchers in a NOFA that was selected for funding by HUD in 2015. In addition to the 33 vouchers, MaineHousing will set aside up to an additional 7 vouchers for families who are over 61 years of age and are receiving Medicaid waiver services, as listed above.

d. Priority for families participating in the Building Family Futures Pilot

In 2016 the Maine Legislature enacted H.P. 1095 – L.D. 1607 – An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Maine Affordable Housing

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Workgroup. This law requires MaineHousing to establish a pilot program using Housing Choice Vouchers to "provide a comprehensive approach to prevent homelessness and promote housing stability, family well-being and self-sufficiency for families at risk of homelessness." MaineHousing initiated the pilot with 10 vouchers in the greater Waterville area and will expand the pilot to other areas of the state depending on the availability of vouchers to commit to the program.

2. **Preferences**

   MaineHousing gives preference to an applicant family on the waiting list if they qualify for one or more of the preference categories listed below. Preference points are cumulative and are added to the applicant family's priority points (if any) to determine an applicant family's position on the waiting list.

   a. **MaineHousing will offer a residency preference to individuals or families who reside in or include a family member who works or has been hired to work in any area of the State other than a municipality with an operating municipal housing authority organized by the municipality.**

      A "residency" preference is for a family that resides in a specified geographic area, or includes a family member who works, or has been notified that they are hired to work, in that geographic area. The preference cannot have the effect of disproportionately delaying or denying assistance to members of protected classes. A residency <u>requirement</u> is prohibited.

   b. **MaineHousing will offer a preference for veterans.**

   c. **MaineHousing will offer a preference for elderly Families 62+, and/or Disabled Families, and Families of two or more persons.**

Point System

The points given each preference are listed below. A family may receive points for more than one preference

Preferences	Points
Living or Working in Maine, Elderly, Disabled, or Family of Two or More	20
Living or Working in Maine, Single	15
Living or Working in MaineHousing jurisdiction	10
Veteran	4
Non-Resident Elderly, Disabled, or Family of Two or More	3

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Income Targeting Requirement [24 CFR 982.201(b) (2)]
HUD requires that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 75 percent of the families admitted to the HCV program during the PHA's fiscal year. ELI families are those with annual incomes at or below the federal poverty level or 30 percent of the area median income, whichever number is higher. To ensure this requirement is met, a PHA may skip non-ELI families on the waiting list in order to select an ELI family.

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

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

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

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **Families will be selected from the waiting list based on the targeted funding or selection preference(s) for which they qualify, and in accordance with MaineHousing's hierarchy of preferences, if applicable. Within each targeted funding or 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 MaineHousing. Documentation will be maintained by MaineHousing as to whether families on the list qualify for and are interested in targeted funding. If a higher placed family on the waiting list is not qualified or not interested in targeted funding, there will be a notation maintained so that MaineHousing does not have to ask higher placed families each time targeted selections are made.**

4-III.D. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION
When a family has been selected from the waiting list, the PHA must notify the family.

[24CFR 982.554(a)]

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will notify the family by first class mail when it is selected from the waiting list. The family will be sent the following documents with a request for return:**

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-
- **The full application for the family to complete and return.**
- **A list of documents that must be provided to document the legal identity of household members, including information about what constitutes acceptable documentation**
- **Other documents and information that should be submitted including the HUD form 9886 and other releases as required.**

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

4-III.E. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW

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

Assistance cannot be provided to the family until all SSN documentation requirements are met. However, if the PHA determines that an applicant family is otherwise eligible to participate in the program, the family may retain its place on the waiting list for a period of time determined by the PHA [Notice PIH 2012-10].

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

MaineHousing Policy

Due to the undue financial burden they would experience in being required to travel to MaineHousing to participate in a face-to-face interview, families selected from the waiting list are not required to participate in an eligibility interview.

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. This documentation may be submitted to MaineHousing by mail, fax or in person at MaineHousing's office in Augusta, Maine. If any materials are missing, MaineHousing will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted. Any clarification needed on the part of the family or MaineHousing will be handled through phone or email contact

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at initial request must be provided within 10 business days of the written reminder (Chapter 7 provides details about longer submission deadlines for particular items, including documentation of eligible noncitizen status). If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension. If the required documents and information are not provided within the

required time frame (plus any extensions), the family will be sent a notice of denial (See Chapter 3).

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

Documents will be provided in English. For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, MaineHousing will provide translation services in accordance with MaineHousing's LEP plan as outlined in Chapter 2.

4-III.F. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The PHA must verify all information provided by the family (see Chapter 7). Based on verified information, the PHA must make a final determination of eligibility (see Chapter 3) and must confirm that the family qualified for any special admission, targeted funding, admission, or selection preference that affected the order in which the family was selected from the waiting list.

MaineHousing Policy

If MaineHousing determines that the family is ineligible, MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing will notify the family in writing that it has been returned to the waiting list, and will specify the reasons for it.

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

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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 PHA 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 PHA issues the family a voucher. The voucher includes the unit size for which the family qualifies based on the PHA'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 PHA 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 PHA'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.

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PART I: BRIEFINGS AND FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

5-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD regulations require the PHA 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 PHA's procedures, and includes instructions on how to lease a unit. This part describes how oral briefings 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 PHA must give the family an oral briefing 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy

Briefings may be conducted in group meetings.

All adult family members are required to attend the briefing.

Families that attend group briefings and still need individual assistance will be referred to an appropriate MaineHousing staff person.

Briefings will be conducted in English. For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, MaineHousing will provide translation services in accordance with the MaineHousing's LEP plan (See Chapter 2).

If the family requests as a convenience, MaineHousing may conduct the briefing by telephone or other remote conferencing.

Notification and Attendance

MaineHousing Policy

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.

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.

Applicants who fail to attend a scheduled briefing will be scheduled for another briefing automatically. MaineHousing will notify the family of the date and time of the second scheduled briefing. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled briefings, without prior MaineHousing approval, will be denied assistance (see Chapter 3).

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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 PHA's jurisdiction;
- For families eligible under portability. An explanation of how portability works. The PHA may not discourage the family from choosing to live anywhere in the PHA jurisdiction or outside the PHA jurisdiction under portability, unless otherwise expressly authorized by statute, regulation, PIH Notice, or court order;
- The PHA must inform the family of how portability may affect the family's assistance through screening, subsidy 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
- For families receiving welfare-to-work vouchers, a description of any local obligations of a welfare-to-work family and an explanation that failure to meet the obligations is grounds for denial of admission or termination of assistance.

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 PHA's policies on any extensions of the term. If the PHA allows extensions, the packet must explain how the family can request an extension.
- A description of the method used to calculate the housing assistance payment for a family, including how the PHA determines the payment standard for a family, how the PHA determines total tenant payment for a family, and information on the payment standard and utility allowance schedule.
- An explanation of how the PHA 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 PHA policy on providing information about families to prospective owners.
- The PHA subsidy standards including when and how exceptions are made.

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- Materials (e.g. brochures) on how to select a unit and any additional information on selecting a unit that HUD provides.
- 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 PHA who may be willing to lease a unit to the family or other resources (e.g. newspapers, organizations, online search tools) known to the PHA that may assist the family in locating a new unit. PHAs 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 PHA.
- The family obligations under the program, including any obligations of a welfare-to-work family.
- The grounds on which the PHA may terminate assistance for a participant family because of family action or failure to act.
- PHA informal hearing procedures including when the PHA 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

If the PHA 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 2017-12].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will provide the following additional materials in the briefing packet:

Information on Lead Paint Hazards

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)

HUD Form 56675 Debts Owed to PHA to be signed by all adult household members.

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What you should know about EIV guide to be signed by all adult household members.

The OIG pamphlet "Is Fraud worth It?"

5-I.C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

Obligations of the family are described in the housing choice voucher (HCV) regulations and on the voucher itself. These obligations include responsibilities the family is required to fulfill, as well as prohibited actions. The PHA 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

MaineHousing Policy

Unless otherwise noted below, when family obligations require the family to respond to a request or notify MaineHousing of a change, notifying the MaineHousing of the request or change within 10 business days is considered prompt notice.

When a family is required to provide notice to MaineHousing, 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 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.

  MaineHousing Policy

  Damages beyond normal wear and tear will be considered to be damages which could be assessed against the security deposit as determined by Maine state law.

- 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.

  MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 PHA and the owner before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease.

  MaineHousing Policy
  The family must comply with lease requirements regarding written notice to the owner. The family must provide written notice to MaineHousing 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.

  MaineHousing Policy
  The request to add a family member must be submitted in writing and approved prior to the person moving into the unit. MaineHousing will determine eligibility of the new member in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3. MaineHousing will also require documentation of landlord approval to add the additional family member to the lease.

- 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.

  MaineHousing Policy

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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.

  MaineHousing 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 in any 45 day period. Written notice must be provided to MaineHousing at the start of the extended absence unless disability or medical circumstances would prevent that from happening.

- 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].

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PART II: SUBSIDY STANDARDS AND VOUCHER ISSUANCE

5-II.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA determines the appropriate number of bedrooms under the PHA 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 PHA determines family unit size:

- The subsidy standards must provide for the smallest number of bedrooms needed to house a family without overcrowding.
- 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 PHA to reside in the unit to care for a family member who is disabled or is at least 50 years of age) must be counted in determining the family unit size;
- 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 PHA subsidy standards.

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
MaineHousing will assign one bedroom for each two persons within the household, except in the following circumstances:

- **Single head of household with additional family members not designated as a spouse or co-head will be allocated a separate bedroom.**
- **Children under 18 of different genders will be allocated separate bedrooms.**
- **Live-in aides will be allocated a separate bedroom.**
- **Single person families will be allocated one bedroom.**

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MaineHousing will reference the following chart in determining the appropriate voucher size for a family:

Voucher Size	Persons in Household (Minimum – Maximum)
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 PHA may grant an exception to its established subsidy standards if the PHA 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will consider granting an exception for any of the reasons specified in the regulation: health or disability.

The family must request any exception to the subsidy standards in writing. 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. The family's use of the additional bedroom for medical equipment will be re-verified at the annual HQS inspection. If the extra bedroom is not being used for its intended purpose MaineHousing will reduce the payment standard at the family's next annual reexamination.

MaineHousing 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 PHA issues a Housing Choice

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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 PHA has determined the family to be eligible for the program, and that the PHA expects to have money available to subsidize the family if the family finds an approvable unit. However, the PHA 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 PHA's housing choice voucher program [Voucher, form HUD-52646]

A voucher can be issued to an applicant family only after the PHA 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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **Vouchers will be issued to eligible applicants immediately following the mandatory briefing.**

The PHA 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 PHA must wait until it has adequate funds before it calls another family from the list [HCV GB p. 8-10].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **Prior to issuing any vouchers, MaineHousing 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 PHA 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)].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The initial voucher term will be 120 calendar days.**
>
> **The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval and proposed lease within the 120-day period.**

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

The PHA 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. There is no limit on the number of extensions that the PHA can approve. Discretionary policies related to extension and expiration of search time must be described in the PHA's administrative plan [24 CFR 982.54].

PHAs 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.

The family must be notified in writing of the PHA's decision to approve or deny an extension. The PHA'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)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will approve additional extensions only in the following circumstances:

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

In order to utilize our funding to provide the maximum assistance possible, MaineHousing will not consider any extension beyond a 365-day period as reasonable.

Any request for an additional extension must include the reason(s) an additional extension is necessary. The PHA may require 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 PHA prior to the expiration date of the voucher (or extended term of the voucher).

The PHA 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 PHA must provide for suspension of the initial or any extended term of the voucher 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.

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 PHA may require that the family reapply, or may place the family on the waiting list with a new application date but without requiring reapplication. 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].

MaineHousing Policy

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

Within 10 business days after the expiration of the voucher term or any extension, MaineHousing 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.

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

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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.

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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].

MaineHousing Policy

Generally an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for 180 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 180 consecutive days is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

Absent Students

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household. MaineHousing does not consider dorms or student designated housing as separate households. Marriage, dependent children, and individual filing of taxes would also be considered the establishment of 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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **If a child has been placed in foster care, MaineHousing 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. As long as the case plan indicates family reunification, the absence will not be considered permanent.**

Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **An employed head, spouse, or cohead absent from the unit more than 180 consecutive days due to employment will continue to be considered a family member. This can include military deployment.**

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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will request verification from a responsible medical professional and will use this determination. 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 cohead qualifies as an elderly person or a person with disabilities.**

Joint Custody of Dependents

> **MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, or an IRS return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes.**

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Caretakers for a Child

MaineHousing Policy

The approval of a caretaker is at the owner and MaineHousing's discretion and subject to the owner and MaineHousing's screening criteria. If neither a parent nor a designated guardian remains in a household receiving HCV assistance, MaineHousing 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 90 days. After the 90 days has elapsed, the caretaker will be considered a family member unless information is provided that would confirm that the caretaker's role is temporary. In such cases MaineHousing 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. Or if third party documentation indicates that a caretaker will be responsible for the children on a long term basis, MaineHousing will transfer the voucher assistance to the caretaker if they are eligible. MaineHousing will define long term as exceeding 90 days.

(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 PHA 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 PHA generally will use current circumstances to determine anticipated income for the coming 12-month period. HUD authorizes the PHA 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 PHA believes that past income is the best available indicator of expected future income [24 CFR 5.609(d)]

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PHAs are 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 PHAs 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 PHA does not determine it is necessary to obtain additional third-party data.

PHA Policy Notice 2010-19

When EIV is obtained and the family does not dispute the EIV employer data, the PHA will use current tenant-provided documents to project annual income. When the tenant-provided documents are pay stubs, the PHA will make every effort to obtain current and consecutive pay stubs dated within the last 60 days.

The PHA 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 PHA determines additional information is needed.

In such cases, the PHA 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 PHA annualized projected income.

When the PHA cannot readily anticipate income based upon current circumstances (e.g., in the case of seasonal employment, unstable working hours, or suspected fraud), the PHA 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 PHA to show why the historic pattern does not represent the family's anticipated income.

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Known Changes in Income

If the PHA 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/hour × 40 hours × 7 weeks) + ($8.25 × 40 hours × 45 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 PHA 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 PHA'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 made clear 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

For persons who regularly receive bonuses or commissions, MaineHousing will verify and then average amounts received for the two years preceding admission or reexamination. If only a one-year history is available, MaineHousing will use the prior year amounts. In either case the family may provide, and MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 (including gifts) 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].

> **MaineHousing 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)

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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)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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].

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing'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.

MaineHousing 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.

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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. The family member's prior, or prequalifying, income remains constant 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.

> **MaineHousing 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **During the 48-month eligibility period, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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 PHA must exclude at least 50 percent of any increase in income attributable to employment or increased earnings.

MaineHousing Policy
During the second 12-month exclusion period, MaineHousing 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].

MaineHousing Policy
To determine business expenses that may be deducted from gross income, MaineHousing 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. If taxes are not filed on self-employment income, MaineHousing will apply the IRS rules to the family's documentation.

Business Expansion
HUD regulations do not permit the PHA to deduct from gross income expenses for business expansion.

MaineHousing 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 PHA to deduct from gross income the amortization of capital indebtedness.

MaineHousing Policy
Capital indebtedness **is defined as the principal portion of the payment on a capital asset such as land, buildings, and machinery. This means MaineHousing 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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
MaineHousing 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

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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); and 24 CFR 5.603(b)]

Overview

There is no asset limitation for participation in the HCV program. However, HUD requires that the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA can take into consideration past rental income along with the prospects of obtaining a new tenant.

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
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 MaineHousing 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 PHA 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.

  MaineHousing Policy

  Where the family has net family assets equal to or less than $5,000, MaineHousing will accept a family's declaration of the amount of assets and the income expected to be received. MaineHousing will not request supporting documentation from the family. (PIH-2013-03)

  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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA.

- 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.

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

  MaineHousing will review the passbook rate annually, in December of each year. The rate will not be adjusted unless the current MaineHousing 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.

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Determining Actual Anticipated Income from Assets

It may or may not be necessary for the PHA 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."

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **If an asset is owned by more than one person and any family member has unrestricted access to the asset, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will prorate the asset according to the percentage of ownership. If no percentage is specified or provided for by state or local law, MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 *HCV Guidebook* permits the PHA to set a threshold below which assets disposed of for less than fair market value will not be counted [HCV GB, p. 5-27].

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MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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 recertification, the family may request an interim recertification to eliminate consideration of the asset(s).

Assets placed by the family in non-revocable 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.

MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing may verify the value of the assets disposed of if other information available to MaineHousing 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.

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MaineHousing Policy

In determining the value of a checking account, MaineHousing will use the current balance.

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

In determining the anticipated income from an interest-bearing checking or savings account, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy

In determining the market value of an investment account, MaineHousing 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), MaineHousing 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].

MaineHousing Policy

In determining the equity, MaineHousing will determine market value by examining recent tax assessments, appraisals or online estimates from websites such as www.zillow.com.

MaineHousing will first use the payoff amount for the loan (mortgage) as the unpaid balance to calculate equity. If the payoff amount is not available, MaineHousing 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:

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- Equity accounts in HUD homeownership programs [24 CFR5.603(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 PHA 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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **For the purposes of calculating expenses to convert to cash for real property, MaineHousing will use ten percent 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.

> **MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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.

Non-revocable 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 PHA 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].

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **In determining the value of personal property held as an investment, MaineHousing will use the family's estimate of the value. MaineHousing 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.**

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

> **MaineHousing 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 [25 CFR 5.609(c)(14)].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **When a delayed-start payment is received and reported during the period in which MaineHousing is processing an annual reexamination, MaineHousing will adjust the family share and MaineHousing subsidy prospectively for the period following the effective date of the increase.**

Treatment of Overpayment Deductions from Social Security Benefits

The PHA 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 PHA must use the

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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].

  MaineHousing Policy
  MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA must include in annual income "imputed" welfare income. The PHA 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 PHA must count alimony or child support amounts awarded as part of a divorce or separation agreement.

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **MaineHousing will count court-awarded amounts for alimony and child support unless MaineHousing verifies that: (1) the payments are not being made, and (2) the**

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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].

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 PHA 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)].

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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 MaineHousing. For contributions that may vary from month to month (e.g., utility payments), MaineHousing 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); and 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.

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To determine annual income in accordance with the above requirements, the PHA 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 <u>Excluded</u> 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) and updated by FR Notice 5/20/14 that have not been discussed earlier in this chapter include the following:

- Reimbursement of medical expenses [24 CFR 5.609(c)(4)]

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- 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 sub marginal 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*

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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 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 provide by states, local governments, and disaster assistance organizations

PART II: ADJUSTED INCOME

6-II.A. INTRODUCTION

Overview

HUD regulations require PHAs 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

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>

Generally, MaineHousing 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), MaineHousing will estimate costs based on historic data and known future costs.

If a family has an accumulated debt for medical or disability assistance expenses, MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing 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."

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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. MaineHousing will allow nonprescription medicines if recommended by a medical provider.

Summary of Allowable Medical Expenses from IRS Publication 502	
Services of medical professionals Surgery and medical procedures that are necessary, legal, non-cosmetic Services of medical facilities Hospitalization, long-term care, and in-home nursing services Improvements to housing directly related to medical needs (e.g., ramps for a wheel chair, handrails)	Substance abuse treatment programs Psychiatric treatment Ambulance services and some costs of transportation related to medical expenses The cost and care of necessary equipment related to a medical condition (e.g., eyeglasses/lenses, hearing aids, crutches, and artificial teeth) Cost and continuing care of necessary service animals 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

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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.

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The family must identify the family members enabled to work as a result of the disability assistance expenses. In evaluating the family's request, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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 PHAs to further define and describe auxiliary apparatus [VG, p. 30].

Eligible Auxiliary Apparatus

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing will utilize the Maine Human Rights Act Definition of Service Animal as follows:

Pursuant to 5 M.R.S. §4553(9-E), "service animal" means:

For the purposes of subchapter 5, a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of such work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting an individual who is totally or partially blind with navigation and other tasks, alerting an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing nonviolent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting an individual to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or a telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to an individual with a mobility disability and helping a person with a psychiatric or neurological disability by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

Eligible Attendant Care

The family determines the type of attendant care that is appropriate for the person with disabilities.

MaineHousing 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.

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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, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing determines the reasonableness of the expenses based on typical costs of care or apparatus in the locality. To establish typical costs, MaineHousing will collect information from organizations that provide services and support to persons with disabilities. A family may present, and MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

This policy applies only to families in which the head or spouse 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, MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing.

Furthering Education

MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing 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

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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].

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 PHA 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

MaineHousing 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.

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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, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will use the schedule of child care costs from the local welfare agency. Families may present, and MaineHousing will consider, justification for costs that exceed typical costs in the area.

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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 PHA 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]

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **Welfare rent does not apply in this locality.**

Minimum Rent [24 CFR 5.630]

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **The minimum rent for this locality is $0.**

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 PHA's applicable payment standard: (1) the family will pay more than the TTP, and (2) at initial occupancy the PHA 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 PHA 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.)

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Utility Reimbursement [24 CFR 982.514(b)]; 982.514(c)]
When the PHA subsidy for a family exceeds the rent to owner, the family is due a utility reimbursement. HUD permits the PHA to pay the reimbursement to the family or directly to the utility provider.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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 PHA must also adopt hardship policies for families for whom receiving quarterly reimbursement would create a financial hardship.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will issue all utility reimbursements monthly.**

6-III.B. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AFFECTING MINIMUM RENT [24 CFR 5.630]

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The financial hardship rules described below do not apply in this jurisdiction because MaineHousing has established a minimum rent of $0.00**

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.

> **MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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 N/A Welfare rent $35 Minimum rent	$15 10% of monthly gross income N/A Welfare rent $35 Minimum rent
Minimum rent applies. TTP = $35	Hardship exemption granted. TTP = $15

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will require the family to repay the suspended amount within 30 calendar days of MaineHousing'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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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); FR Notice 10/24/2016]

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 PHA's payment standards. The establishment and revision of the PHA'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 PHA 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.

If a PHA changes its payment standard schedule, resulting in a lower payment standard amount, during the term of a HAP contract, the PHA 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 10/24/16].
However, if the PHA 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 PHA may either reduce the payment standard to the current amount in effect on the PHA'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 PHA may also establish different policies for designated areas within their jurisdiction (e.g., different zip code areas).

In any case, the PHA 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 PHA'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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **If MaineHousing changes its payment standard schedule resulting in a lower payment standard amount, during the term of a HAP contract, MaineHousing will not reduce the payment standard used to calculate subsidy for families under HAP contract as long as the HAP contract remains in effect.**
> **MaineHousing 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.

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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 PHA is allowed to establish a higher payment standard for the family of not more than 120 percent of the published FMR.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing may approve a payment standard not more than 120% of the FMR as a reasonable accommodation for a family that includes a person with disabilities (PIH 2013-3).**
>
> **Further guidance is given under HUD PIH 2013-18 Revisions for Request for Exception Payment Standards for Persons with Disabilities as a Reasonable Accommodation. This notice gives guidance to exception payments standards above 110% to 120% of the FMR as a reasonable accommodation, includes the calculation process and the documentation required with these requests.**

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. [FR Notice 6/25/14]. See Chapter 5 for information on the PHA's subsidy standards.

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
Because the allowances for utilities and services are subject to change over time, the utility allowance should be recalculated every year at the family's annual reexamination. The PHA should ensure that the most recent update of the utility allowance schedule has been used to calculate the family's utility allowance, and that there has been no change in the utilities and allowances supplied by the tenant. [HCV GB, p. 18-8].

> **MaineHousing 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.**

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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.

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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

(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

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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).

(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) Non-recurrent, 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 - *1*

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

1 FR Notice 11/24/08 makes note of pending revisions to this regulation, namely the exclusion of any deferred disability benefits received in lump-sum or prospective monthly amounts from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). At the time of publication, 24 CFR 5.609 had yet to be updated.

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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 the following chart for a list of benefits that qualify for this exclusion.]

Sources of Income Excluded by Federal Statute from Consideration as Income for Purposes of Determining Eligibility or Benefits

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) Payments to Volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5044(g), 5058);

c) Payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(c));

d) Income derived from certain sub marginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes (25 U.S.C. 459e);

e) Payments or allowances made under the Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 8624(f));

f) Payments received under programs funded in whole or in part under the Job Training Partnership Act (29 U.S.C. 1552(b); (effective July 1, 2000, references to Job Training Partnership Act shall be deemed to refer to the corresponding provision of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2931);

g) Income derived from the disposition of funds to the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians (Pub.L- 94-540, 90 Stat. 2503-04);

h) The first $2000 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 $2000 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);

i) Amounts of scholarships funded under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, including awards under federal work-study program or under the Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs (20 U.S.C. 1087uu) - *2* Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1985 (42 U.S.C. 3056(f));

k) 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-product liability litigation, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.);

2 See Section 6-I.L. for exceptions

l) Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (25 U.S.C. 1721);

m) 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);

n) Earned income tax credit (EITC) refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991 (26 U.S.C. 32(j)); o) 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);

p) Allowances, earnings and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12637(d));

q) Any allowance paid under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1805 to a child suffering from spina bifida who is the child of a Vietnam veteran (38 U.S.C. 1805);

r) 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); and

s) Allowances, earnings and payments to individuals participating in programs under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2931)

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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. 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

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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

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(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).

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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 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

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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.

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Chapter 7

VERIFICATION

[24 CFR 982.516, 24 CFR 982.551, 24 CFR 5.230, Notice PIH 2017-12]

INTRODUCTION

The PHA 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 PHA must not pass on the cost of verification to the family.

The PHA will follow the verification guidance provided by HUD in Notice PIH 2017-12 and any subsequent guidance issued by HUD. This chapter summarizes those requirements and provides supplementary PHA 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, and 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 PHA and HUD's confidentiality requirements.

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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 PHA or HUD determines is necessary to the administration of the program and must consent to PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA procedures.

7-I.B. OVERVIEW OF VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

HUD's Verification Hierarchy [Notice PIH 2017-12]

HUD mandates the use of the 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 PHA to use the most reliable form of verification that is available and to document the reasons when the PHA uses a lesser form of verification.

In order of priority, the forms of verification that the PHA 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

MaineHousing Policy

Any documents used for verification generally must be dated within 60 days of the date they are provided to MaineHousing. The documents must not be damaged, altered or in any way illegible.

Any MaineHousing staff member who views an 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.

File Documentation

The PHA 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 PHA is unable to obtain third-party verification, the PHA will document in the family file the reason that third-party verification was not available [24 CFR982.516 (a) (2); Notice PIH 2017-12].

7-I.C. UP-FRONT INCOME VERIFICATION (UIV)

Up-front income verification (UIV) refers to the PHA'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 PHA.

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 PHA 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 PHA.

See Chapter 6 for the PHA's policy on the use of UIV/EIV to project annual income.

Upfront Income Verification Using HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System (Mandatory)

PHAs 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 recertification 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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.

PHAs are 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will identify participants whose identity verification has failed by reviewing EIV's *Identity Verification Report* on a monthly basis.

MaineHousing will attempt to resolve PIC/SSA discrepancies by obtaining appropriate documentation from the participant. When MaineHousing determines that discrepancies exist due to 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will inform all applicants and participants of its use of the following UIV resources during the admission and reexamination process:

- **HUD's EIV system**

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 PHA 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 2017-12]
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 PHA is required to obtain, at minimum, two current and consecutive pay stubs for determining annual income from wages.
The PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy
Third-party documents provided by the family must be dated within 60 days of the MaineHousing request date.

If MaineHousing determines that third-party documents provided by the family are not acceptable, MaineHousing will explain the reason to the family and request additional documentation.

As verification of earned income, MaineHousing 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 PHA 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.

PHAs may mail, fax, or e-mail third-party written verification form requests to third-party sources.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will send third-party verification forms directly to the third party.

Third-party verification forms will be sent when third-party verification documents provided by the family are unavailable or are rejected by MaineHousing.

Oral Third-Party Verification [Notice PIH 2017-12]

For third-party oral verification, PHAs 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.

PHAs 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.

MaineHousing Policy

In collecting third-party oral verification, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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 2017-12]

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.

MaineHousing Policy

If the family cannot provide original documents, MaineHousing 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.

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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].

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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)]
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.

MaineHousing Policy
For families with net assets totaling $5,000 or less, MaineHousing 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. All family members 18 years of age and older must sign the family's declaration.
MaineHousing will use third-party documentation for assets as part of the intake process, whenever a family member is added to verify the individual's assets, and every three years thereafter.

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)

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When the PHA 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.

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing.

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing and must be signed by the family member whose information or status is being verified.

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Part II: Verifying FAMILY INFORMATION

7-II.A. VERIFICATION OF LEGAL IDENTITY

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing'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 MaineHousing.

Legal identity will be verified for all applicants at the time of eligibility determination and in cases where the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will terminate the individual's assistance.

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 PHA determines that the participant's failure to comply was due to unforeseen circumstances and was outside of the participant's control.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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 PHA may not add the new household member until such documentation is provided.

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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 PHA 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 PHA is awaiting documentation of the SSN, the child will be counted as part of the assisted household.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy
Once an individual's status is classified as "verified" in HUD's EIV system, MaineHousing may remove and destroy 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.

MaineHousing Policy
If an official record of birth or evidence of social security retirement benefits cannot be provided, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If MaineHousing has reasonable doubts about a marital relationship, MaineHousing will require the family to document the marriage.

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 spouse, using the same last name, filing joint income tax returns).

Separation or Divorce

MaineHousing Policy

Certification by the head of household is normally sufficient verification. If MaineHousing has reasonable doubts about a separation or divorce, MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

If an adult member who was formerly a member of the household is reported to be permanently absent, MaineHousing may request that the family 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).

Foster Children and Foster Adults

MaineHousing 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

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General Requirements

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy

In accordance with the verification hierarchy described in section 7-1.B, MaineHousing 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 PHA cannot verify at least one of these exemption criteria, the PHA 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 PHA 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

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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:

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- **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 PHA determines that the student is a *vulnerable youth* (see section 3-II.E)**

7-II.F. DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY

The PHA must verify the existence of a disability in order to allow certain income disallowances and deductions from income. The PHA is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability [24 CFR 100.202(c)]. The PHA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If the PHA receives a verification document that provides such information, the PHA will not place this information in the tenant file. Under no circumstances will the PHA request a participant's medical record(s). For more information on health care privacy laws, see the Department of Health and Human Services' website athttp://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 of qualifying for waiting list preferences (if applicable) or certain income disallowances and deductions [VG, p. 23].

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>

For family members claiming disability who receive disability benefits from the SSA, the PHA 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, MaineHousing 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), MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing.

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.

MaineHousing Policy

For family members claiming disability who do not receive 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 PHA 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 PHA may request verification of the declaration by requiring presentation of a birth certificate, United States passport or other appropriate documentation.

MaineHousing Policy

Family members who claim U.S. citizenship or national status will be required to provide additional documentation such as a birth certificate, naturalization card or passport.

Eligible Immigrants

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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.

PHA 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 PHA must verify immigration status with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The PHA will follow all USCIS protocols for verification of eligible immigration status.

7-II.H. VERIFICATION OF PREFERENCE STATUS

The PHA must verify any preferences claimed by an applicant that determined placement on the waiting list.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will offer a preference to any family that has been terminated from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding. MaineHousing will verify this preference using MaineHousing's termination records.**
>
> **MaineHousing will verify the priority of a victim of domestic violence through a referral from a domestic violence service provider.**
>
> **MaineHousing will verify a residency preference for MaineHousing jurisdiction through self certification.**
>
> **MaineHousing will verify a priority of families who are homeless through a referral from a homeless shelter**
>
> **MaineHousing will verify a preference for elderly Families 62+, and/or HUD defined Disabled Families, and Families of two or more persons by verifying age or disability status as described earlier in this chapter.**

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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 PHA policies that supplement the general verification procedures specified in Part I of this chapter.

7-III.A. EARNED INCOME

Tips

MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

For wages other than tips, the family must provide originals of the two most current, consecutive pay stubs.

7-III.B. BUSINESS AND SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME

MaineHousing Policy

Business owners and self-employed persons will be required to provide:

- **An audited financial statement for the previous fiscal year if an audit was conducted. 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.**
- **All schedules completed for filing federal and local taxes in the preceding year.**
- **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.**
- **MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will accept the family member's certified estimate of income and schedule an interim reexamination in three (3) months. If the**

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family member has been self-employed for three (3) to twelve (12) months MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of applicants, MaineHousing 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), MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing.

To verify the SS/SSI benefits of participants, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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) MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing.

7-III.D. ALIMONY OR CHILD SUPPORT

MaineHousing Policy

The methods MaineHousing will use to verify alimony and child support payments differ depending on whether the family declares that it receives regular payments by the following methods:

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 MaineHousing request**
- **Third-party verification form from the state or local child support enforcement agency**
- **Third-party verification form from the person paying the support**

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- **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 any 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 PHA needs to verify only those certifications that warrant documentation [HCV GB, p. 5-28].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will verify the value of assets disposed of only if:

- **MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing verified this amount. Now the person reports that she has given this $10,000 to her son. MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will verify the value of this asset.

7-III.F. NET INCOME FROM RENTAL PROPERTY

MaineHousing Policy

The family must provide:

- **A current executed lease for the property that shows the rental amount or certification from the current tenant**

- **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, MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 PHA 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].

For partially excluded income, the PHA **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).

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MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will accept the family's self-certification as verification of fully excluded income. MaineHousing may request additional documentation if necessary to document the income source.

MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 PHA would not be able to determine whether or to what extent the income is to be excluded (see section 7-III.H).

MaineHousing 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), MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will request written verification of the student's tuition amount.

If MaineHousing is unable to obtain third-party written verification of the requested information, MaineHousing 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 RESTRICTINS

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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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy

If MaineHousing is required to determine the income eligibility of a student's parents, MaineHousing will request an income declaration and certification of income from the appropriate parent(s) (as determined in section 3-II.E). MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing. The required information must be submitted (postmarked) within 10 business days of the date of MaineHousing's request or within any extended timeframe approved by the MaineHousing.

MaineHousing 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.

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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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>

Medical expenses will be verified through:

Written third-party documents provided by the family, such as pharmacy printouts or receipts.

MaineHousing will make a best effort to determine what expenses from the past are likely to continue to occur in the future. MaineHousing will also accept evidence of monthly payments or total payments that will be due for medical expenses during the upcoming 12 months.

Written third-party verification forms, if the family is unable to provide acceptable documentation.

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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA'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.

> **MaineHousing 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

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **When anticipated costs are related to on-going payment of medical bills incurred in past years, MaineHousing 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

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will accept written third-party documents provided by the family.**
>
> **If family-provided documents are not available, MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing 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 addition, the PHA 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 PHA will verify that the expense is incurred for a person with disabilities (See 7-II.F.).

Family Member(s) Permitted to Work
The PHA must verify that the expenses claimed actually enable a family member, or members, (including the person with disabilities) to work.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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 PHA must verify that:

- The child is eligible for care (12 years 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy
Information to be Gathered
MaineHousing 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

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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 MaineHousing will use documentation from a state or local agency that monitors work-related requirements (e.g., welfare or unemployment). In such cases MaineHousing will request family-provided verification from the agency of the member's job seeking efforts to date, and require the family to submit to MaineHousing any reports provided to the other agency.
In the event third-party verification is not available, MaineHousing will provide the family with a form on which the family member must record job search efforts. MaineHousing will review this information at each subsequent reexamination for which this deduction is claimed.

Furthering Education
MaineHousing 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
MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will verify that the type of child care selected by the family is allowable, as described in Chapter 6 (6-II.F).

MaineHousing 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).

MaineHousing 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.

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<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
The actual costs the family incurs will be compared with MaineHousing'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, MaineHousing will request additional documentation, as required, to support a determination that the higher cost is appropriate.

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EXHIBIT 7-1: SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NONCITIZENS [HCV GB, pp. 5-9 and 5-10]

- **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

- 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

- Noncitizens that claim eligible immigration status also must present the applicable USCIS document. Acceptable USCIS documents are listed below.

• Form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card (for permanent resident aliens)
• Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record annotated with one of the following:
  • "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"
	• Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record with no annotation accompanied by:
	• 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).

• Form I-688 Temporary Resident Card annotated "Section 245A" or Section 210".	Form I-688B Employment Authorization Card annotated "Provision of Law 274a. 12(11)" or "Provision of Law 274a.12".

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 *Federal Register*

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 PHA to establish additional requirements. The use of the term "HQS" in this plan refers to the combination of both HUD and PHA-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 PHAs 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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.

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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

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.
- **HUD PIH Notice 2010-51, Over Subsidization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Extended by PIH 2012-33).** PHA must verify at annual unit inspection if additional bedroom size, approved under a reasonable accommodation, is still necessary for medical equipment.

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
International Residential Code, Maine Internal Plumbing Rules, National Electric Code (NFPA 70), Standards for the Installation of Oil Burning Equipment (NFPA 31), Standards for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents, and Solid Fuel-Burning Appliances (NFPA 211), Installation of Propane and Natural Gas Equipment (NFPA 54 with

Amendment), and Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) will be used as inspection standards when their application is applicable.

Tenant Preference Items

HUD requires the PHA to enforce minimum HQS but also recognizes that certain judgments about the acceptability of the unit are left to the family. For example, the PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy

Any owner that intends to negotiate a restoration agreement or require an escrow account must submit the agreement(s) to MaineHousing 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

In addition to HQS, MaineHousing has adopted the following required inspection and performance standards:

1. **Hard-wired with battery backup smoke detectors must be installed on all floors including the basement and enclosed interior common hallways in units in apartment buildings with 3 or more units. As a substitute, in the common hallways a 10-year sealed tamper-resistant battery powered smoke detector may be installed.**
2. **All oil and gas furnaces and boilers must be serviced annually and a dated inspection tag must be affixed to the burner or hung in the immediate vicinity.**
3. **Deteriorated interior and exterior surfaces must be treated and stabilized using lead-safe work practices as appropriate. A deteriorated surface is paint or any other coating that is peeling, chipping, chalking or cracking or otherwise damaged or separated from the substrate**
4. **Any required lead-based paint testing will be conducted by a certified lead based paint inspector. MaineHousing will not abate Housing Assistance Payments if the Owner is complying with the State plan for treatment. If the Owner fails to comply with the State plan, MaineHousing will abate Housing Assistance Payments retroactive to the expiration date of the original 30-day notice.**
5. **Working ground-fault circuit-interrupter (GFCI) protection must be installed for all outlets in the following locations: bathrooms, outlets installed to serve countertops in kitchens, outdoors (must also be covered), crawl spaces at or below grade, garages and accessory buildings located at or below grade, sinks in areas other than the kitchen where receptacles are installed within 6 feet of the outside edge of the sink.**
6. **At least one window in any room used for sleeping shall be an egress window. Any building constructed after 1976 shall be required to comply with the requirement to provide 5.7 square feet of net clear opening with a minimum width of 20" and a minimum height of 24". The window shall also meet all other requirement for egress windows contained in NFPA 101 Life Safety Code. Any replacement windows installed in a building constructed after 1976 shall be required to meet the net clear opening of 5.7 square feet. This shall be measured with the window in its natural open position.**
7. **At least one window in any room used for sleeping shall be an egress window. Any building constructed before 1976 will be allowed to meet the following specifications:. the net clear opening would be allowed to meet the minimum**

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20" in width and 24" in height with a total net clear opening of 3.3 square feet; if the window is constructed of wood or vinyl and the overall window sash size meets a minimum of 5.0 square feet. The window shall meet all other requirements for an egress window as specified in NFPA 101 Life Safety Code as adopted by the Office of State Fire Marshal. Any replacement window installed in a building constructed before 1976 shall meet the same requirements as the existing windows and shall not reduce the existing net clear opening below the minimum requirements.

8. **If an egress window fails MaineHousing's inspection but is inspected by the local fire chief or local code enforcement officer, and they provide a letter in writing stating they approve the window, MaineHousing will accept the letter and pass the window.**
9. **Carbon monoxide detectors must be installed within 15 feet of all bedrooms and be powered by both electrical service and battery backup or a non-replaceable 10-year battery.**
10. **MaineHousing inspectors will not conduct an HQS inspection without a person 18 years of age or older present in the unit.**
11. **All basements and utility rooms must be accessible at the time of inspection.**
12. **Double-key deadbolt locks are not allowed to be installed in any egress door of a unit or common areas of the building that provide mutual access.**
13. **All work on units resulting from a failed inspection must be completed by a state licensed professional if so required by law. This includes, but is not limited to, electrical, plumbing, and oil and solid fuel as applicable. MaineHousing reserves the right to request that owners provide written documentation of professional completion.**
14. **All units and buildings must be clearly and properly numbered.**

Walls

In areas where plaster or drywall is severely sagging, buckling, bulging, cracked (larger than 1/8" wide or longer than 11"), has holes (larger than a quarter), it must be repaired or replaced and primed.

Ceilings

In areas where plaster or drywall is severely sagging, cracked (larger than 1/8" wide or longer than 11"), has holes (larger than a quarter), it must be repaired or replaced and primed to match existing ceilings. There shall be no missing ceiling tiles and if they are stained they need to be replaced or painted.

Windows

Window sashes must be in good working condition, solid and intact, and properly fitted to the window frame. Damaged or deteriorated sashes must be replaced. All windows must have trim intact.

Windows must be weather-stripped as needed to ensure a weather-tight seal.

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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(larger than a quarter), have all trim intact, and be operable 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 re-secured and made level. If they cannot be leveled, they must be replaced.

All floors must be in a clean, finished state. Carpet or vinyl products must be free of holes and trip hazards. Raw wood, sub floors or unsealed concrete is not permitted.

Sinks

All sinks and commode water lines must have shut off valves, unless faucets are wall mounted. All sink drains must have a gas trap installed.

All sinks must have functioning stoppers.

Toilets

All worn or cracked toilet seats and tank lids must be replaced and toilet tank lid must fit properly.

Large cracks in the enamel are not allowed.

Tubs and Showers

Tubs and showers must be fully operable, in sanitary condition with no large cracks and have no leaks.

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.

Debris

Excessive debris or garbage conducive to unsafe or unsanitary conditions, infestation of rodents or insects, or a fire hazard will not be permitted on the premises of units subject to HQS inspection.

Clutter

Units containing clutter resulting in a fire hazard or a threat to decent, safe and sanitary condition, or would impede an inspection must be corrected or will result in an HQS fail.

Mold

Although some mold presence is normal, mold amplification is not. The unit must be free from abnormally high levels of air pollution caused by carbon monoxide, sewer gas, fuel gas, dust or other harmful pollutants. Although HUD does not specifically address such items as mold, radon or asbestos, MaineHousing will categorize by definition these under "harmful pollutants".

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Insect and Rodent Infestation
MaineHousing's interpretation is to assume any infestation as "serious and persistent" and fail the unit. Owners will be required to show proof of correction attempts for the unit to pass upon re-inspection. Any Maine state laws regarding infestations must be followed. MaineHousing inspectors will not perform an inspection if they determine that any infestation or suspected infestation constitutes a threat to their health and safety.
Bed Bugs
Upon report of bed bugs in a unit MaineHousing will send written notification of the report to the tenant and owner including a copy of Maine Statute specific to treatment of bedbug infestation. Owners will be required to show proof of treatment performed by a licensed pest control company within 30 days and to continue to provide proof of treatment on a monthly basis until the unit is cleared of bed bugs. The Owner will have no more than 6 months from the date of MaineHousing's notification letter to clear the unit of bedbugs or the unit will be abated. MaineHousing Inspectors will not perform an inspection in a unit where bed bug infestation has been reported

Digital Photos of Inspections

MaineHousing will take digital photos at inspections including initial, annual, special, quality control, and re-inspections when there is a possible deficiency that is in question and/or documentation is needed for further reference.

8-I.C. LIFE-THREATENING CONDITIONS [24 CFR 982.404(a); FR Notice 1/18/17]
HUD requires the PHA 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 PHA notification.

MaineHousing Policy
The following are considered life-threatening conditions:

- **Any condition that seriously jeopardizes the security of the unit**
- **Major plumbing leaks or flooding, waterlogged ceiling or floor, ceiling, wall or roof in imminent danger of falling**
- **Natural or LP gas or fuel oil leaks**
  A fuel storage vessel, fluid line, valve, or connection that supplies fuel to a HVAC unit is leaking or a strong odor is detected with potential for explosion or fire or that results in a health risk if inhaled
- **Any electrical problem or condition that could result in shock or fire (PIH Notice 2010-10)**
  A light fixture is readily accessible, is not securely mounted to the ceiling or wall, and electrical connections or wires are exposed
  A light fixture is hanging by its wires

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A light fixture has a missing or broken bulb, and the open socket is readily accessible to the tenant during the day-to-day use of the unit
A receptacle (outlet) or switch is missing or broken and electrical connections or wires are exposed
An open circuit breaker position is not appropriately blanked off in a panel board, main panel board, or other electrical box that contains circuit breakers or fuses
A cover is missing from any electrical device box, panel box, switch gear box, control panel, etc., and there are exposed electrical connections
Any nicks, abrasions, or fraying of the insulation that exposes conducting wire
Exposed bare wires or electrical connections
Any condition that results in openings in electrical panels or electrical control device enclosures
Water leaking or ponding near any electrical device
Any condition that poses a serious risk of electrocution or fire and poses an immediate life-threatening condition

- **Inoperable heating system when outside temperature is below 60 degrees Fahrenheit.**
- **Utilities not in service, including no running water**
- **Conditions that present the imminent possibility of injury**
- **Obstacles that prevent safe entrance or exit from the unit**
  Any components that affect the function of the fire escape are missing or damaged
  Stored items or other barriers restrict or prevent the use of the fire escape in the event of an emergency
  The building's emergency exit is blocked or impeded, thus limiting the ability of occupants to exit in a fire or other emergency

- **Absence of a functioning toilet in the unit**
- **Inoperable or missing smoke detectors**
- **Missing or inoperable carbon monoxide detector**
- **Missing, damaged, discharged, overcharged, or expired fire extinguisher (where required)**
- **Gas/oil-fired water heater or heating, ventilation, or cooling system with missing, damaged, improper, or misaligned chimney venting**

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The chimney or venting system on a fuel-fired water heater is misaligned, negatively pitched, or damaged, which may cause improper or dangerous venting or gases
A gas dryer vent is missing, damaged, or is visually determined to be inoperable, or the dryer exhaust is not vented to the outside
A fuel-fired space heater is not properly vented or lacks available combustion air
A non-vented space heater is present
Safety devices on a fuel-fired space heater are missing or damaged
The chimney or venting system on a fuel-fired heating, ventilation, or cooling system is misaligned, negatively pitched, or damaged, which may cause improper or dangerous venting of gas

- **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**

If an owner fails to correct life threatening conditions as required by MaineHousing, MaineHousing will enforce owner compliance in accordance with HUD requirements. See 8-II-G.

If a family fails to correct a family-caused life-threatening condition as required by MaineHousing, MaineHousing will enforce the family obligations. See 8-II.H.

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 results 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 and Notice PIH 2017-13]

If a PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA, 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 PHA will take action in accordance with Section 8-II.G.

PHA 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 PHA determines that a unit is overcrowded because of an increase in family size or a change in family composition, 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 HAP contract in accordance with its terms.

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PART II: THE INSPECTION PROCESS

8-II.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR 982.405]

Types of Inspections

The PHA conducts the following types of inspections as needed. Each type of inspection is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

- *Initial Inspections*. The PHA 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 PHA to inspect each unit under lease at least annually or biennially, depending on PHA policy, 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 annual 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 PHA 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 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).

Inspection Costs [Notice PIH 2016-05]

- The PHA may not charge the family for unit inspections or re-inspections [24 CFR 982.405(e)]. In the case of inspections of PHA-owned units, the PHA may compensate the independent agency from ongoing administrative fee for inspections performed. The PHA and the independent agency may not charge the family any fee or charge for the inspection [24 CFR.982.352 (b)].

- The PHA 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 PHA may charge a reasonable fee to owners for re-inspections 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 re-inspection.

- The owner may not pass the cost of a re-inspection fee to the family. Re-inspection 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will not charge a fee for failed re-inspections.

Notice and Scheduling

The family must allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times with reasonable notice [24 CFR 982.551(d)].

MaineHousing Policy
Both the family and the owner will be given reasonable notice 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 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Generally inspections will be conducted on business days only. In the case of a life threatening emergency, MaineHousing will give as much notice as possible, given the nature of the emergency.

Owner and Family Inspection Attendance
HUD permits the PHA to set policy regarding family and owner presence at the time of inspection [HCV GB p. 10-27].

MaineHousing Policy
- When a family occupies the unit at the time of inspection an adult family member or representative, age 18 or older, 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, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will approve assisted tenancy and start HAP for any unit that fails HQS inspection if the deficiencies identified during the inspection are non-life-threatening.

Non-life threatening conditions **are defined as any conditions that would fail to meet the housing quality standards under 24 CFR 982.401 and do not meet the definition**

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of *life-threatening* as defined in Section 8-I.C., Life-Threatening Conditions. Prior to approving assisted tenancy and executing the HAP contract, MaineHousing will ensure that the unit does not have any life-threatening deficiencies.

MaineHousing will send written notice to the owner listing any non-life-threatening deficiencies and providing the owner with 30 calendar days, or a MaineHousing-approved extension, to comply with HQS. If the non-life-threatening conditions are not corrected within notice period, MaineHousing will abate HAP until the unit is in compliance with HQS. MaineHousing will follow abatement policies listed in Section 8-II.G., Enforcing Owner Compliance.

The owner may be in abatement for a maximum of 30 days before MaineHousing terminates the HAP contract in accordance with Section 8-II.G., Enforcing Owner Compliance.

If the initial inspection identifies more than one non-life-threatening deficiency, MaineHousing will notify the family in writing within 10 business days of the inspection of the deficiencies and offer the family the opportunity to decline to enter into an assisted lease without losing their voucher. The notice to the family will also state that, if the owner fails to correct the non-life-threatening deficiencies, MaineHousing will terminate the HAP contract, and the family must move to another unit in order to continue receiving assistance.

MaineHousing 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 (RTA).

During the winter months, if the unit passes inspection but has exterior work that needs to be completed, MaineHousing may offer an Acknowledgement Form to be signed by the owner and tenant giving the owner until June 30th to complete the work. A re-inspection will be scheduled after June 30th to ensure the work has been completed. If there is a child under the age of six that will be residing in the unit, no exceptions will be granted if the exterior work involves deteriorated paint. Also, no

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exceptions will be granted if the egress window in the room used for sleeping does not meet NFPA 101 Life Safety Code.

Inspection Results and Re-inspections

MaineHousing Policy
If any HQS violations are identified, the owner will be notified of the deficiencies and be given a time frame to correct them. If requested by the owner, the time frame for correcting the deficiencies may be extended by MaineHousing for good cause. MaineHousing will re-inspect the unit within a reasonable amount of time from the date the owner notifies MaineHousing that the required corrections have been made.

If the time period for correcting the deficiencies (or any MaineHousing-approved extension) has elapsed, or the unit fails HQS at the time of the re-inspection, MaineHousing will notify the owner and the family that the unit has been rejected and that the family must search for another unit. MaineHousing may agree to conduct a second re-inspection, for good cause, at the request of the family and owner.

Following a failed re-inspection, the family may submit a new Request for Tenancy Approval after the owner has made repairs, if they are unable to locate another suitable unit.

Utilities

Generally, 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.

MaineHousing Policy
If utility service is not available for testing at the time of the initial inspection or family supplied appliances are not present, MaineHousing will reschedule the inspection to confirm that utilities are operational or the appliances are present before the HAP contract is executed by MaineHousing.

Appliances [Form HUD-52580]

MaineHousing Policy
If the family is responsible for supplying the stove and/or refrigerator, they must be present and in working order at the time of initial inspection.

8-II.C. ANNUAL/BIENNIAL HQS INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405 and 982.406: Notice PIH 2016-05]

MaineHousing Policy
Each unit under HAP contract must be inspected within 12 months of the last full HQS inspection.
MaineHousing will not rely on alternative inspection standards.

For landlords who are participants in the Owner Excellence Program, if the results of the annual inspection indicate no serious inspection concerns, the following annual inspections may be changed to biennial scheduling.

Scheduling the Inspection

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will schedule annual inspections no more than 12 months after the most recent inspection.

If an adult family member cannot be present on the scheduled date, the family should request that MaineHousing reschedule the inspection. MaineHousing and family will agree on a new inspection date that generally should take place within 5 business days of the originally-scheduled date. MaineHousing may schedule an inspection more than 5 business days after the original date for good cause.

If the family misses the first scheduled appointment without requesting a new inspection date, MaineHousing will automatically schedule a second inspection. If the family misses two scheduled inspections without MaineHousing approval, MaineHousing 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)]

The PHA will conduct a special inspection if the owner, family, or another source reports HQS violations in the unit. 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.

MaineHousing Policy
During a special inspection, MaineHousing generally will inspect only those deficiencies that were reported. However, the inspector may record any additional HQS deficiencies that are observed and will require the responsible party to make the necessary repairs.

If the annual inspection has been scheduled or is due within 90 days of the date the special inspection is scheduled MaineHousing may elect to conduct a full annual inspection.

8-II.E. QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS [24 CFR 982.405(b); HCV GB, p. 10-32]

HUD requires a PHA 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.

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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, and special), (2) inspections completed by each inspector, and (3) units from a cross-section of neighborhoods.

MaineHousing Policy

The sample size will be 5%. The sample will be drawn from recently completed HQS inspections (i.e., performed during the 3 months preceding re-inspection) and is to be drawn to represent a cross-section of neighborhoods and the work of a cross-section of inspectors.

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 PHA will determine (1) whether or not the failure is a life-threatening condition and (2) whether the family or owner is responsible.

MaineHousing Policy

When life-threatening conditions are identified, MaineHousing will immediately notify both parties either in person or by telephone. The verbal notification must be followed up in writing, facsimile, or email. The notice will specify who is responsible for correcting the violation. The corrective actions must be taken within 24 hours of MaineHousing's notice. If MaineHousing is unable to contact the owner or its agent by phone or in person, the written notice must be sent by certified mail.

When failures that are not life-threatening are identified, MaineHousing will send the owner and the family a written notification of the inspection results within a reasonable time frame. 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 from the date of inspection 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 MaineHousing-approved extension), the owner's HAP will be abated in accordance with MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing-approved extension, if applicable) the family's assistance may be terminated in accordance with MaineHousing policy (see Chapter 12).

Confirmation that the owner or agent has proceeded to make corrective repairs or made a sufficient good faith effort to repair must take place within the required time frame for emergency repairs (24 hours from the time of the inspection).

MaineHousing may verify the correction of HQS violations remotely for annual or interim inspections. MaineHousing may accept an owner's certification, a receipt from a vendor, a photo of the repair or tenant confirmation that repairs are complete and will verify that action at the next on-site inspection. MaineHousing will tie the verification process to the severity of the corrections needed and/or its experience with the owner and the property.

Extensions

For conditions that are life-threatening, the PHA cannot grant an extension to the 24 hour corrective action period. For conditions that are not life-threatening, the PHA 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].

MaineHousing Policy

Extensions will be granted in cases where MaineHousing has determined that the owner has made a good faith effort to correct the deficiencies and is unable to for reasons beyond the owner's control. Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

A repair cannot be completed because required parts or services are not available.

A repair cannot be completed because of weather conditions.
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 60 days from the date the extension was granted, 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. These extensions will only be granted upon the receipt of a written and signed Acknowledgement from the property owner which lists the failed items and the date by which MaineHousing will conduct the re-inspection. Failure to comply with the Acknowledgement will result in abatement and termination of the HAP payment. Lack of funds for repairs will not be considered good cause for the delay of a correction by the owner unless the owner can demonstrate that they have applied for loan or grant for which there is a reasonable expectation of funding.

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Re-inspections

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will conduct a re-inspection immediately following the end of the corrective period, or any MaineHousing approved extension.**
>
> **The family and owner will be given reasonable notice of the re-inspection appointment. If the deficiencies have not been corrected by the time of the re-inspection, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing policies. If MaineHousing is unable to gain entry to the unit in order to conduct the scheduled re-inspection, MaineHousing 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 if this is a second family caused fail or delay.**

8-II.G. ENFORCING OWNER COMPLIANCE

If the owner fails to maintain the dwelling unit in accordance with HQS, the PHA 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 PHA, HUD requires the PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will make all HAP abatements effective the first of the month following the expiration of MaineHousing specified correction period (including any extension). In the cases of 24 hour fails the abatement will begin immediately after the unit fails inspection.**
>
> **MaineHousing will inspect abated units within a reasonable time of the owner's notification that the work has been completed. Payment will resume effective on the day the owner contacted MaineHousing stating all deficiencies had been rectified. A re-inspection is scheduled to verify repairs have been completed.**

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.

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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**.**

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The maximum length of time that HAP may be abated is 90 days. However, if the owner completes corrections and notifies MaineHousing before the termination date of the HAP contract, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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 PHA (and any extensions), the PHA 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.

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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 PHA 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 PHA (or independent agency in the case of PHA-owned units) will assist the family with the negotiations upon request. At initial occupancy the PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing will consider unit size and length of tenancy in the other units.**

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MaineHousing will determine whether the requested increase is reasonable within 10 business days of receiving the request from the owner. The owner will be notified of the determination in writing.

All rents adjustments will be effective the first of the month following 60 days after MaineHousing's receipt of the owner's request or on the date specified by the owner, whichever is later.

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.

MaineHousing Policy
In addition to the instances described above, MaineHousing will make a determination of rent reasonableness at any time after the initial occupancy period if: (1) MaineHousing determines that the initial rent reasonableness determination was in error or (2) MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 Comparable

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, and 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 PHA 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 PHA information regarding rents charged for other units on the premises.

8-III.D. PHA RENT REASONABLENESS METHODOLOGY

How Market Data Is Collected

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **MaineHousing will collect and maintain data on market rents in MaineHousing's jurisdiction. Information sources include newspapers, realtors, market surveys, inquiries of owners and other available sources. The data will be maintained by bedroom size and market areas. Market areas may be defined by zip codes, census tract, neighborhood, and identifiable natural or man-made boundaries. The data will be updated on an ongoing basis and rent information that is more than 15 months old will be eliminated from the database.**

How Rents Are Determined

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
The rent for a unit proposed for HCV assistance will be compared to the rent charged for comparable units in the same market area. MaineHousing will use its rent reasonableness module within the Elite software system. At the time of determination three comparable units will be selected from the module to establish rent reasonableness unless sufficient units are not available.

MaineHousing will notify the owner of the rent MaineHousing can approve based upon its analysis of rents for comparable units. The owner may submit information about other comparable units in the market area. MaineHousing 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 10 business days of the MaineHousing's request for information or the owner's request to submit information.

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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.

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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 **within 30** days 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.
- Maintain covered housing without deteriorated paint if there is child under six in the family

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 within 30 days. 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).

Hazards and Heath/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.

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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.

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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 HAP contract.

In order for the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA, 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)]

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9-I.A. TENANT SCREENING

The PHA 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 PHA may elect to screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the PHA's policies with regard to screening applicant families for program eligibility [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 PHA approval of the tenancy, the PHA must inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner [24 CFR 982.307(a) (2)]. The PHA 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 PHA must provide the owner with the family's current and prior address (as shown in the PHA records) and the name and address (if known to the PHA) of the landlord at the family's current and prior address [24 CFR 982.307(b) (1)].

The PHA is permitted, but not required, to offer the owner other information in the PHA's possession about the tenancy history or drug trafficking of family members [24 CFR 982.307(b) (2)].

The PHA's policy on providing information to the owner must be included in the family's briefing packet [24 CFR 982.307(b) (3)].

The PHA may not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided by the family in response to a PHA 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)].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy.**
>
> **MaineHousing 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 PHA to approve the assisted tenancy in the selected unit.

The owner and the family must submit two documents to the PHA:

- Completed Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) – Form HUD-52517
- Copy of the proposed lease, including the HUD-prescribed Tenancy Addendum – Form HUD-52641-A

The RTA 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

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the requested beginning date of the lease, necessary for the PHA 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 PHA 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 RTA and the proposed lease must be submitted no later than the expiration date stated on the voucher. [HCV GB p.8-15].

MaineHousing Policy

The RTA must be signed by both the family and the owner.

The owner may submit the RTA on behalf of the family.

Completed RTA (including the proposed dwelling lease) must be submitted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, or by fax.

The family may not submit, and MaineHousing will not process, more than one (1) RTA at a time.

When the family submits the RTA MaineHousing will review the RTA for completeness.

- **If the RTA is incomplete (including lack of signature by family, owner, or both), or if the dwelling lease is not submitted with the RTA MaineHousing 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, or by fax. MaineHousing will not accept missing information over the phone.**

When the family submits the RTA and proposed lease, MaineHousing will also review the terms of the RTA for consistency with the terms of the proposed lease.

- **If the terms of the RTA are not consistent with the terms of the proposed lease, MaineHousing will notify the family and the owner of the discrepancies.**
- **Corrections to the terms of the RTA and/or the proposed lease will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail or by fax. MaineHousing may accept corrections by phone.**

Because of the time sensitive nature of the tenancy approval process, MaineHousing will attempt to communicate with the owner and family by phone, fax, or email.

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MaineHousing will use mail when the parties cannot be reached by phone, fax, or email.

9-I.C. OWNER PARTICIPATION

The PHA does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where the PHA may deny approval of an assisted tenancy based on past owner behavior, conflict of interest, or other owner-related issues. These are also criteria for which the PHA 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 PHA's jurisdiction. This includes the dwelling unit they are currently occupying.

Ineligible Units [24 CFR 982.352(a)]

The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA.

Special Housing Types [24 CFR 982 Subpart M]

HUD regulations permit, but do not generally require, the PHA 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 PHA has chosen to allow.

The regulations do require the PHA 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.

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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.

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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 PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing does not provide a model or standard dwelling lease for owners to use in the HCV program. MaineHousing will refer owners to the Attorney General's model lease upon request.**

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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not approve an initial lease term of less than one (1) year. An exception may be made for a reasonable accommodation. MaineHousing acknowledges that some communities in its jurisdiction have a common market practice of leases with an initial term of less than a year. MaineHousing may approve shorter initial lease terms on a case by case basis.**

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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA chooses to do so, language to this effect must be added to Part A of the HAP contract [Form HUD-52641].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will allow the owner to collect any security deposit amount the owner determines is appropriate as governed by Maine state law. 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 PHA minus the PHA'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)].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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 PHA will review the dwelling lease for compliance with all applicable requirements.

MaineHousing Policy

If the dwelling lease is incomplete or incorrect, MaineHousing 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, or by fax. MaineHousing may accept missing and corrected information over the phone

Because the initial leasing process is time-sensitive, MaineHousing will attempt to communicate with the owner and family by phone, fax, or email. MaineHousing will use mail when the parties can't 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)]

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA must ensure that all required actions and determinations, discussed in Part I of this chapter have been completed.

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These actions include ensuring that the unit is eligible; the unit has been inspected by the PHA 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 is 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 PHA, 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will complete its determination within 5 business days of receiving all required information.

If the terms of the RTA/proposed lease are changed for any reason, including but not limited to negotiation with MaineHousing, MaineHousing will obtain corrected copies of the RTA and proposed lease, signed by the family and the owner.

Corrections to the RTA/proposed lease will only be accepted as hard copies, in-person, by mail, or by fax. MaineHousing may accept corrections over the phone.

If MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 PHA and the owner of the dwelling unit. Under the HAP contract, the PHA 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 PHA has given approval for the family of the assisted tenancy, the owner and the PHA must execute the HAP contract.

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The term of the HAP contract must be the same as the term of the lease [24 CFR 982.451(a)(2)].

The PHA 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 PHA must make a best effort to ensure that the HAP contract is executed before 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA may not pay any housing assistance payment to the owner.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **Owners who have not previously participated in the HCV program may be asked to attend a meeting with MaineHousing in which the terms of the Tenancy Addendum and the HAP contract will be explained. MaineHousing may waive this requirement on a case-by-case basis, if it determines that the owner is sufficiently familiar with the requirements and responsibilities under the HCV program. In place of the meeting the owner may be given a handbook by MaineHousing.**
>
> **The owner and the assisted family will execute the dwelling lease and the owner must provide a copy to MaineHousing. MaineHousing will ensure that both the owner and the assisted family receive copies of the dwelling lease.**
>
> **The owner and MaineHousing will execute the HAP contract. MaineHousing may accept electronic signature. MaineHousing will not execute the HAP contract until the owner has submitted IRS form W-9. MaineHousing will ensure that the owner receives a copy of the executed HAP contract.**
>
> **MaineHousing will pay owners subsidy via direct deposit of funds into an owner designated financial account. Effective January 1, 2014 electronic deposit will be mandatory for all subsidy payments to owners and PHAs.**

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 PHA 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:

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- 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 (RTA) 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 must notify the PHA at least 60 days before any such changes go into effect [24 CFR 982.308(g)(4)]. The PHA will agree to such an increase only if 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

Where the owner is requesting a rent increase, MaineHousing will determine whether the requested increase is reasonable within 10 business days of receiving the request from the owner. The owner will be notified of the determination in writing.

Rent increases will go into effect on the first of the month following the 60 day period after the owner notifies MaineHousing of the rent change or on the date specified by the owner, whichever is later.

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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 PHA policies governing moves within or outside the PHA'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 PHA's HCV program, whether the family moves to another unit within the PHA's jurisdiction or to a unit outside the PHA'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 PHA's jurisdiction. This part also covers the special responsibilities that the PHA has under portability regulations and procedures.

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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 982.35(b)(3)]. If the family terminates the lease on notice to the owner, the family must give the PHA a copy of the notice at the same time [24 CFR 982.35(d)(1)].
- The lease for the family's unit has been terminated by mutual agreement of the owner and the family [24 CFR 982.35(b)(1)(ii)].

  MaineHousing Policy
  If the family and the owner mutually agree to terminate the lease for the family's unit, the family must give MaineHousing 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 982.35(b)(2)]. The family must give the PHA 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 982.35(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 PHA, 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 982.35(b)(4), 24 CFR 982.353(b)]. The PHA must adopt an emergency transfer plan as required by regulations at 24 CFR 5.2006(e)

  MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will request documentation in accordance with section 16-IX.D of this plan.

  MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing will document the waiver in the family's file.

  MaineHousing has adopted an emergency transfer plan, which is included as Exhibit 16-3 to this plan

- The PHA has terminated the HAP contract for the family's unit for the owner's breach [24 CFR 982.35(b)(1)(i)].

- The PHA 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 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 the family, the PHA 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 PHA 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 a PHA may deny a family permission to move and two ways in which a PHA may restrict moves by a family.

Denial of Moves

HUD regulations permit the PHA to deny a family permission to move under the following conditions:

Insufficient Funding

The PHA may deny a family permission to move either within or outside the PHA's jurisdiction if the PHA does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance [24 CFR 982.35(e)(1)]. However, Notice PIH 2016-09significantly 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will deny a family permission to move on grounds that MaineHousing does not have sufficient funding for continued assistance if (a) the move is initiated by the family, not the owner or MaineHousing; (b) MaineHousing can demonstrate that the move will, in fact, result in higher subsidy costs (c) MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing's jurisdiction. MaineHousing, 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 MaineHousing's jurisdiction and outside under portability, MaineHousing will not deny a move due to insufficient funding if MaineHousing previously approved the move and subsequently experienced a funding shortfall if the family cannot remain in their current unit. MaineHousing will rescind the voucher in this situation if the family will be allowed to remain in their current unit.**

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MaineHousing will create a list of families whose moves have been denied due to insufficient funding. MaineHousing 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 PHA 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).

MaineHousing 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 PHA may deny a family permission to move if it has grounds for denying or terminating the family's assistance [24 CFR 982.35(e) (2)].

MaineHousing Policy
If MaineHousing has grounds for denying or terminating a family's assistance, MaineHousing will act on those grounds in accordance with the regulations and policies set forth in Chapters 3 and 12, respectively. MaineHousing retains the right to deny permission to move where it has grounds to deny or terminate or such actions have begun.

Restrictions on Elective Moves [24 CFR 982.35(c)]
HUD regulations permit the PHA to prohibit any elective move by a participant family during the family's initial lease term. They also permit the PHA 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 PHA may not establish a policy permitting moves only at reexamination [Notice PIH 2016-09].

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will deny a family permission to make an elective move during the family's initial lease term. This policy applies to moves within MaineHousing's jurisdiction or outside it under portability.

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing's jurisdiction.

MaineHousing will also deny a family permission to move if they are not a tenant in good standing. MaineHousing defines a tenant as NOT in good standing in the following situations: damages to the unit exceeding $1500 in excess of security deposit or the equivalent of one month's rent, debt to the landlord for unpaid tenant rent (tenant liability not to exceed 3 months of the current monthly tenant rental portion), the court determines the participant has committed serious violations of the lease, the family currently owes rent or other amounts to MaineHousing or another

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PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act or the family breaches an agreement with MaineHousing to pay amounts owed to MaineHousing, or amounts paid to an owner by MaineHousing.

MaineHousing 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, and witness protection programs), to accommodate a change in family circumstances (e.g., new employment, school attendance in a distant area), to address an emergency situation over which a family has no control. MaineHousing will also consider an exception for those tenants who can show documentation of a current repayment agreement in good standing.

In addition, MaineHousing 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 PHA and the owner before moving out of the old unit or terminating the lease on notice to the owner [24 CFR 982.35(d)(2)]. If the family wishes to move to a unit outside the PHA's jurisdiction under portability, the notice to the PHA must specify the area where the family wishes to move [24 CFR 982.35(d)(2),]. The notices must be in writing [24 CFR 982.5].

Approval

MaineHousing Policy

Upon receipt of a family's required 30 day notification that it wishes to move, MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing will attempt to notify the family in writing of its determination within 15 business days following receipt of the family's notification.

Reexamination of Family Income and Composition

MaineHousing Policy

For families approved to move to a new unit within MaineHousing's jurisdiction, MaineHousing will perform a new annual 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 PHA's jurisdiction under portability, MaineHousing will follow the policies set forth in Part II of this chapter.

Voucher Issuance and Briefing

MaineHousing Policy

For families approved to move to a new unit within MaineHousing's jurisdiction, MaineHousing will issue a new voucher within 10 business days of MaineHousing's written approval to move. No briefing is required for these families. MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing approves. Otherwise, the family will lose its assistance.

For families moving into or families approved to move out of MaineHousing's jurisdiction under portability, MaineHousing 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 PHA 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. 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.

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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 PHA 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 PHA's jurisdiction under portability. HUD regulations and PHA policy determine whether a family qualifies.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will provide contact information for the receiving PHAs that serve an area in writing. If there is more than one PHA in the area, MaineHousing will provide the family with written notice of the contact information for the receiving PHA's that serve the area and the family will select the receiving PHA. The family must inform MaineHousing which PHA it has selected. If the family prefers not to select the receiving PHA, MaineHousing will select the receiving PHA on behalf of the family.

Applicant Families

Under HUD regulations, most applicant families qualify to lease a unit outside the PHA's jurisdiction under portability. However, HUD gives the PHA 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 PHA must notify HUD within 10 business days of the determination to deny the move [24 CFR 982.355(e)].

MaineHousing Policy
In determining whether or not to deny an applicant family permission to move under portability because MaineHousing lacks sufficient funding or has grounds for denying assistance to the family, MaineHousing will follow the policies established in section 10-I.B of this chapter. If MaineHousing does deny the move due to insufficient funding, MaineHousing will notify HUD in writing within 10 business days of MaineHousing'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)].

MaineHousing Policy
If neither the head of household nor the spouse/cohead of an applicant family had a domicile (legal residence) in MaineHousing's jurisdiction at the time that the family's initial application for assistance was submitted, the family must lease a unit within MaineHousing's jurisdiction for at least 12 months before requesting portability.

MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing will also consider exceptions for moves related to employment or education.

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

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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)].

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will determine whether a participant family may move out of MaineHousing'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. MaineHousing will notify the family of its determination in accordance with the approval policy set forth in section 10-I.C of this chapter all policies affecting Homeownership Portability are discussed in section 15-VII.L.

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 982.3531); 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.

MaineHousing Policy
For a participant family approved to move out of its jurisdiction under portability, MaineHousing generally will conduct a reexamination of family income and composition 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.

MaineHousing 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 these families.

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MaineHousing Policy

No formal briefing will be required for a participant family wishing to move outside MaineHousing's jurisdiction under portability. However, MaineHousing 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).

MaineHousing will provide the name, address, and phone of the contact 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, MaineHousing will advise the family that the family selects the receiving PHA and notify the MaineHousing of which receiving PHA was selected. MaineHousing will provide the family with contact information for all of the receiving PHAs that serve the area. MaineHousing will not provide any additional information about receiving PHAs in the area. MaineHousing will further inform the family that if the family prefers not to select the receiving PHA, MaineHousing will select the receiving PHA on behalf of the family. In this case, MaineHousing will not provide the family with information for all receiving PHAs in the area.

MaineHousing will advise the family that they will be under the receiving PHA'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.

MaineHousing Policy

For participating families approved to move under portability, MaineHousing will issue a new voucher within 15 business days of MaineHousing's written approval to move.

The initial term of the voucher will be 120 days.

Voucher Extensions and Expiration

MaineHousing Policy

Subject to potential reasonable accommodations, MaineHousing will approve no extensions to a voucher issued to an applicant or participant family porting out of MaineHousing'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.

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To receive or continue receiving assistance under the initial PHA'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 60 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 CFR982.3-55(c)(3)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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)]. The initial PHA must also advise the family how to contact and request assistance from the receiving PHA [24 CFR 982.355(c) (6)].

MaineHousing Policy

Because the portability process is time-sensitive, MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing will pass this information along to the family. MaineHousing will also ask for the name, address, telephone number, fax and email 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)(74), 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)(74), Notice PIH 2016-09]

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MaineHousing Policy

In addition to these documents, MaineHousing will provide the following information, if available, to the receiving PHA:

- **Social security numbers (SSNs)**
- **Documentation of SSNs for all nonexempt household members who's SSNs have not been verified through the EIV system**
- **Documentation of legal identity**
- **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**

MaineHousing will notify the family in writing regarding any information provided to the receiving PHA [HCV GB, p. 13-3].

Initial Billing Deadline [Notice PIH 2016-19,]

The deadline 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.

MaineHousing Policy

If MaineHousing has not received an initial billing notice from the receiving PHA within the billing deadline it will attempt to 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. MaineHousing will send the receiving PHA a written confirmation of its decision by mail.

MaineHousing 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

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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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The initial PHA will utilize direct deposit or paper checks to ensure that the payment is received by the deadline. If the initial PHA extends the term of the voucher, MaineHousing'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 PHA 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)].

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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).

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not require the family to attend a briefing. MaineHousing will provide the family with an individual meeting via teleconference or in person, and will orally inform the family about the PHA's payment and subsidy standards, procedures for requesting approval of a unit, the unit inspection process, and the leasing process. MaineHousing may provide the family with written information about the program.**

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)].

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MaineHousing Policy

For any family moving into its jurisdiction under portability, MaineHousing will conduct a new reexamination of family income and composition. However, MaineHousing will not delay issuing the family a voucher for this reason. Nor will MaineHousing delay approving a unit for the family until the reexamination process is complete unless the family is an applicant and MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will rely upon any 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 120 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].

MaineHousing Policy

When a family ports into its jurisdiction, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing's procedures. MaineHousing 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].

MaineHousing Policy

The receiving PHA's voucher will expire 30 calendars days from the expiration date of the initial PHA's voucher. If the initial PHA extends the term of the voucher, MaineHousing'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]

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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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing generally will not extend the term of the voucher that it issues to an incoming portable family unless MaineHousing 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.**
>
> **MaineHousing 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 PHA must suspend the term of that voucher. The term of the voucher stops from the date that 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 [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

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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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **Unless MaineHousing negotiates a different amount of reimbursement with the initial PHA, MaineHousing 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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.

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<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
MaineHousing 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.

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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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **If MaineHousing elects to deny or terminate assistance for a portable family, MaineHousing will notify the initial PHA within 10 business days after any informal review or hearing if the denial or termination is upheld. MaineHousing 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.**

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 (a) 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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **If MaineHousing decides to absorb a portable family upon the execution of a HAP contract on behalf of the family, MaineHousing will notify the initial PHA by the**

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initial billing deadline specified on form HUD-52665. The effective date of the HAP contract will be the effective date of the absorption.

If MaineHousing 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)].

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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 PHA 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.

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PART I: ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS [24 CFR 982.516]

11-I.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA 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.

Two streamlining options ae available, depending upon the percentage of the family's income that is received from fixed sources. If at least 90 percent of the family's income is from fixed sources, the PHA may streamline the verification of fixed income and may choose whether to verify non-fixed income amounts in years where no fixed-income review is required. If the family receives less than 90 percent of its income from fixed sources, the PHA may streamline the verification of fixed income and must verify non-fixed income annually.

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
>
> **MaineHousing may streamline the annual reexamination process by applying the verified COLA or interest rate to fixed-income sources. MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 least once every three years thereafter.**
>
> **Third-party verification of non-fixed income will be obtained annually regardless of the percentage of family income received from fixed sources.**

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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].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will begin the annual reexamination process 105 to 120 days in advance of its scheduled effective date. Generally, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will perform a new annual reexamination.

MaineHousing also may schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the anniversary date for administrative purposes.

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].

MaineHousing Policy

Families generally are required to participate in an annual reexamination process, conducted by mail, which must be responded to by the head of household, spouse, or cohead. If participation in the annual reexamination process by mail poses a hardship because of a family member's disability, the family should contact the PHA to request a reasonable accommodation (see Chapter 2).

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)].

MaineHousing Policy

Families will be asked to submit all required information (as described in the reexamination notice) to MaineHousing within 45 days of request. The required information will include a MaineHousing-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.

If any required documents or information requested are not returned by the family, they will receive a notice within 10 business days. If the family is unable to obtain

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the information or materials within the required time period, 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].

MaineHousing Policy
At the annual reexamination, the PHA 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. The PHA 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 PHA 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 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 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.

MaineHousing Policy

During the annual reexamination process, MaineHousing 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 PHA 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].

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing chooses to schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the family's anniversary date for administrative**

purposes, the effective date will be determined by MaineHousing, but will always allow for the 30-day notice period.

- **If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, *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 a family moves to a new unit, the decrease will take effect on the effective date of the new lease and HAP contract.**
- **If MaineHousing chooses to schedule an annual reexamination for completion prior to the family's anniversary date for administrative purposes, the effective date will be determined by MaineHousing.**
- **If the family causes a delay in processing the annual reexamination, d*ecreases* 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 PHA by the date specified, and this delay prevents the PHA from completing the reexamination as scheduled.

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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 PHA 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 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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)].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The family must inform MaineHousing of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child within 14 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].

MaineHousing Policy

Families must request MaineHousing 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 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 MaineHousing prior to the individual moving into the unit.

MaineHousing will not approve the addition of a new family or household member unless the individual meets MaineHousing's eligibility criteria (see Chapter 3) and documentation requirements (see Chapter 7, Part II).

MaineHousing will not approve the addition of a foster child or foster adult if it will cause a violation of HQS space standards.

If MaineHousing determines an individual meets MaineHousing's eligibility criteria and documentation requirements, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing determines that an individual does not meet MaineHousing's eligibility criteria or documentation requirements, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy

If a household member ceases to reside in the unit, the family must inform MaineHousing within 14 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 MaineHousing within 14 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will conduct interim reexaminations in each of the following instances:

- **For families receiving the Earned Income Disallowance (EID), MaineHousing will conduct an interim reexamination at the start and conclusion of the 24-month eligibility period.**
- **If the family has certified their source of income using MaineHousing's Certification of Zero or Minimal Income form, MaineHousing will conduct an interim reexamination if a change in income is reported. MaineHousing will require semi-annually updates if the family declares zero income on the Certification of Zero or Minimal Income form.**
- **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), MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will conduct an interim reexamination.**

MaineHousing may conduct an interim reexamination at any time to assist a participant in the Family Self-Sufficiency program.

MaineHousing 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will note the information in the tenant file, but will not conduct an interim reexamination.**
>
> **Families are not required to report any other changes in income or expense unless they are a zero income family or a new family member brings income to the household. Changes in income must be reported within 14 days of the change.**
>
> **Families with income that has been excluded as sporadic income, may be required to report changes on a quarterly basis.**

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.

> **MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will conduct an interim reexamination. See Section 11-II.D. for effective dates.**
>
> **Families may report changes in income or expenses at any time.**

11-II.D. PROCESSING THE INTERIM REEXAMINATION

Method of Reporting

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The family must notify MaineHousing of changes in writing.**
>
> **Based on the type of change reported, MaineHousing will determine the documentation the family will be required to submit. The family must submit any required information or documents within 14 days of receiving a request from**

MaineHousing. This time frame may be extended for good cause with MaineHousing approval. MaineHousing will accept required documentation by mail, by fax, 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].

MaineHousing 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 may be made retroactively.

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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 i*ncreased,* 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)(5)]

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.

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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 [HCV GB, p. 18-8].

See HUD Federal Register FR-5778-N-01 dated June 25, 2014 HUD Implementation of Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations Provisions on Public Housing Agency Consortia.

A change in the voucher program requires PHAs to now use the utility allowance for *the lower of* the actual unit size *or the voucher bedroom size*. Exceptions can be made under reasonable accommodation.

> **MaineHousing 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).

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The notice to the family will include the annual and adjusted income amounts that were used to calculate the family share of the rent and the housing assistance 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 PHA.

Part II: Approach to Termination of Assistance. This part describes the policies and the process that the PHA 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 PHA may consider in lieu of termination, the criteria the PHA will use when deciding what action to take and the steps the PHA 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.

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PART I: GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

12-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD requires the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA.

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 PHA is reduced to zero the family's assistance terminates automatically 180 days after the last HAP payment.

> **MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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 PHA terminate housing assistance payments on behalf of the family at any time.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **The request to terminate assistance should be made in writing and signed by the head of household, and spouse, or co-head if applicable. Before terminating the family's assistance, MaineHousing will follow the notice requirements in Section 12-II.F.**

12-I.D. MANDATORY TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

HUD requires the PHA to terminate assistance in the following circumstances.

Eviction [24 CFR 982.552(b)(2), 24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)]

The PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **A family will be considered *evicted* if the family moves after a legal eviction order, writ of possession arising from a forcible entry and detainer action, 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, a notice to quit, for serious or repeated lease violations but before a legal eviction order has been**

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issued, termination of assistance is not mandatory. In such cases MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will consider the factors described in sections 12-II.D and 12-II.E, the request for and potential granting or denial of a reasonable accommodation by the landlord and/or MaineHousing, and any alternative arrangement entered into by the participant and landlord. Upon consideration of such factors, MaineHousing may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate assistance. ***Revised May 21, 2013***

Serious and repeated lease violations **will include, but not be limited to, nonpayment of rent, disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, unauthorized household members, or living or housekeeping habits that cause damage to the unit or premises and criminal activity. The reason for the eviction may be the fault of the tenant or guests.**

Failure to Provide Consent [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)]
The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA, 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA determined the family to be noncompliant.

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MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 a PHA 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 PHA must immediately terminate assistance for the household member.

In this situation, the PHA 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 PHA must terminate assistance for the household.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing is bound by the decision of the Federal District Court for the District of Maine in the matter of Miller v McCormick, 605 F.Supp.2d 296 (D. Me 2009) , which held that participants cannot be terminated based solely upon their status as lifetime sex offenders. Notice PIH 2012-28 holds that such participants who were erroneously admitted to the program after June 25, 2001 or fail to disclose in recertification screening must be terminated. MaineHousing will terminate participants who fail to disclose or conceal their status but is prohibited from terminating those who were erroneously admitted and disclose their status.

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 PHA must the 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 PHA 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.

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Death of the Sole Family Member [24 CFR 982.311(d) and Notice PIH 2010-9]
The PHA 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 PHA to establish policies that permit the PHA to terminate assistance if the PHA 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

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing may terminate a family's assistance if 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. In the case of medical marijuana use MaineHousing will defer to the final policy decision of its governing board.

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

MaineHousing may 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.

MaineHousing 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 sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.
In making its decision to terminate assistance, the MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy

Violent criminal activity may also include any 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.

MaineHousing may 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.

MaineHousing 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 sole basis for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.
In making its decision to terminate assistance, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 PHA to terminate assistance under a number of other circumstances. It is left to the discretion of the PHA 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 PHAs 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing may 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 MaineHousing policies.**

- **Any family member has been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last three years.**
- **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 breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with any PHA within the past six years.**
- **The family has not accepted or participated in services required by special programs for which they have been given a voucher such as Home to Stay or VASH.**
- **A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward MaineHousing personnel.**

Abusive or violent behavior towards MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA must establish a policy on how long the family may be absent from the assisted unit. However, the family may not be absent from the unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days for any reason Absence in this context means that no member of the family is residing in the unit.

MaineHousing Policy

If the family is absent from the unit for more than 60 consecutive calendar days, the family's assistance will be terminated. In the cases of disability or health related absences, MaineHousing may allow an absence for up to 180 days. Notice of termination will be sent in accordance with Section 12-II.F.

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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will determine whether there is sufficient funding to pay for currently assisted families according to the policies in Part VIII of Chapter 16. If

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MaineHousing determines there is a shortage of funding, prior to terminating any HAP contracts, MaineHousing will determine if any other actions can be taken to reduce program costs.

In the event that MaineHousing decides to stop issuing vouchers as a result of a funding shortfall, and MaineHousing is not assisting the required number of special purpose vouchers (NED families, HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) families, and family unification program (FUP) families), when MaineHousing resumes issuing vouchers, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will terminate HAP contracts as a last resort.

Prior to terminating any HAP contracts, MaineHousing will inform the local HUD field office. MaineHousing will terminate the minimum number needed in order to reduce HAP costs to a level within MaineHousing's annual budget authority.

If MaineHousing must terminate HAP contracts due to insufficient funding, MaineHousing will do so in accordance with the following criteria and instructions:

- **Families comprising the required number of special purpose vouchers, including nonelderly disabled (NED), HUD-Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and family unification program (FUP) will be the last to be terminated.**
- **The last families housed who did not qualify for a preference will be the first to be terminated. If that does not correct the budget deficiency MaineHousing will terminate based on the existing preference order with the lowest ranking preferences being the first to be terminated on a most recently housed first terminated basis.**

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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)].

> **MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing request. If the culpable family member is the head of household, the spouse, co-head or other remaining adult family member may provide the certification.**

Repayment of Family Debts

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **If a family owes amounts to MaineHousing, as a condition of continued assistance, MaineHousing will require the family to repay the full amount or to enter into a repayment agreement, within 30 days of receiving notice from MaineHousing 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 PHA 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 PHA is permitted, but not required, to consider all relevant circumstances when determining whether a family's assistance should be terminated.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. MaineHousing 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

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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**
- **MaineHousing 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**
- **The effect on the community of termination or failure to terminate**
- **The effect on the integrity of the program [24 CFR §5.852]**

Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(iv)]
If the family includes a person with disabilities, the PHA's decision to terminate the family's assistance is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

MaineHousing Policy
If a family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for a proposed termination of assistance, MaineHousing will determine whether the behavior is related to the disability. If so, upon the family's request, the MaineHousing will determine whether alternative measures are appropriate as a reasonable accommodation. MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 a PHA 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 PHA, 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 982.35(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, sexual assault, or stalking [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(2)].

Fourth, it gives PHAs 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 a PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA to terminate the assistance of a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking if the PHA 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)]

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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)].

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing'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]

MaineHousing Policy

When an individual facing termination of assistance for reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking claims protection under VAWA, MaineHousing will request that the individual provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with the policies in section 16-IX.D of this plan.

MaineHousing 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 PHA 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

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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].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will terminate assistance to a family member if MaineHousing determines that the family member has committed violent criminal activity as defined by MaineHousing against other family members or others. This action will not affect the assistance of the remaining, non-culpable family members.

In making its decision, MaineHousing will consider all credible evidence, including, but not limited to, a signed certification (form HUD-5382) or other documentation of abuse submitted to MaineHousing by the victim in accordance with this section and section 16-IX.D. MaineHousing will also consider the factors in section 12-II.D. Upon such consideration, MaineHousing may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the assistance of the culpable family member.

If MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy

Whenever a family's assistance will be terminated, MaineHousing will send a written notice of termination to the family and to the owner. MaineHousing will also send a form HUD-5382 to the family with the termination notice. The notice will state the date on which the termination will become effective. This date generally will be at least 30 calendar days following the date of the termination notice, but exceptions will be made whenever HUD rules, other MaineHousing policies, or the circumstances surrounding the termination require.

When MaineHousing notifies an owner that a family's assistance will be terminated, MaineHousing will, if appropriate, advise the owner of his/her right to offer the family a separate, unassisted lease.

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.

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<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
Whenever MaineHousing decides to terminate a family's assistance because of the family's action or failure to act, MaineHousing will include in its termination notice the VAWA information described in section 16-IX.C of this plan and a form HUD-5382. MaineHousing will request in writing that a family member wishing to claim protection under VAWA notify MaineHousing within 14 business days.

Still other notice requirements apply in two situations:

- If a criminal record is the basis of a family's termination, the PHA 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.

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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 PHA 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 PHA'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

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- 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 instances 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 PHA a copy of any eviction notice at the same time the owner notifies the family. The family is also required to give the PHA a copy of any eviction notice (see Chapter 5).

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MaineHousing Policy

If the eviction action is finalized in court, the owner must provide MaineHousing 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.)

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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 PHA has no other grounds for termination of assistance, the PHA 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.

  MaineHousing 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 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.

  MaineHousing Policy
  MaineHousing 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.

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

- The family must promptly give the PHA a copy of any owner eviction notice.

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- 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.

  MaineHousing Policy
  The request to add a family member must be submitted in writing and approved prior to the person moving into the unit. MaineHousing 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.

  MaineHousing 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.

  MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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.

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- 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]

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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 PHA'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 PHA and the owner as expressed in the HAP contract.

For detailed information about HCV program responsibilities and processes, including PHA 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.

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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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will conduct owner outreach to ensure that owners are familiar with the program and its advantages. MaineHousing will actively recruit property owners with property located outside areas of poverty and minority concentration. These outreach strategies may include:

- **Distributing printed material about the program to property owners and managers**
- **Contacting property owners and managers by phone or in-person**
- **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.

MaineHousing Policy

All MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing will provide owners who are new to the program with a handbook that explains the program, including HUD and MaineHousing policies and procedures, in easy-to-understand language.

MaineHousing will give special attention to helping new owners succeed through activities such as:

- **Providing the owner with a designated MaineHousing contact person.**

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- **Coordinating inspection and leasing activities between MaineHousing, the owner, and the family.**
- **Providing an inspection checklist and other resource materials about HUD housing quality standards.**
- **Providing other written information about how the program operates, including answers to frequently asked questions.**
- **Encouraging owners to actively participate in the initial inspection.**

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)].

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing. MaineHousing will refer landlords to www.mainehousingsearch.org 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 unassisted tenant. The PHA 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 (RTA, 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 PHA, 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 RTA 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.

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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 PHA will inspect the owner's dwelling unit at least annually 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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

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- 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 PHA does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where the PHA 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 PHA must not approve the assisted tenancy if the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA must not approve a tenancy if the owner is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family. The PHA 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. Current contracts on behalf of owners and families that are related may continue, but any new leases or contracts for these families may not be approved.

Conflict of Interest [24 CFR 982.161; HCV GB p. 8-19]

The PHA 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 PHA (except a participant commissioner)
- Any employee of the PHA, or any contractor, subcontractor or agent of the PHA, 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 PHA must submit a waiver request to the appropriate HUD Field Office for determination.

Any waiver request submitted by the PHA 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 PHA, 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 PHA or assistance under the HCV program for an eligible PHA 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 PHA, description of the nature of the investment, including disclosure/divestiture plans.

Where the PHA has requested a conflict of interest waiver, the PHA may not execute the HAP contract until HUD has made a decision on the waiver request.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **In considering whether to request a conflict of interest waiver from HUD, MaineHousing 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 or 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].

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MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing may refuse to approve a request for tenancy if MaineHousing 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 cohabitates with the proposed tenant with the exception of a shared housing or other approved situation**
- **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, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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.

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MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will only enter into a contractual relationship with the legal owner of a qualified unit. MaineHousing may request 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, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status in connection with any actions or responsibilities under the HCV program and the HAP contract with the PHA.

The owner must cooperate with the PHA 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.

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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 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 a manufactured home. See chapter 15 for a discussion of any special housing types included in the PHA's HCV program.

When the PHA has determined that the unit meets program requirements and the tenancy is approvable, the PHA 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).

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **MaineHousing has not adopted a policy that defines when the housing assistance payment by MaineHousing 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:

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- 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA, the excess amount must be returned immediately. If the PHA determines that the owner is not entitled to all or a portion of the HAP, the PHA 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 from the PHA, 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 PHA 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 penalties if the PHA 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 PHA is not required to pay a late payment penalty if HUD determines that the payment is late for reasons beyond the PHA's control. In addition, late payment penalties are not required if the PHA 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 PHA 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.

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If the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit, the PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy

The owner must inform MaineHousing when the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit.

The owner must inform MaineHousing when the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant, and provide MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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 PHA determines that a breach of the HAP contract has occurred, it may exercise any of its rights and remedies under the HAP contract.

The PHA 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 PHA may also obtain additional relief by judicial order or action.

The PHA 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 PHA must provide the owner with written notice of any reduction in housing assistance payments or the termination of the HAP contract.

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MaineHousing Policy

Before MaineHousing invokes a remedy against an owner, MaineHousing will evaluate all information and documents available to determine if the contract has been breached.

If relevant, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 PHA terminates the HAP contract;
- The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA;
- The Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) between the PHA and HUD expires
- The PHA elects to terminate the HAP contract.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing may 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 PHA terminates the HAP contract, the PHA 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].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **In all cases, the HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which MaineHousing gives written notice to the owner. The owner is not entitled to any housing assistance payment after this period, and must return to MaineHousing 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 PHA.

An owner under a HAP contract must notify the PHA in writing prior to a change in the legal ownership of the unit. The owner must supply all information as requested by the PHA.

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 PHA with a copy of the executed agreement.

> **MaineHousing 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.**
>
> **MaineHousing 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.**

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Within 10 business days of receiving the owner's request, MaineHousing will inform the current owner in writing whether the assignment may take place.

The new owner must provide a written certification to MaineHousing 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 within 60 days of the effective date of the assignment, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will process the leasing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 9.

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Chapter 14

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

INTRODUCTION

The PHA is committed to ensuring that subsidy funds made available to the PHA are spent in accordance with HUD requirements.

This chapter covers HUD and PHA 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 PHA policies related to preventing, detecting, and investigating errors and program abuse.
>
> Part II: Corrective Measures and Penalties. This part describes the corrective measures the PHA must and may take when errors or program abuses are found.

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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

MaineHousing Policy

To ensure that MaineHousing's HCV program is administered according to the highest ethical and legal standards, MaineHousing will employ a variety of techniques to ensure that both errors and intentional program abuse are rare.

MaineHousing will discuss program compliance and integrity issues during the voucher briefing sessions described in Chapter 5.

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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 2017-12. In addition, MaineHousing will require the head of each household to acknowledge receipt of the guide by signing a copy for retention in the family file.

MaineHousing will place a warning statement about the penalties for fraud (as described in 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 1010) on key MaineHousing forms and form letters that request information from a family or owner.

MaineHousing staff will be required to review and explain the contents of all HUD- and MaineHousing-required forms prior to requesting family member signatures.

At every regular reexamination, MaineHousing staff will explain any changes in HUD regulations or MaineHousing policy that affect program participants.

MaineHousing will require first-time owners (or their agents) to participate in a briefing session on HAP contract requirements.

MaineHousing will provide owners with ongoing information about the program, with an emphasis on actions and situations to avoid.

MaineHousing will provide each MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA 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).

MaineHousing Policy

In addition to the SEMAP quality control requirements, MaineHousing will employ a variety of methods to detect errors and program abuse.

- **MaineHousing 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 PHA.**
- **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.**
- **MaineHousing 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 PHA activities and notifies the PHA of errors and potential cases of program abuse.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing's error detection and abuse prevention efforts.

Individual Reporting of Possible Errors and Program Abuse

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing 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 PHA may investigate possible instances of error or abuse using all available PHA and public records. If necessary, the PHA will require HCV families to sign consent forms for the release of additional information.

Analysis and Findings

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing will determine (1) whether an error or program abuse has occurred, (2) whether any amount of money is owed MaineHousing, 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 PHA will enforce other corrective actions and penalties depends upon the nature of the error or program abuse.

MaineHousing Policy

In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, MaineHousing 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, and (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, MaineHousing 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 tenant family members who were not involved in the offense.

Notice and Appeals

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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). In the case that the agency does not find cause to conduct an investigation, no notice will be sent.

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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 PHA must promptly correct the HAP, family share, and any utility reimbursement prospectively.

> **MaineHousing 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 PHA or the PHA 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 PHA to use incorrect information provided by a third party.

Family Reimbursement to PHA [HCV GB pp. 22-12 to 22-13]

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **In the case of family-caused errors or program abuse, the family will be required to repay any excess subsidy received. MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will terminate the family's assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.**

PHA Reimbursement to Family [HCV GB p. 22-12]

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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)].

MaineHousing Policy

Evidence of family program abuse will include, but is not limited to:

- **Payment to the owner in excess of amounts authorized by MaineHousing for rent, security deposit, and additional services**
- **Offering bribes or illegal gratuities to the MaineHousing Board of Commissioners, employees, contractors, or other MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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**

MaineHousing 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 PHA may, at its discretion, impose any of the following remedies.

- The PHA may require the family to repay excess subsidy amounts paid by the PHA, as described earlier in this section.
- The PHA 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 PHA may deny or terminate the family's assistance following the policies set forth in Chapter 3 and Chapter 12 respectively.

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- The PHA 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 PHA any excess subsidy received. The PHA may recover overpaid amounts by withholding housing assistance payments due for subsequent months, or if the debt is large, the PHA may allow the owner to pay in installments over a period of time [HCV GB p. 22-13].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **In cases where the owner has received excess subsidy, MaineHousing 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:

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **Evidence of owner program abuse will include but is not limited to:**
>
> - **Charging the family rent above or below the amount specified by MaineHousing**
> - **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 MaineHousing Board of Commissioners, employees, contractors, or other MaineHousing representatives**

- **Offering payments or other incentives to an HCV family as an inducement for the family to make false or misleading statements to MaineHousing**
- **Residing in the unit with an assisted family**

Remedies and Penalties
When the PHA determines that the owner has committed program abuse, the PHA 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 PHA programs.
- Refer the case to state or federal officials for criminal prosecution as described in section 14-II.E.
- Pursue other remedies as determined by MaineHousing.

14-II.D. PHA-CAUSED ERRORS OR PROGRAM ABUSE

The responsibilities and expectations of PHA staff with respect to normal program administration are discussed throughout this plan. This section specifically addresses actions of a PHA staff member that are considered errors or program abuse related to the HCV program. Additional standards of conduct may be provided in the PHA personnel policy.

PHA-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 PHA
Neither a family nor an owner is required to repay an overpayment of subsidy if the error or program abuse is caused solely by PHA staff [HCV GB. 22-12].

PHA Reimbursement to Family or Owner
The PHA 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 PHA's administrative fee reserves [HCV GB p. 22-12].

Prohibited Activities

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
Any of the following will be considered evidence of program abuse by MaineHousing 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**

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- **Seeking or accepting anything of material value from applicants, participating families, vendors, owners, contractors, or other persons who provide services or materials to MaineHousing**
- **Disclosing confidential or proprietary information to outside parties**
- **Gaining profit as a result of insider knowledge of MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will review instances of program abuse by an owner, family, or MaineHousing staff member for referral to law enforcement for further action. When the program abuse involves an amount of overpaid assistance that meets or exceeds the applicable 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 PHA may retain a portion of program fraud losses that the PHA recovers from a family or owner through litigation, court order, or a repayment agreement [24 CFR 982.163].

The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA related to the collection, these costs must be deducted from the amount retained by the PHA.

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Chapter 15

SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES

[24 CFR 982 Subpart M]

INTRODUCTION

The PHA may permit a family to use any of the special housing types discussed in this chapter. However, the PHA is not required to permit families receiving assistance in its jurisdiction to use these housing types, except that PHAs must permit use of any special housing type if needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability. The PHA also may limit the number of families who receive HCV assistance in these housing types and cannot require families to use a particular housing type. No special funding is provided for special housing types.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **Families will not be permitted to use any Congregate Housing, Group Homes, Shared Housing and Cooperative Housing, unless use is needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to a person with disabilities. Families will be able to use SROs, Homeownership and Manufactured Homes upon MaineHousing approval.**

Special housing types include single room occupancy (SRO), congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, cooperative housing, manufactured homes where the family owns the home and leases the space, and homeownership [24 CFR 982.601].

This chapter consists of the following seven 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: Single Room Occupancy

Part II: Congregate Housing

Part III: Group Homes

Part IV: Shared Housing

Part V: Cooperative Housing

Part VI: Manufactured Homes (including manufactured home space rental)

Part VII: Homeownership

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PART I: SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY

[24 CFR 982.602 through 982.605]

15-I.A. OVERVIEW

A Single Room Occupancy (SRO) unit provides living and sleeping space for the exclusive use of the occupant but requires the occupant to share sanitary and/or food preparation facilities with others. More than one person may not occupy an SRO unit. HCV regulations do not limit the number of units in an SRO facility, but the size of a facility may be limited by local ordinances.

When providing HCV assistance in an SRO unit, a separate lease and HAP contract are executed for each assisted person, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

15-I.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION

The payment standard for SRO housing is 75 percent of the zero-bedroom payment standard amount on the PHA's payment standard schedule.

The utility allowance for an assisted person residing in SRO housing is 75 percent of the zero-bedroom utility allowance.

The HAP for an assisted occupant in an SRO facility is the lower of the SRO payment standard amount minus the Total Tenant Payment ("TTP") or the gross rent for the unit minus the TTP.

15-I.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS)

HQS requirements described in Chapter 8 apply to SRO housing except as modified below.

- *Access*: Access doors to the SRO unit must have working locks for privacy. The occupant must be able to access the unit without going through any other unit. Each unit must have immediate access to two or more approved means of exit from the building, appropriately marked and leading to safe and open space at ground level. The SRO unit must also have any other means of exit required by State or local law.
- *Fire Safety*: All SRO facilities must have a sprinkler system that protects major spaces. "Major spaces" are defined as hallways, common areas, and any other areas specified in local fire, building, or safety codes. SROs must also have hard-wired smoke detectors, and any other fire and safety equipment required by state or local law.

Sanitary facilities and space and security standards must meet local code requirements for SRO housing. In the absence of local code standards the requirements discussed below apply [24 CFR 982.605].

- *Sanitary Facilities*: At least one flush toilet that can be used in privacy, a lavatory basin, and a bathtub or shower in proper operating condition must be provided for each six persons (or fewer) residing in the SRO facility. If the SRO units are leased only to men, flush urinals may be substituted for up to one half of the required number of toilets. Sanitary facilities must be reasonably accessible from a common hall or passageway, and may not be located more than one floor above or below the SRO unit. They may not be located below grade unless the SRO units are located on that level.

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- *Space and Security*: An SRO unit must contain at least 110 square feet of floor space, and at least four square feet of closet space with an unobstructed height of at least five feet, for use by the occupant. If the closet space is less than four square feet, the habitable floor space in the SRO unit must be increased by the amount of the deficiency. Exterior doors and windows accessible from outside the SRO unit must be lockable.

Because no children live in SRO housing, the housing quality standards applicable to lead-based paint do not apply.

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PART II: CONGREGATE HOUSING

[24 CFR 982.606 through 982.609]

15-II.A. OVERVIEW

Congregate housing is intended for use by elderly persons or persons with disabilities. A congregate housing facility contains a shared central kitchen and dining area and a private living area for the individual household that includes at least a living room, bedroom and bathroom. Food service for residents must be provided.

If approved by the PHA, a family member or live-in aide may reside with the elderly person or person with disabilities. The PHA 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.

When providing HCV assistance in congregate housing, a separate lease and HAP contract are executed for each assisted family, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

15-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION

The payment standard for an individual unit in a congregate housing facility is based on the number of rooms in the private living area. If there is only one room in the unit (not including the bathroom or the kitchen, if a kitchen is provided), the PHA must use the payment standard for a zero-bedroom unit. If the unit has two or more rooms (other than the bathroom and the kitchen), the PHA must use the one-bedroom payment standard.

The HAP for an assisted occupant in a congregate housing facility is the lower of the applicable payment standard minus the TTP or the gross rent for the unit minus the TTP.

The gross rent for the unit for the purpose of calculating HCV assistance is the shelter portion (including utilities) of the resident's monthly housing expense only. The residents' costs for food service should not be included in the rent for a congregate housing unit.

15-II.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

HQS requirements as described in Chapter 8 apply to congregate housing except for the requirements stated below.

> Congregate housing must have (1) a refrigerator of appropriate size in the private living area of each resident; (2) a central kitchen and dining facilities located within the premises and accessible to the residents, and (3) food service for the residents, that is not provided by the residents themselves.
>
> The housing quality standards applicable to lead-based paint do not apply.

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PART III: GROUP HOME

[24 CFR 982.610 through 982.614 and HCV GB p. 7-4]

15-III.A. OVERVIEW

A group home is a state-licensed facility intended for occupancy by elderly persons and/or persons with disabilities. Except for live-in aides, all persons living in a group home, whether assisted or not, must be elderly persons or persons with disabilities. Persons living in a group home must not require continuous medical or nursing care.

A group home consists of bedrooms for residents, which can be shared by no more than two people, and a living room, kitchen, dining area, bathroom, and other appropriate social, recreational, or community space that may be shared with other residents.

No more than 12 persons may reside in a group home including assisted and unassisted residents and any live-in aides.

If approved by the PHA, a live-in aide may live in the group home with a person with disabilities. The PHA 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.

When providing HCV assistance in a group home, a separate lease and HAP contract is executed for each assisted family, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

15-III.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE, AND HAP CALCULATION

Unless there is a live-in aide, the family unit size for an assisted occupant of a group home must be zero- or one-bedroom, depending on the PHA's subsidy standard. If there is a live-in aide, the aide must be counted in determining the household's unit size.

The payment standard used to calculate the HAP is the lower of the payment standard for the family unit size or the prorata share of the payment standard for the group home size. The prorata share is calculated by dividing the number of persons in the assisted household by the number of persons (assisted and unassisted) living in the group home.

The HAP for an assisted occupant in a group home is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the gross rent minus the TTP.

The utility allowance for an assisted occupant in a group home is the prorata share of the utility allowance for the group home.

The rents paid for participants residing in group homes are subject to generally applicable standards for rent reasonableness. The rent for an assisted person must not exceed the prorata portion of the reasonable rent for the group home. In determining reasonable rent, the PHA should consider whether sanitary facilities and facilities for food preparation and service are common facilities or private facilities.

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15-III.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

HQS requirements described in Chapter 8 apply to group homes except for the requirements stated below.

- *Sanitary Facilities*: A group home must have at least one bathroom in the facility, with a flush toilet that can be used in privacy, a fixed basin with hot and cold running water, and a shower or bathtub with hot and cold running water. A group home may contain private or common bathrooms. However, no more than four residents can be required to share a bathroom.
- *Food Preparation and Service*: Group home units must contain a kitchen and dining area with adequate space to store, prepare, and serve food. The facilities for food preparation and service may be private or may be shared by the residents. The kitchen must contain a range, an oven, a refrigerator, and a sink with hot and cold running water. The sink must drain into an approvable public or private disposal system.
- *Space and Security*: Group homes must contain at least one bedroom of appropriate size for every two people, and a living room, kitchen, dining area, bathroom, and other appropriate social, recreational, or community space that may be shared with other residents.
- *Structure and Material*: To avoid any threat to the health and safety of the residents, group homes must be structurally sound. Elevators must be in good condition. Group homes must be accessible to and usable by residents with disabilities.
- *Site and Neighborhood*: Group homes must be located in a residential setting. The site and neighborhood should be reasonably free from hazards to the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents, and should not be subject to serious adverse conditions, such as:
  - Dangerous walks or steps
  - Instability
  - Flooding, poor drainage
  - Septic tank back-ups
  - Sewage hazards
  - Mud slides
  - Abnormal air pollution
  - Smoke or dust
  - Excessive noise
  - Vibrations or vehicular traffic
  - Excessive accumulations of trash
  - Vermin or rodent infestation, and
  - Fire hazards.

The housing quality standards applicable to lead-based paint do not apply.

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PART IV: SHARED HOUSING

[24 CFR 982.615 through 982.618]

15-IV.A. OVERVIEW

Shared housing is a single housing unit occupied by an assisted family and another resident or residents. The shared unit consists of both common space for use by the occupants of the unit and separate private space for each assisted family.

An assisted family may share a unit with other persons assisted under the HCV program or with other unassisted persons. The owner of a shared housing unit may reside in the unit, but housing assistance may not be paid on behalf of the owner. The resident owner may not be related by blood or marriage to the assisted family.

If approved by the PHA, a live-in aide may reside with the family to care for a person with disabilities. The PHA 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.

When providing HCV assistance in shared housing, a separate lease and HAP contract are executed for each assisted family, and the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

15-IV.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION

The payment standard for a family in shared housing is the lower of the payment standard for the family unit size or the prorata share of the payment standard for the shared housing unit size.

The prorata share is calculated by dividing the number of bedrooms available for occupancy by the assisted family in the private space by the total number of bedrooms in the unit.

The HAP for a family in shared housing is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the gross rent minus the TTP. The utility allowance for an assisted family living in shared housing is the lower of the utility allowance for the family unit size (voucher size) or the prorata share of the utility allowance for the shared housing unit.

> **Example:** A family holds a 2-bedroom voucher. The family decides to occupy 3 out of 4 bedrooms available in the unit.
>
> The utility allowance for a 4-bedroom unit equals $200
>
> The utility allowance for a 2-bedroom unit equals $100
>
> The prorata share of the utility allowance is $150 (3/4 of $200)
>
> The PHA will use the 2-bedroom utility allowance of $100.

The rents paid for families living in shared housing are subject to generally applicable standards for rent reasonableness. The rent paid to the owner for the assisted family must not exceed the pro-rata portion of the reasonable rent for the shared unit. In determining reasonable rent, the PHA should consider whether sanitary and food preparation areas are private or shared.

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15-IV.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

The PHA may not give approval to reside in shared housing unless the entire unit, including the portion of the unit available for use by the assisted family under its lease, meets the housing quality standards.

HQS requirements described in Chapter 8 apply to shared housing except for the requirements stated below.

- *Facilities Available for the Family*: Facilities available to the assisted family, whether shared or private, must include a living room, a bathroom, and food preparation and refuse disposal facilities.
- *Space and Security*: The entire unit must provide adequate space and security for all assisted and unassisted residents. The private space for each assisted family must contain at least one bedroom for each two persons in the family. The number of bedrooms in the private space of an assisted family must not be less than the family unit size. A zero-bedroom or one-bedroom unit may not be used for shared housing.

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PART V: COOPERATIVE HOUSING

[24 CFR 982.619]

15-V.A. OVERVIEW

This part applies to rental assistance for a cooperative member residing in cooperative housing. It does not apply to assistance for a cooperative member who has purchased membership under the HCV homeownership option, or to rental assistance for a family that leases a cooperative housing unit from a cooperative member.

A cooperative is a form of ownership (nonprofit corporation or association) in which the residents purchase memberships in the ownership entity. Rather than being charged "rent" a cooperative member is charged a "carrying charge."

When providing HCV assistance in cooperative housing, the standard form of the HAP contract is used.

15-V.B. PAYMENT STANDARD, UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND HAP CALCULATION

The payment standard and utility allowance are determined according to regular HCV program requirements.

The HAP for a cooperative housing unit is the lower of the payment standard minus the TTP or the monthly carrying charge for the unit, plus any utility allowance, minus the TTP. The monthly carrying charge includes the member's share of the cooperative debt service, operating expenses, and necessary payments to cooperative reserve funds. The carrying charge does not include down payments or other payments to purchase the cooperative unit or to amortize a loan made to the family for this purpose.

15-V.C. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

All standard HQS requirements apply to cooperative housing units. There are no additional HQS requirements.

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PART VI: 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 PHA 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. PHAs may, but are not required to, provide assistance for such families.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will provide assistance to an eligible family who resides in a manufactured home that the family owns and leases the lot on which the manufactured home is located.**

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 PHA payment standard for manufactured homes is determined in accordance with 24 CFR 982.505 and is the payment standard used for the PHA'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 PHA 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 PHA 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 unities.

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 annually thereafter the PHA must determine that the rent for the manufactured home space is reasonable based on rents for comparable manufactured home spaces. The PHA 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, 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

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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.

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PART VII: 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA to determine whether it is reasonable to implement a homeownership program as a reasonable accommodation. The PHA must determine what is reasonable based on the specific circumstances and individual needs of the person with a disability. The PHA may determine that it is not reasonable to offer homeownership assistance as a reasonable accommodation in cases where the PHA has otherwise opted not to implement a homeownership program.

The PHA 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 PHA may also establish additional initial requirements as long as they are described in the PHA administrative plan.

- The family must have been admitted to the Housing Choice Voucher 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. The PHA may establish a higher income standard for families. However, a family that meets the federal minimum income requirement (but not the PHA's requirement) will be considered to meet the minimum income requirement if it can demonstrate that it has been pre-qualified or pre-approved for financing that is sufficient to purchase an eligible unit.
- 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.

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- 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 PHA must grant an exemption from the employment requirement if the PHA 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).

MaineHousing Policy

Only current participants in the MaineHousing HCV program who have received rental assistance for at least one full year and are in good standing may apply for the HCV Homeownership program.

MaineHousing defines good standing for the HCV Homeownership program as:

- **No debts owed to MaineHousing, other PHAs, or current landlord**
- **Not in violation of their lease or family obligations under the HCV program**

A pre-approval letter from a mortgage lender must accompany the application packet; OR verification of $1,000 three months average daily balance in a savings account and proof of credit score of at least 640.

15-VII.C. SELECTION OF FAMILIES [24 CFR 982.626]

Unless otherwise provided (under the homeownership option), the PHA may limit homeownership assistance to families or purposes defined by the PHA, and may prescribe additional requirements for commencement of homeownership assistance for a family. Any such limits or additional requirements must be described in the PHA administrative plan.

If the PHA limits the number of families that may participate in the homeownership option, the PHA must establish a system by which to select families to participate.

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<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
MaineHousing will limit participation in MaineHousing's Homeownership program to 50 families.

In addition to meeting HUD eligibility requirements for homeownership assistance, the family must:

- **Reside in MaineHousing's jurisdiction unless MaineHousing has a reciprocity agreement with the housing authority in the state of Maine in whose jurisdiction the family chooses to live, and**
- **Except for a mortgage to purchase the property, the famly must hold a fee simple title in the home**

15-VII.D. ELIGIBLE UNITS [24 CFR 982.628]
In order for a unit to be eligible, the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA-owned units all of the following conditions must be satisfied:
  - The PHA informs the family, both orally and in writing, that the family has the right to purchase any eligible unit and a PHA-owned unit is freely selected by the family without PHA pressure or steering;
  - The unit is not ineligible housing;

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- The PHA 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 PHA provided financing. All of these actions must be completed in accordance with program requirements.

The PHA must not approve the unit if the PHA has been informed that the seller is debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation.

15-VII.E. ADDITIONAL PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA, the PHA may issue the family a voucher to lease a unit or place the family's name on the waiting list for a voucher.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will issue a certificate of eligibility for one year. If the certificate of eligibility expires and the family is not under contract for the purchase of a home, the family may not reapply for Homeownership for one full year of additional participation in the HCV program following the expiration date.

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 PHA. HUD suggests the following topics for the PHA-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 PHA 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 PHA may also offer additional counseling after commencement of homeownership assistance (ongoing counseling). If the PHA offers a program of ongoing counseling for participants in the homeownership option, the PHA shall have discretion to determine whether the family is required to participate in the ongoing counseling.

If the PHA does not use a HUD-approved housing counseling agency to provide the counseling, the PHA should ensure that its counseling program is consistent with the counseling provided under HUD's Housing Counseling program.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing may require an additional pre-purchase educational component to enhance purchase readiness and long-term housing stability.

15-VII.G. HOME INSPECTIONS, CONTRACT OF SALE, AND PHA DISAPPROVAL OF SELLER [24 CFR 982.631]

Home Inspections

The PHA may not commence monthly homeownership assistance payments for a family until the PHA 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 PHA may not require the family to use an independent inspector selected by the PHA. The independent inspector may not be a PHA employee or contractor, or other person under control of the PHA. However, the PHA may establish standards for qualification of inspectors selected by families under the homeownership option.

The PHA 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 PHA 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.

Disapproval of a Seller
In its administrative discretion, the PHA may deny approval of a seller for the same reasons a PHA may disapprove an owner under the regular HCV program [see 24 CFR 982.306(c)].

15-VII.H. FINANCING [24 CFR 982.632]
The PHA 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 PHA must establish policies describing these requirements in the administrative plan.

A PHA may not require that families acquire financing from one or more specified lenders, thereby restricting the family's ability to secure favorable financing terms.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing does not provide down payment assistance.

In addition to HUD restrictions applying to financing the purchase of the family's home, the family may not enter into any agreement in connection with the financing that provides for any of the following:

- **Seller financing, unless the seller is a nonprofit organization approved by MaineHousing**
- **Private financing**
- **Bond for Deed financing**
- **An adjustable rate mortgage secured by the family's home**
- **A balloon payment at the maturity of the promissory note given by the family**
- **An escrow for routine maintenance items.**

MaineHousing must review and approve all lender qualifications and financing terms and conditions. MaineHousing may permit additional debt to make the home accessible and may require mortgage insurance.

Refinancing the property, without prior written approval from MaineHousing may result in termination of the HCV Homeownership assistance.

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 PHA may not continue homeownership assistance after the month when the family moves out. The family or lender is not required to refund to the PHA 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.

The family must comply with the following obligations:

- The family must comply with the terms of the mortgage securing debt incurred to purchase the home, or any refinancing of such debt.
- 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. Use and occupancy of the home are subject to 24 CFR 982.551 (h) and (i).
- The family must supply information to the PHA or HUD as specified in 24 CFR 982.551(b). The family must further supply any information required by the PHA or HUD concerning mortgage financing or refinancing, sale or transfer of any interest in the home, or homeownership expenses.
- The family must notify the PHA before moving out of the home.
- The family must notify the PHA 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).

MaineHousing Policy

The applicant head of household, spouse or adult on the mortgage document must remain continuously employed (no less than 30 hours per week) while participating in the program. MaineHousing has the discretion to interpret small gaps in employment. Permissible gaps can only occur if loss of employment resulted from measures beyond the participant's control (layoff, medical emergency); and did not result in an employment gap of more than eight consecutive weeks.

Mitigating Circumstances

- **If a working family is subsequently determined by MaineHousing to now qualify as a "disabled family," as defined by HUD, the full-time employment requirement is no longer applicable to that family.**
- **MaineHousing will consider mitigating circumstances where certain lapses in employment prohibit the family from meeting its continuous employment**

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obligation. These include receipt of Unemployment Insurance Benefits due to layoff; absences defined under the Family Medical Leave Act; receipt of Workman's Compensation benefits.

- **MaineHousing will allow week-for-week substitutions whenever any of these benefits are received. The participant must return to full-time employment within 60 days after exhaustion of unemployment benefits. Failure to return to full-time employment (30 hours per week) within 60 days will generate a correctable program violation warning. Failure to correct may result in a correctable 30-day Notice of Termination.**

- **Any inspection MaineHousing conducts after the initial inspection will be done on an advisory basis. The family will be encouraged to make the repairs, but will not be required to do so as a condition of ongoing assistance.**

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 years, if the initial mortgage incurred to finance purchase of the home has a term of 20 years or longer; or
- Ten 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 PHAs, the total of such assistance terms is subject to the maximum term described in this part.

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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 PHA will use the same payment standard schedule, payment standard amounts, and subsidy standards as those described in 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 PHA may pay the homeownership assistance payments directly to the family, or at the PHA's discretion, to a lender on behalf of the family. If the assistance payment exceeds the amount due to the lender, the PHA 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, a PHA may grant relief from this requirement in those cases where automatic termination would result in extreme hardship for the family.

The PHA must adopt policies for determining the amount of homeownership expenses to be allowed by the PHA in accordance with HUD requirements.

Homeownership expenses (not including cooperatives) only include amounts allowed by the PHA 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 PHA allowance for maintenance expenses;
- The PHA allowance for costs of major repairs and replacements;
- The PHA 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 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;
- 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)].

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- 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 PHA 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 PHA allowance for maintenance expenses;
- The PHA allowance for costs of major repairs and replacements;
- The PHA 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 PHA 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. Continued tenant-based assistance for a new unit cannot begin so long as any family member holds title to the prior home.

The PHA may deny permission to move to a new unit with continued voucher assistance:

- If the PHA has insufficient funding to provide continued assistance.

- In accordance with 24 CFR 982.638, regarding denial or termination of assistance.
- In accordance with the PHA's policy regarding number of moves within a 12-month period.

The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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.

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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 seven parts as described below:

Part I: Administrative Fee Reserve. This part describes the PHA'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 PHA. This part describes policies for recovery of monies that the PHA has overpaid on behalf of families, or to owners, and describes the circumstances under which the PHA 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 a PHA.

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 PHA will follow.

Part VII: Reporting and Record Keeping for Children with Environmental Intervention Blood Lead Level. This part describes the PHA'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 PHA'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, And 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.

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PART I: ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE [24 CFR 982.155]

The PHA 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 a PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy

Expenditures from the UNP account will be made in accordance with all applicable federal requirements. Expenditures will not exceed $5,000 per occurrence without the prior approval of the Executive Director.

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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 PHA to adapt the program to local conditions. This part discusses how the PHA 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).

MaineHousing Policy

Copies of the payment standard and utility allowance schedules are available for review in MaineHousing's offices during normal business hours or on MaineHousing's website.

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.

MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA must establish a payment standard schedule that establishes payment standard amounts for each FMR area within the PHA's jurisdiction, and for each unit size within each of the FMR areas. For each unit size, the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA must update its payment standards if the standards are no longer within the basic range [24 CFR 982.503(b)]. HUD may require the PHA to make further adjustments if it determines that rent burdens for assisted families in the PHA's jurisdiction are unacceptably high [24 CFR 982.503(g)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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" MaineHousing will consider the following factors when determining whether an adjustment should be made to the payment standard schedule:

Funding Availability: The MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will consider increasing the payment standard. In evaluating rent burdens, MaineHousing will not include families renting a larger unit than their family unit size.

Quality of Units Selected: MaineHousing 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: MaineHousing 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: MaineHousing 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: MaineHousing 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.

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Changes to payment standard amounts will be effective on January 1st of every year, or within three months of the FMR effective date, whichever is earlier. The effective date is applicable both to HUD-required revisions and to discretionary revisions.

Exception Payment Standards [982.503(c)]

The PHA 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.

Unit-by-Unit Exceptions [24 CFR 982.503(b), 24 CFR 982.505(d), Notice PIH 2010-26]
Unit-by-unit exceptions to the PHA'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 PHA's payment standard schedule.

When needed as a reasonable accommodation, the PHA 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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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.**
- **The request for an exception is not more than 120% of FMR**

"Success Rate" Payment Standard Amounts [24 CFR 982.503(e)]
If a substantial percentage of families have difficulty finding a suitable unit, the PHA may request a "success rate payment standard" that applies to the entire jurisdiction. If approved by HUD, a success rate payment standard allows the PHA to set its payment standards at 90-110 percent of a

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higher FMR (the 50th, rather than the 40th percentile FMR). To support the request, the PHA 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 PHA had established payment standards for all unit sizes, and for the entire jurisdiction, at 110 percent of the published FMR; and
- The PHA 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 PHA may choose to adjust the payment standard for only some unit sizes in all, or a designated part, of the PHA's jurisdiction within the FMR area.

Decreases in the Payment Standard below the Basic Range [24 CFR 982.503(d)]
The PHA 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 PHA-established utility allowance schedule is used in determining family share and PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA about establishing utility allowance schedules.

See HUD Federal Register FR-5778-N-01 dated June 25, 2014 HUD Implementation of Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations Provisions on Public Housing Agency Consortia.

A change in the voucher program requires PHAs to now use the utility allowance for *the lower of* the actual unit size *or the voucher bedroom size*. Exceptions can be made under reasonable accommodation.

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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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The majority of housing units in MaineHousing's jurisdiction do not include central air conditioning and are not wired for tenant-installed air conditioners. Therefore MaineHousing has not included an allowance for air conditioning in its utility allowance schedule.**

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 (See Chapter 2 for policies regarding the request and approval of reasonable accommodations).

Utility Allowance Revisions
The PHA 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 PHA must maintain information supporting its annual review of utility allowance and any revisions made in its utility allowance schedule.

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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 PHA that may adversely affect them. PHA decisions that may be appealed by applicants and participants are discussed in this section.

The process for applicant appeals of PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA
- General policy issues or class grievances
- A determination of the family unit size under the PHA subsidy standards
- A PHA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term
- A PHA determination not to grant approval of the tenancy
- A PHA determination that the unit is not in compliance with the HQS
- A PHA determination that the unit is not in accordance with the HQS due to family size or composition

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will only offer an informal review to applicants for whom assistance is being denied. Denial of assistance includes: denying listing on MaineHousing 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 PHA must give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying assistance. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the PHA 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

MaineHousing Policy

A request for an informal review must be made in writing and delivered to MaineHousing either in person or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 10 business days from the date of MaineHousing's denial of assistance.

MaineHousing 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 PHA.

Informal Review Decision [24 CFR 982.554(b)]

The PHA must notify the applicant of the PHA's final decision, including a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

MaineHousing Policy

In rendering a decision, MaineHousing will evaluate the following matters:

- **Whether or not the grounds for denial were stated factually in the notice to the family.**
- **The validity of the grounds for denial of assistance. If the grounds for denial are not supported by the regulations, then the decision to deny assistance will be overturned.**
- **The validity of the evidence. MaineHousing will evaluate whether the facts presented prove the grounds for denial of assistance. If the facts prove that there are grounds for denial, and the denial is required by HUD, MaineHousing will uphold the decision to deny assistance.**

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- **If the facts prove the grounds for denial, and the denial is discretionary, MaineHousing may uphold the decision to deny assistance.**

The PHA 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, along with proof of mailing.

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 for their informal review, the denial of admission will stand and the family will be so notified.

16-III.C. INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS [24 CFR 982.555]

PHAs must offer an informal hearing for certain PHA determinations relating to the individual circumstances of a participant family. A participant is defined as a family that has been admitted to the PHA's HCV program and is currently assisted in the program. The purpose of the informal hearing is to consider whether the PHA's decisions related to the family's circumstances are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations and PHA policies.

The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA utility allowance schedule
- A determination of the family unit size under the PHA'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 PHA 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 PHA
- General policy issues or class grievances
- Establishment of the PHA schedule of utility allowances for families in the program
- A PHA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term
- A PHA determination not to approve a unit or tenancy
- A PHA determination that a unit selected by the applicant is not in compliance with the HQS
- A PHA determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of family size
- A determination by the PHA to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against an owner under a HAP contract

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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 PHA makes a decision that is subject to informal hearing procedures, the PHA 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 and voucher size, the PHA 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 PHA'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.

MaineHousing Policy
In cases where MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing.**
- **A brief statement of the reasons for the decision including the regulatory reference.**
- **The date the proposed action will take place.**
- **A statement that if the family does not agree with the decision the family may request an informal hearing of the decision.**

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- **A deadline for the family to request the informal hearing.**
- **To whom the hearing request should be addressed.**
- **A brief overview of the informal hearing process**
- **A statement of the family's right to request a reasonable accommodation**

Scheduling an Informal Hearing **[24 CFR 982.555(d)]**

When an informal hearing is required, the PHA must proceed with the hearing in a reasonably expeditious manner upon the request of the family.

MaineHousing Policy

A request for an informal hearing must be made in writing and delivered to MaineHousing either in person or by first class mail no later than 14 days from the date of MaineHousing's mailing of the notice to terminate assistance.

MaineHousing will attempt to schedule and send written notice of the informal hearing date to the family within 30 calendar days of the family's request.

Once the family requests a hearing they will be sent a hearing notice with the following information:

- **An explanation of MaineHousing's hearing procedures.**
- **The date, time and location of the hearing**

The family must confirm their availability for the scheduled date of the hearing either by phone or in writing within 14 days of the date of MaineHousing's hearing notice. 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 and may include incarceration or in-patient medical treatment." Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date. At its discretion, MaineHousing may request documentation of the "good cause" prior to rescheduling the hearing.

If the family does not appear within 20 minutes of the scheduled time, the family must contact MaineHousing within 24 hours of the scheduled hearing date, excluding weekends and holidays. MaineHousing will reschedule the hearing only if the family can show good cause (see definition above) for the failure to appear, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. If the family does not contact MaineHousing within 24 hours, the family may request the informal hearing within 30 days upon extraordinary circumstances.

Pre-Hearing Right to Discovery [24 CFR 982.555(e)]

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Participants and the PHA are permitted pre-hearing discovery rights. The family must be given the opportunity to examine before the hearing any PHA documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The family must be allowed to copy any such documents at their own expense. If the PHA does not make the document available for examination on request of the family, the PHA may not rely on the document at the hearing.

The PHA hearing procedures may provide that the PHA must be given the opportunity to examine at the PHA offices before the hearing, any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The PHA must be allowed to copy any such document at the PHA's expense. If the family does not make the document available for examination on request of the PHA, the family may not rely on the document at the hearing.

For the purpose of informal hearings, *documents* include records and regulations.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will provide the family with any exhibit documentation to be presented free of charge no later than 5 business days prior to the scheduled hearing. If the family wishes to obtain copies of additional documentation they will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of $.10 per page. MaineHousing will entertain requests for waivers of the fees in the case of deminimus numbers of copies or family hardship.**
>
> **MaineHousing must be given an opportunity to examine at MaineHousing offices before the hearing any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. Whenever a participant requests an informal hearing, MaineHousing will automatically mail a letter to the participant requesting a copy of any family documents that the participant wishes to present or utilize at the hearing. The participant must make the documents available no later than 5 business days prior to the scheduled hearing date. The participant can satisfy this requirement by providing the documents via mail or in electronic form within the time constraints outlined above in order to allow MaineHousing the opportunity to prepare for the hearing. Failure to comply with this obligation may result in the hearing officer not allowing the documents into evidence.**

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 PHA, other than the person who made or approved the decision or a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The hearings for terminations will be conducted by a contracted hearing officer. Other informal hearings may be conducted by any MaineHousing employee, other**

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than the person who made the decision under review or their subordinate, or other qualified person designated by MaineHousing.

Attendance at the Informal Hearing

MaineHousing Policy

Hearings may be attended by a hearing officer and the following applicable persons:

- **A MaineHousing representative(s) and any witnesses for MaineHousing**
- **The participant and any witnesses for the participant**
- **The participant's counsel or other representative**
- **Any other person approved by MaineHousing 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 PHA's hearing procedures [24 CFR 982.555(4)(ii)].

MaineHousing Policy:
The hearings will be conducted in accordance with the Maine Administrative Procedures Act.

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 engaging in behavior that interferes with the orderly conduct of the hearing may be barred in whole or part from participation by the hearing officer.

***Evidence* [24 CFR 982.555(e)(5)]**

The PHA 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.

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing. Writings include all forms of recorded communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds, videotapes or symbols or combinations thereof.**

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- **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.**

Evidence may be included without regard to the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings. Evidence shall be admitted if it is the kind of evidence upon which reasonable persons are accustomed to rely in the conduct of serious affairs.

If either MaineHousing 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 decision must be furnished promptly to the family.

MaineHousing Policy
In rendering a decision, the hearing officer will consider the following matters:

MaineHousing Notice to the Family: The hearing officer will determine if the family was properly informed of the reasons for MaineHousing's decision in the Notice.

Evidence Presented at the Hearing: The evidence consists of the documents and testimonies presented at the hearing. Evidence is not conclusion and it is not argument. The hearing officer will evaluate the facts to determine if they support MaineHousing's decision as well as any evidence presented by the family in way of mitigation, extenuation or other purposes.

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 MaineHousing policies. If the grounds for termination are not one specified in the regulations or in compliance with MaineHousing policies, then the decision of MaineHousing will be overturned.

Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the participant shall be based on a preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing.

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

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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.

The issues at the hearing will be whether MaineHousing's decision relating to the individual circumstances of the Participant is in accordance with the applicable laws, HUD regulations and MaineHousing policies. The hearing shall not be a complete review of whether MaineHousing should have undertaken the proposed action. The hearing officer is not to substitute the hearing officer's judgment on the wisdom of the decision.

The hearing officer will issue a written decision to the family and MaineHousing no later than 10 business days after the hearing. The report 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 MaineHousing representative; Name of family representative (if any); and
- List of witnesses testifying at the hearing.

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.

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 MaineHousing's decision.

Recommended Decision: In the recommended decision, the hearing officer will include a statement of whether MaineHousing's action is upheld or not.

Procedures for Rehearing or Further Hearing

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 PHA will take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

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PHA Notice of Final Decision [24 CFR 982.555(f)]

MaineHousing will issue a Final Decision either adopting or rejecting (fully or partially) the hearing officer's recommendations. The PHA is not bound by the decision of the hearing officer for matters in which the PHA 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 PHA determines it is not bound by the hearing officer's decision in accordance with HUD regulations, the PHA must promptly notify the family of the determination and the reason for the determination.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will mail a "Notice of Final Decision" including the hearing officer's report, to the participant and their representative. This notice will be sent by first-class mail, postage pre-paid, with an affidavit of mailing enclosed. The participant will be mailed the original "Notice of Final Decision" and a copy of the proof of mailing. A copy of the "Notice of Final Decision" along with the original proof of mailing will be maintained in MaineHousing's file.**
>
> **A "Notice of Final Decision" will be mailed by MaineHousing regardless of whether they agree with or overturn the hearing officer's decision. The Final Decision will include a statement of the family's right to review of the decision by the courts and the action required and time within which such action must be taken in order to exercise that right.**

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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA receives notification that the USCIS secondary verification failed to confirm eligible immigration status, the PHA 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 PHA with a copy of the written request for appeal and the proof of mailing.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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 PHA, of its decision. When the USCIS notifies the PHA of the decision, the PHA must notify the family of its right to request an informal hearing.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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 PHA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the PHA notice of denial, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

The informal hearing procedures for applicant families are described below.

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Informal Hearing Officer

The PHA 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.

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 PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The family will be allowed to copy any documents related to the hearing at a cost of $.10 per page. The family must request discovery of MaineHousing documents no later than 5 business days prior to the hearing.**

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 PHA, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information the PHA 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 PHA will provide competent interpretation services, free of charge.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will provide oral interpretation upon request as outlined in Chapter 2.**

Recording of the Hearing

The family is entitled to have the hearing recorded by audiotape. The PHA may, but is not required to provide a transcript of the hearing.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not provide a transcript of an audio taped hearing.**

Hearing Decision

The PHA 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.

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MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will follow the informal hearings process described in this chapter.

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 PHA provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the PHA 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 PHA must retain for a minimum of 5 years the following documents that may have been submitted to the PHA by the family, or provided to the PHA as part of the USCIS appeal or the PHA 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

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PART IV: OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO THE PHA

16-IV.A. OVERVIEW

PHAs are required to include in the administrative plan, policies concerning repayment by a family of amounts owed to the PHA [24 CFR 982.54]. This part describes the PHA's policies for recovery of monies owed to the PHA by families or owners.

MaineHousing Policy

When an action or inaction of an owner or participant results in the overpayment of housing assistance, MaineHousing holds the owner or participant liable to return any overpayments to MaineHousing.

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing, MaineHousing will utilize other available collection alternatives including, but not limited to, the following:

- **State income tax set-off program**
- **Or other means as determined appropriate by MaineHousing and Maine state law.**

16-IV.B. REPAYMENT POLICY

Owner Debts to the PHA

MaineHousing Policy

Any amount due to MaineHousing by an owner must be repaid by the owner within 30 days of MaineHousing determination of the debt.

If the owner fails to repay the debt within the required time frame and is entitled to future HAP payments, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing may, in its sole discretion, offer to enter into a repayment agreement on terms prescribed by MaineHousing.

If the owner refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, MaineHousing may ban the owner from future participation in the program and pursue other modes of collection.

If the agency decides to allow the owner to participate in the program in the future, outstanding debts will be collected from future HAP payments.

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Family Debts to the PHA

MaineHousing Policy

Any amount owed to MaineHousing by an HCV family must be repaid by the family. If the family is unable to repay the debt within 30 days, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 PHA in which a tenant or owner acknowledges a debt in a specific amount and agrees to repay the amount due at specific time periods.

General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families

Down Payment Requirement

MaineHousing Policy

Before executing a repayment agreement with a family, MaineHousing will generally require a down payment of at least $100. If the family can provide evidence satisfactory to MaineHousing that a down payment of $100 would impose an undue hardship, MaineHousing may, in its sole discretion, require a lesser amount or waive the requirement.

Payment Thresholds

Notice PIH 2017-12 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 2017-12 acknowledges that PHAs have the discretion to establish "thresholds and policies" for repayment agreements with families [24 CFR 982.552(c)(1)(vii)].

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing has established the following thresholds for repayment of debts:

- **Amounts greater than $101 must be repaid in full or in $50 monthly installments.**
- **Debts $100 and under will not be permitted a repayment agreement and must be paid in full within 60 days of notification.**

If a family can provide evidence satisfactory to MaineHousing that the threshold applicable to the family's debt would impose an undue hardship, MaineHousing may, in its sole discretion, determine that a lower monthly payment amount is reasonable. In making its determination, MaineHousing will consider all relevant information, including the following:

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- **The amount owed by the family to MaineHousing**
- **The reason for the debt, including whether the debt was the result of family action/inaction or circumstances beyond the family's control**
- **The family's current and potential income and expenses**
- **The family's current family share, as calculated under 24 CFR 982.515**
- **The family's history of meeting its financial responsibilities**

Execution of the Agreement

MaineHousing Policy
Any repayment agreement between MaineHousing and a family must be signed and dated by MaineHousing and by the head of household and spouse/cohead (if applicable).

Due Dates

MaineHousing Policy
All payments are due by the close of business on the 10th day of the month. If the 10th does not fall on a business day, the due date is the close of business on the first business day after the 10th.

Late or Missed Payments

MaineHousing Policy
If a family receives three delinquency notices for unexcused late payments in a 12-month period, the repayment agreement will be considered in default, and MaineHousing will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12. MaineHousing may grant a deferral for up to 2 payments at its discretion.

No Offer of Repayment Agreement

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing generally 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.

Repayment Agreements Involving Improper Payments
Notice PIH 2017-12 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 PHA 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 PHA 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

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- 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

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 Chart
Indicator 1: Selection from the waiting list **Maximum Score: 15** • 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** • 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** • 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** • 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 re-inspects 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 re-inspections 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.

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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 HQS inspections

Maximum Points: 10

- This indicator shows whether the PHA inspects each unit under contract at least annually.
- Points are based on the percent of annual 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

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- 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.

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PART VI: RECORD KEEPING

16-VI.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA must keep:

- A copy of the executed lease;
- The HAP contract; and
- The application from the family.

In addition, the PHA 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 PHA budget and financial statements for the program;
- Records to document the basis for PHA 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 PHAs 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

PHAs must maintain applicant and participant files and information in accordance with the regulatory requirements described below.

MaineHousing Policy
All applicant and participant information will be kept in a secure location and access will be limited to authorized MaineHousing staff.

MaineHousing 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 PHA 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.*

MaineHousing Policy
Prior to utilizing HUD's EIV system, MaineHousing will adopt and implement EIV security procedures required by HUD.

Criminal Records
The PHA may only disclose the criminal conviction records which the PHA receives from a law enforcement agency to officers or employees of the PHA, or to authorized representatives of the PHA who have a job-related need to have access to the information [24 CFR 5.903(e)].

The PHA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any criminal record received by the PHA 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 PHA action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation [24 CFR 5.903(g)].

The PHA must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any sex offender registration information received by the PHA 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 PHA 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

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performed must be retained [Notice PIH 2012-28]. This requirement does not apply to information that is public information, or is obtained by a PHA other than under 24 CFR 5.905.

Medical/Disability Records

PHAs are not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability. The PHA may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If the PHA receives a verification document that provides such information, the PHA should not place this information in the tenant file. The PHA should destroy the document.

Documentation of Domestic Violence, Dating violence, sexual assault, or Stalking

For requirements and PHA policies related to management of documentation obtained from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, see section 16-IX.E.

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PART VII: REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL

16-VII.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA 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 PHA is subject to.

16-VII.B. REPORTING REQUIREMENT [24 CFR 35.1225(e) Notice PIH 2017-13]

The owner 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. The owner must also notify the HUD field office and the HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH) of the child's address within five business days. The PHA may collaborate with the owner on the notification process, such as by agreeing with the owner to provide the required notifications on the owner's behalf.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
>
> **Upon notification by the owner, MaineHousing 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 within five business days.**
>
> **Upon notification by the owner, MaineHousing will notify the HUD field office and the HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH) of the child's address within five business days.**

16-VII.C. DATA COLLECTION AND RECORD KEEPING [24 CFR 35.1225(f)]

At least quarterly, the PHA 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 PHA obtains names and addresses of environmental intervention blood lead level children from the public health department(s), the PHA 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 PHA must carry out the notification, verification, and hazard reduction requirements discussed in Chapter 8, and the reporting requirement discussed above.

At least quarterly, the PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing is not providing such a report.**

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PART VIII: DETERMINATION OF INSUFFICIENT FUNDING

16-VIII.A. OVERVIEW

The HCV regulations allow PHAs 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 982.35(e)(1) and 982.454]. If a PHA denies a family a portability move based on insufficient funding, the PHA is required to notify the local HUD office within 10 business days [24 CFR 982.354].Insufficient funding may also impact the PHA's ability to issue vouchers to families on the waiting list. This part discusses the methodology the PHA will use to determine whether or not the PHA has sufficient funding to issue vouchers, approve moves, and to continue subsidizing all families currently under a HAP contract.

16-VIII.B. METHODOLOGY

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing'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, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing cannot support the cost of the proposed subsidy commitment (voucher issuance or move) based on the funding analysis, MaineHousing will be considered to have insufficient funding.

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PART IX: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, CONFIDENTIALITY

16-IX.A. OVERVIEW

The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (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 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 PHA policies in three areas: notification, documentation, and confidentiality. Specific VAWA requirements and PHA 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, sexual assault, or Stalking"; and 12-II.F, "Termination Notice."

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 of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by 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.
- 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 PHA adopts the following policy to help ensure that all actual and potential beneficiaries of its HCV program are aware of their rights under VAWA.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will post the following information regarding VAWA 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, and 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 MaineHousing'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, From HUD-5383 (Exhibit 16-4)**
- **A copy of the Notice to Housing Choice Voucher Owners and Managers regarding the Violence Against Women Act (Exhibit 16-5)**
- **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)]

PHAs are 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will provide all applicants with information about VAWA prior to admission (at briefing). MaineHousing will also include information about VAWA in all notices of denial of assistance (see section 3-III.G).

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MaineHousing will provide all participants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see section 5-I.B) and at annual reexamination. MaineHousing 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 notice in Exhibit 16-1 and a 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

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will provide owners and managers with information about their rights and obligations under VAWA using the Tenancy Addendum.

MaineHousing will include information about VAWA in all Landlord Packets.

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 PHA may extend this time period at its discretion. [24 CFR 5.2007(a)]

The individual may satisfy the PHA'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 PHA 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].

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MaineHousing Policy

Any request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, will be in writing, will specify a deadline of 10 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.

MaineHousing may, in its discretion, extend the deadline for 10 business days. Any extension granted by MaineHousing will be in writing.

Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(e)]

In cases where the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property.

MaineHousing Policy

If presented with conflicting certification documents (two or more forms HUD-5382) from members of the same household, MaineHousing 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 PHA to provide this documentation.

Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(d)]

The PHA 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).

MaineHousing Policy

If MaineHousing accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, MaineHousing 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, a PHA 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 PHA may allow, the PHA may deny relief for protection under VAWA.

16-IX.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)]

All information provided to the PHA 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 PHA (1) may not enter the information into any shared

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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.

MaineHousing Policy

If disclosure is required for use in an eviction proceeding or is otherwise required by applicable law, MaineHousing will inform the victim before disclosure occurs so that safety risks can be identified and addressed.

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EXHIBIT 16-1: Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence against Women Act, Form HUD-5380

MaineHousing

Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence against Women Act - ***3***

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 *4*

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal agency that oversees that the **Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)** complies 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 the **HCV 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 **HCV 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 **HCV 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.

Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household

MaineHousing may terminate the assistance of the individual who has engaged in criminal activity (

3- Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation
4- 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.

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(the abuser or perpetrator) directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking in accordance with chapter 12 of MaineHousing's HCV Administrative Plan.

If MaineHousing chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator from the HCV voucher, MaineHousing may not take away the rights of eligible tenants to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. If the terminated abuser or perpetrator was the sole tenant to have established eligibility for assistance under the program, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures.

Moving to another Unit

Upon your request, MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will 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, MaineHousing will 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 MaineHousing does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, MaineHousing will ask you for such documentation, as described in the documentation section below.

(2) You expressly request the emergency transfer. MaineHousing will 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.

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MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and MaineHousing 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

MaineHousing will 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 MaineHousing must be in writing, and MaineHousing must give you at least 10 business days (Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays do not count) from the day you receive the request to provide the documentation. MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing 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.

If you fail or refuse to provide one of these documents within the 10 business days, MaineHousing does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

If MaineHousing 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

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petitioning household members as the abuser or perpetrator), MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

Confidentiality

MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of MaineHousing (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.

MaineHousing must not enter your information into any shared database or disclose your information to any other entity or individual. MaineHousing, however, may disclose the information provided if:

- you give written permission to MaineHousing to release the information on a time limited basis.
- MaineHousing needs to use the information in a termination proceeding, such as to terminate your abuser or perpetrator from assistance under this program.
- a law requires MaineHousing or your landlord to release the information.

Reasons a Tenant Eligible for Occupancy Rights under VAWA May Be Terminated from the HCV Program.

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, MaineHousing 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 your assistance terminated, if MaineHousing can demonstrate that not 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 MaineHousing can demonstrate the above, MaineHousing should only terminate your assistance 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 MaineHousing's violations of these rights and seek additional assistance, if needed, by contacting or filing a complaint with HUD's Boston Regional Office at
(617) 994-8200.
For Additional Information

Additionally, MaineHousing must make a copy of HUD's VAWA regulations available to you if you ask to see them.

For questions regarding VAWA, please contact MaineHousing at 207-624-5789.

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).

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 the Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-871-7741 (Voice) 711 (Maine Relay)

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 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING, AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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

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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 victims):**_____
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):**_____
9. **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 (HCV VERSION)

MaineHousing

Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

Emergency Transfers

MaineHousing 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) *5* **MaineHousing** 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 *6* The ability of **MaineHousing** 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 another dwelling unit is available for 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 oversees that **MaineHousing** 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.

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.

5 Despite 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.
6 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

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Emergency Transfer Request Documentation

To request an emergency transfer, the tenant shall notify **MaineHousing** and submit a written request for a transfer to **MaineHousing**. **MaineHousing** 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 HP'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

MaineHousing will keep confidential any information that the tenant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the tenant gives **MaineHousing** 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 a hearing regarding termination of assistance from the Housing Choice Voucher program. This includes keeping confidential the new location of the dwelling unit of the tenant, if one is provided, from the person(s) that committed an act(s) 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 **MaineHousing'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

MaineHousing cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. **MaineHousing** will, however, act as quickly as possible to assist a tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking in moving to another unit, subject to the availability and safety of a unit. In order to facilitate the process, **MaineHousing** may offer the tenant security deposit assistance up to a total of $500, subject to the availability of funds. 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. **MaineHousing** may be unable to transfer a tenant to a particular unit if the tenant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

MaineHousing 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, **MaineHousing** 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.

Safety and Security of Tenants

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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 Maine Statewide Domestic Violence Helpline at 1-866-834-4357, or a local domestic violence shelter, for assistance in creating a safety plan. For persons with hearing impairments, the national hotline can be accessed by calling 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Tenants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Maine Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-871-7741 (Voice) 711 (Maine Relay) or visit the website at http://www.mecasa.org.

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.

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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) _____

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EXHIBIT 16-5: MAINEHOUSING 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 MaineHousing at 207-624-5789.

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

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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.

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Chapter 17

PROJECT-BASED VOUCHERS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes HUD regulations and PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA's discretion.

Part VI: Selection of PBV Program Participants. This part describes the requirements and policies governing how the PHA 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 re-determined 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.

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PART I: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

17-I.A. OVERVIEW [24 CFR §983.5 FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21]

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)].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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 PHA is not required to reduce the number of these units if the amount of budget authority is subsequently reduced. However, the PHA 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 [24 CFR §983.6].

Additional Project-Based Units [FR Notice 1/18/17 Notice PIH 2017-21]

The PHA may project-base an additional 10 percent of its units above the 20 percent program limit. The units may be distributed among one, all, or a combination of the categories as long as the total number of units does not exceed the 10 percent cap. Units qualify under this exception, 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) and contained in the Continuum of Care Interim Rule at 24 CFR 578.3..
- 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not set aside units above the 20 percent program limit.**

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. The unit must be covered under a PBV HAP contract that first became effective on or after 4/18/17.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing may project-base units not subject to the 20 percent cap.

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 PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy
Except as otherwise noted in this chapter, or unless specifically prohibited by PBV program regulations, MaineHousing 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. 4601-4655] 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. PHAs may not use voucher program funds to cover relocation costs, except that PHAs 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 reserve 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 PHA to ensure the owner complies with these requirements.

17-I.D. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR §983.8]

The PHA 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 PHA must comply with the PHA 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 PHA must describe the procedures for owner submission of PBV proposals and for PHA selection of PBV proposals [24 CFR §983.51]. Before selecting a PBV proposal, the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA must select PBV proposals in accordance with the selection procedures in the PHA administrative plan. The PHA must select PBV proposals by either of the following two methods.

- PHA request for PBV Proposals. The PHA may solicit proposals by using a request for proposals (RFP) to select proposals on a competitive basis in response to the PHA request. The PHA 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 PHA may select proposals 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, community development, or supportive services program that was subject to a competition in accordance with the requirements of the applicable program (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 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 PHA need not conduct another competition.

Units Selected Non-Competitively [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21]

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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not attach PBVs to projects owned by MaineHousing as described above.**

Solicitation and Selection of PBV Proposals [24 CFR §983.51 and §983.6]

PHA procedures for selecting PBV proposals by RFP must be designed and actually operated to provide broad public notice of the opportunity to offer PBV proposals for consideration by the PHA. 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 PHA request for PBV proposals must specify the submission deadline. Detailed application and selection information must be provided at the request of interested parties.

MaineHousing Policy
PHA Request for Proposals

MaineHousing will competitively award Project Based Vouchers through a separate request for proposals (RFP) process or as part of its competitive process for capital funding under various state and/or federal programs.

MaineHousing will advertise its RFP for project based vouchers to interested parties, and may also post in newspapers and trade journals.

In addition, MaineHousing will post the RFP proposal submission and rating and ranking procedures on its website and will contact interested parties.

In order for the proposal to be considered, the owner must submit the proposal to MaineHousing by the published deadline date, and the proposal must respond to all requirements as outlined in the RFP. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

PHA Selection of Proposals Subject to a Previous Competition under a Federal, State, or Local Housing Assistance Program

MaineHousing may periodically place PBV assistance in projects from owners that were competitively selected under another federal, state or local housing assistance program within the last three years, including projects that were competitively awarded Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR 983.51(e) 983.59, FR Notice 1/18/17 and Notice PIH 2017-21]
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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing does not own housing units

The PHA may only compensate the independent entity from PHA ongoing administrative fee income (including amounts credited to the administrative fee reserve). The PHA may not use other program receipts to compensate the independent entity for its services. The PHA and independent

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entity may not charge the family any fee for the appraisal or the services provided by the independent entity.

PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy
Within 10 business days of MaineHousing making the selection, MaineHousing will notify the selected owner in writing of the owner's selection for the PBV program. MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will publish its notice for selection of PBV proposals on its website and will inform the same interested party list as used in the solicitation. The announcement will include the name of the owner that was selected for the PBV program. MaineHousing will also post the notice of owner selection on its electronic web site.
MaineHousing will make available to any interested party its rating and ranking sheets and documents that identify MaineHousing 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.
MaineHousing will not make available sensitive owner information that is privileged, such as financial statements and similar information about the owner.
MaineHousing will make these documents available for review at MaineHousing during normal business hours. The cost for reproduction of allowable documents will be $.10 per page.

Maximum amount of PBV assistance [24 CFR §983.6][Notice PIH-2015-5]
Before a PHA issues a Request for Proposal or makes a selection, the PHA must submit the following information to a HUD field office and email pbvsubmission@hud.gov for review:

1. The project identification for proposed selections
2. The total amount of annual budget authority;
3. The percentage of annual budget authority available to be project-based; and
4. The total amount of annual budget authority the PHA is planning to project-base pursuant to the selection and the number of units that such budget authority will support.
5. Are the units newly constructed or rehabilitated or is the rehabilitation of the units planned
6. PHA contact

17-II.C. HOUSING TYPE [24 CFR §983.52]

The PHA 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 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 PHA selection, the unit substantially complies with HQS. Units for which new construction or rehabilitation began after the owner's proposal submission but prior to the execution of the AHAP 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 PHA must decide what housing type, new construction, rehabilitation, or existing housing, will be used to develop project-based housing. The PHA choice of housing type must be reflected in its request for proposals.

17-II.D. PROHIBITION OF ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN UNITS

Ineligible Housing Types [24 CFR §983.53]

The PHA 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 PHA may not attach or pay PBV assistance for a unit occupied by an owner and the PHA 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 as defined in 24 CFR §983.152.

Subsidized Housing [24 CFR §983.54]

A PHA 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 unit subsidized with rental assistance payments under USDA-Rural Development's (Rural Development) Section 521 Rental Assistance Program (except that a PHA may attach assistance to a unit subsidized with Rural Development Section 515 interest reduction payments;
- A Section 202 project for non-elderly persons with disabilities;
- Section 811 project-based supportive housing for persons with disabilities;
- Section 202 supportive housing for persons who are 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 PHA in accordance with HUD requirements.

17-II.E. SUBSIDY LAYERING REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR §983.55]

The PHA 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 PHA must submit the necessary documentation to HUD for a subsidy layering review. Except in cases noted above, the PHA 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.

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **HUD has waived its requirement that HUD perform subsidy layering reviews for projects for which MaineHousing proposes to use PBV assistance and has authorized MaineHousing to perform subsidy layering reviews for those projects. HUD's waiver is contingent on MaineHousing's full cooperation in any monitoring and/or quality control reviews that HUD wishes to undertake in connection with subsidy layering reviews performed under this waiver authority, including submission of any requested documentation to HUD. As required by the waiver,**

MaineHousing has certified to HUD that it will recommend to HUD a reduction in the PBV subsidy when it is determined that the inclusion of PBV assistance will result in governmental assistance that is more than necessary to provide affordable housing.

17-II.F. CAP ON NUMBER OF PBV UNITS IN EACH PROJECT

25 Percent per Project Cap [24 CFR §983.56, FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-21]
In general, the PHA may not select a proposal to provide PBV assistance for units in a project or enter into an agreement to enter into a HAP contract 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, Notice PIH 2017-21]
As of April 18, 2017 units are not counted against the 25 percent 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
- If 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 project cap is the greater of 25 units or 40 percent(instead of 25 percent) of the units in the project [FR Notice 7/14/17].

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 (HAP contracts executed prior to 4/18/17) may continue to use the former exemptions and may renew their HAP contracts under the old requirements, unless the PHA 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.

Supportive Services
PHAs must include in the PHA administrative plan the type of services offered to families for a project to qualify for the families receiving supportive services exception and the extent to which such services will be provided. As of 4/18/17, 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. A PHA may not require participation in the supportive service as a condition of living in the excepted unit, although such services may be offered. 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) Program supportive services or any other supportive services as defined in the PHA administrative plan, and successfully completes the FSS contract of

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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.

MaineHousing Policy
Excepted units will be limited to units for elderly families.

Projects not Subject to a Project Cap [FR Notice 1/18/17; Notice PIH 2017-21]
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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing 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.

MaineHousing Policy:
MaineHousing will provide assistance for excepted units. Beyond that, MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA Plan under 24 CFR §903 and the PHA administrative plan.

In addition, prior to selecting a proposal, the PHA 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).

MaineHousing Policy

It is MaineHousing's goal to select sites for PBV housing that provide for deconcentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities. In complying with this goal MaineHousing will limit approval of sites for PBV housing to census tracts that have poverty concentrations of 20 percent or less.

However, MaineHousing may grant exceptions to the 20 percent standard where MaineHousing 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 is 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 PHA may not select a site or 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

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- 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 PHA 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 persons who are elderly, 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 PHA 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.) and applicable federal laws and authorities in accordance with HUD's regulations at 24 CFR 58.5 and 58.6. 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 PHA may not enter into an agreement to enter into a HAP contract or a HAP contract with an owner, and the PHA, the owner, and its contractors may not acquire, rehabilitate, convert, lease,

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repair, dispose of, demolish, or construct real property or commit or expend program or local funds for PBV activities, until the environmental review is completed.

The PHA 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 as a result of the environmental review.

MaineHousing Policy

As the responsible entity, MaineHousing has the responsibility under HUD's environmental review rules for performing the environmental review (for which it may use consultants) and, if necessary requesting the release of the PBV assistance from HUD. MaineHousing will perform an environmental review for all housing types proposed for PBV assistance, including existing housing, newly constructed housing, and rehabilitated housing.

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 PHA 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)

The housing must comply with the accessibility requirements under the Maine Human Rights Act, 5 MRSA 4551 ET. Seq. and implementing regulations, including Chapter 8 of the Maine Human Rights Commission's rules.

17-III.D. INSPECTING UNITS

Pre-selection Inspection [24 CFR §983.103(a)]

The PHA 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 PHA may not execute the HAP contract until the units fully comply with HQS.

Pre-HAP Contract Inspections [24 CFR §983.103(b)]

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

Turnover Inspections [24 CFR §983.103(c) FR Notice 1/18/17, and Notice PIH 2017-20]
Before providing assistance to a new family in a contract unit, the PHA must inspect the unit. The PHA may not provide assistance on behalf of the family 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 or if the unit passed an alternative inspection.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will provide assistance in turnover units 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 PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will inspect all units on an annual basis, unless owners are participating in the Owner Excellence Program where they qualify for biennial inspections**

If more than 20 percent of the sample of inspected contract units in a building fail the initial inspection, the PHA must re-inspect 100 percent of the contract units in the building.

Other Inspections [24 CFR §983.103(e)]
The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA supervisory quality control HQS inspections, the PHA 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.

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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 PHA 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 PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will enter into the Agreement with the owner at the loan closing, and before construction or rehabilitation work is started.**

In the Agreement the owner agrees to develop the PBV contract units to comply with HQS, and the PHA agrees that upon timely completion of such development in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, the PHA 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 PHA, 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 PHA notice of proposal selection to the selected owner. The PHA may not enter into the Agreement if construction or rehabilitation has started after proposal submission. Generally, the PHA may not enter into the Agreement with the owner until the subsidy layering review is completed. Likewise, the PHA may not enter into the Agreement until the environmental review is completed and the PHA has received environmental approval. However, the PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing 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 the 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.

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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 PHA in the form and manner required by the PHA:

- 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 PHA's discretion, the Agreement may specify additional documentation that must be submitted by the owner as evidence of housing completion.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing will specify any additional documentation requirements in the Agreement to enter into HAP contract.**

PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA must submit the HAP contract for execution by the owner and must then execute the HAP contract.

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PART V: HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS CONTRACT (HAP)

17-V.A. OVERVIEW

The PHA 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 or buildings where the contract units are located;
- 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 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

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agreement to enter into a HAP contract, and the owner furnishes all required evidence of completion.

MaineHousing Policy
For existing housing, the HAP contract will be executed within 10 business days of MaineHousing determining that all units pass HQS For rehabilitated or newly constructed housing, the HAP contract will be executed within 10 business days of MaineHousing determining that the units have been completed in accordance with the agreement to enter into HAP contract, 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 and Notice PIH 2017-21]
The PHA 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 PHA-owned units, the term of the HAP contract must be agreed upon by the PHA and the independent entity approved by HUD [24 CFR 983.59(b) (2)].

MaineHousing Policy
The initial 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 PHA may extend the term of the contract for an additional term of up to 20 years if the PHA determines an extension is appropriate to continue providing affordable housing for low-income families. A HAP contract extension may not exceed 20years. A PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA-owned units, any extension of the term of the HAP contract must be agreed upon by the PHA and the independent entity approved by HUD [24 CFR 983.59(b)(2)].

MaineHousing Policy
When determining whether or not to extend an expiring PBV contract, MaineHousing 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);**

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- **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) and FR Notice 1/18/17]

The HAP contract must provide that the term of the PHA's contractual commitment is subject to the availability of sufficient appropriated funding as determined by HUD or by the PHA 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 PHAs 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 PHA 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 PHA. 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 and Notice PIH 2017-21]

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 PHA and assisted tenants of the termination. The notice must be provided in the manner 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 PHA must provide the family with a voucher and the family must also be given the option by the PHA 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

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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 PHA 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 PHA determines that a contract unit does not comply with HQS (or other HAP contract requirement), the PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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 PHA'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 PHA must inspect the proposed unit and determine the reasonable rent for the unit.

Addition of Contract Units [FR Notice 1/18/17 and Notice PIH 2017-21]
The PHA 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 PHA must submit to the local field office information outlined in FR Notice 1/18/17. The PHA must also detail in the administrative plan their intent to add PBV units and the rationale for adding units to the specific PBV project.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not add contract units to the HAP contract**

Removal of unit from HAP contract [24 CFR §983.211]
Units occupied by families whose income has increased during their tenancy resulting in the tenant rent equaling the rent to the owner, shall be removed from the HAP Contract 180 days following the last housing assistance payment on behalf of the family.

If the project is fully assisted, a PHA may reinstate the unit removed as stated above to the HAP contract after the ineligible family vacates the property. If the project is partially assisted, a PHA may substitute a different unit for the unit removed as stated above to the HAP contract when the first eligible substitute becomes available.

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A reinstatement or substitution of units under the HAP contract must be permissible under 24 CFR §983.207. The anniversary and expirations dates of the HAP contract for the unit must be the same as it was when it was originally placed under the HAP contract. The PHA must refer eligible families to the owner in accordance with the PHA's selection policies.

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 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 the owner 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 PHA, 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; and
- 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 a 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 PHA 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 PHA 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will identify the need for any special features on a case-by-case basis depending on the intended occupancy of the PBV project. MaineHousing 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).

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not provide vacancy payments.**

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 PHA may select families for the PBV program from those who are participants in the PHA'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 re-determined 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 PHA, 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 PHA's collection and use of family information regarding income, expenses, and family composition [24 CFR 5.230]. The PHA 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.

A PHA may not approve a tenancy if the owner (including a principal or other interested party) of a unit is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family, unless the PHA determines that approving the unit would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will determine an applicant family's eligibility for the PBV program in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3. Any additional eligibility criteria for the specific project will be taken into consideration.**

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 PHA 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 PHA's waiting list. Once the family's continued eligibility is determined (the PHA 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 PHA must

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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-VI.C. 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 use 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.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will establish and manage separate waiting lists for individual projects or buildings that are receiving PBV assistance.**

17-VI.D. SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR §983.251(c)]

Applicants who will occupy units with PBV assistance must be selected from the PHA's waiting list. The PHA may establish selection criteria or preferences for occupancy of particular PBV units. The PHA 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 PHA's tenant-based and project-based voucher programs during the PHA 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 PHA must first refer families who require such features to the owner.

Preferences [24 CFR §983.251(d), FR Notice 11/24/08]

The PHA 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 PHA 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 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 persons with disabilities 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 PHA has projects with "excepted units for elderly families or supportive services, the PHA must give preference to such families when referring families to these units [24 CFR §983.262(b); FR Notice 1/18/17].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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). MaineHousing will not offer any additional preferences for the PBV program or for particular PBV projects or units.**

17-VI.E. OFFER OF PBV ASSISTANCE

Refusal of Offer [24 CFR §983.251(e) (3)]

The PHA 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 PBV 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 PHA must give the family an oral briefing. 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 PHA must provide a briefing packet that explains how the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA 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

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The PHA 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 adopting 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 PHA from the PHA'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 PHA's subsidy standards.

Filling Vacancies [24 CFR §983.254(a)]

The owner must promptly notify the PHA of any vacancy or expected vacancy in a contract unit. After receiving such notice, the PHA must make every reasonable effort to promptly refer a sufficient number of families for the owner to fill such vacancies. The PHA and the owner must make reasonable efforts to minimize the likelihood and length of any vacancy.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **The owner must notify MaineHousing in writing (mail, fax, or e-mail) within 5 business days of learning about any vacancy or expected vacancy.**
>
> **MaineHousing will make every reasonable effort to refer eligible 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 PHA 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. The PHA 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 PHA's notice.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **If any contract units have been vacant for 120 days or more, MaineHousing will give notice to the owner that the HAP contract may be amended to reduce the number of contract units that have been vacant for this period. MaineHousing will provide the notice to the owner within 10 business days of the 120th day of the vacancy.**

17-VI.G. TENANT SCREENING [24 CFR §983.255]

PHA Responsibility
The PHA is not responsible or liable to the owner or any other person for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. However, the PHA may opt to screen applicants for family behavior or suitability for tenancy and may deny applicants based on such screening.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not conduct screening to determine a PBV applicant family's behavior or suitability for tenancy.**

The PHA must provide the owner with an applicant family's current and prior address (as shown in PHA records) and the name and address (if known by the PHA) of the family's current landlord and any prior landlords.

In addition, the PHA may offer the owner other information the PHA may have about a family, including information about the tenancy history of family members or about drug trafficking and criminal activity by family members. The PHA must provide applicant families a description of the PHA policy on providing information to owners, and the PHA must give the same types of information to all owners.

The PHA 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)].

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing will not provide any additional information to the owner, such as tenancy history, criminal history, etc.**

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.

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PART VII: OCCUPANCY

17-VII.A. OVERVIEW

After an applicant has been selected from the waiting list, determined eligible by the PHA, 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 PHA model lease, which must also include, word-for-word, all provisions required by HUD.

The PHA may review the owner's lease form to determine if the lease complies with state and local law. If the PHA determines that the lease does not comply with state or local law, the PHA may decline to approve the tenancy.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will not review the owner's lease for compliance with state or local law.**

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 provided 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 PHA (the names of family members and any PHA-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.

Lease Term and 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 PHA 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 PHA a copy of all changes.

The owner must notify the PHA 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 PHA and in accordance with the terms of the lease relating to its amendment. The PHA must re-determine 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 re-determined 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 a 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 PHA policy. According to program requirements, the family's assistance must be terminated if they are absent from the unit for more than 180 consecutive days. PHA termination of assistance actions due to family absence from the unit are subject to 24 CFR 982.312, except that the unit is not terminated from the HAP contract if the family is absent for longer than the maximum period permitted.

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Continuation of Housing Assistance Payments [24 CFR 983.258]
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 PHA. After the 180-day period, the unit shall be removed from the HAP contract pursuant to 24 CFR 983.211.

> **MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA may prohibit security deposits in excess of private market practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will allow the owner to collect a security deposit amount the owner determines is appropriate, and which is consistent with Maine law.**

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 PHA 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 PHA determines that a family is occupying a wrong size unit, based on the PHA'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 PHA must promptly notify the family and the owner of this determination, and the PHA must offer the family the opportunity to receive continued housing assistance in another unit.

> **MaineHousing Policy**
> **MaineHousing will notify the family and the owner of the family's need to move based on the occupancy of a wrong-size unit or a unit with accessibility features that**

the family does not need within 10 business days of the MaineHousing's determination or notification by the owner. MaineHousing will offer the family the following types of continued assistance in the following order, based on the availability of assistance:

- **PBV assistance in an appropriate unit in the same building or project;**
- **PBV assistance in an appropriate unit in another project; or**
- **Tenant-based voucher assistance.**

If the PHA offers the family a tenant-based voucher, the PHA 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 PHA) or the date upon which the family vacates the unit. If the family does not move out of the wrong-sized or accessible unit by the expiration date of the term of the family's voucher, the PHA must remove the unit from the HAP Contract.

If the PHA 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 PHA, or both, the PHA must terminate the housing assistance payments for the unit at the expiration of a reasonable period as determined by the PHA and remove the unit from the HAP contract.

MaineHousing Policy

When MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing will terminate the housing assistance payments at the expiration of this 30-day period and remove the unit from the HAP Contract.

MaineHousing 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 PHA. If the family wishes to move with continued tenant-based assistance, the family must contact the PHA 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 PHA 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 a voucher or other comparable tenant-based assistance is not immediately available upon termination of the family's lease in the PBV unit, the PHA must give the family priority to receive the next available opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance.

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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]

As of April 17, 2018, the PHA 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 families
- The units are for households eligible for supportive services available to all families receiving PBV assistance in the project

If 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 project cap is the greater of 25 units or 40 percent (instead of 25 percent) of the units in the project [FR Notice 7/14/17].**

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 PHA 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 PHA, and the PHA shall cease paying HAP on behalf of the family.

Further, when a family (or the remaining members of the family) residing in an excepted unit no longer meets the criteria for a "qualifying family" because the family is no longer an elderly family due to a change in family composition the PHA has the discretion to allow the family to remain in the excepted unit. If the PHA does not exercise this discretion, the family must vacate the unit within a reasonable period of time established by the PHA, and the PHA shall 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 PHA 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 project in accordance with §983.207(a); 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 PHA.

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The PHA may allow a family that initially qualified for occupancy of an excepted unit based on elderly 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 long term or permanent hospitalization or nursing care), 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.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will allow families who initially qualified to live in an excepted unit to remain when circumstances change that are beyond the remaining family members' control.

In all other cases, MaineHousing will provide written notice to the family and owner within 10 business days of making the determination. 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, MaineHousing will terminate the housing assistance payments at the expiration of this 30-day period.

MaineHousing 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.

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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 re-determined 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 fair market rents (FMR) published by HUD.

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 PHA, 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, 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 PHA must determine the reasonable rent in accordance with §983.303. The rent to the owner for each contract unit may at no time exceed the reasonable rent, except in cases where the PHA 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 PHA has not elected within the HAP contract not to establish the initial rent to owner as the rent floor, the rent to owner shall not at any time exceed the reasonable rent.

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
MaineHousing 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 PHA 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 PHA utility allowance schedule in effect at execution of the HAP contract. When re-determining the rent to owner, the PHA must use the most recently published FMR and the PHA utility allowance schedule in effect at the time of redetermination. At its discretion, the PHA 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 standard amount for use in the PBV program.

Likewise, the PHA may not establish or apply different utility allowance amounts for the PBV program. The same utility allowance schedule applies to both the tenant-based and project-based voucher programs.

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MaineHousing Policy

Upon written request by the owner, the MaineHousing 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. MaineHousing 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, MaineHousing 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 MaineHousing determines it is necessary due to MaineHousing budgetary constraints.

Use of Small Area FMRs (SAFMRs) [24 CFR 888.113(h)]

While small area FMRs (SAFMRs) do not apply to PBV projects, PHAs that operate a tenant-based program under SAFMRs (either by HUD-designation or because the PHA requested HUD approval to use SAFMRs) may apply SAFMRs to all future PBV HAP contracts. If the PHA adopts this policy, it must apply to all future PBV projects and the PHA's entire jurisdiction. The PHA and owner may not subsequently choose to revert back to use of the FMRs once the SAFMRs have been adopted, even if the PHA subsequently changes its policy.

Further, the PHA may apply SAFMRs to current PBV projects where the notice of owner selection was made on or before the effective dates PHA implementation, provided the owner is willing to mutually agree to doing so and the application is prospective. The PHA and owner may not subsequently choose to revert back to use of the FMRs once the SAFMRs have been adopted, even if the PHA subsequently changes its policy. If rents increase as a result of the use of SAFMRs, the rent increase may not be effective until the first anniversary of the HAP contract.

MaineHousing Policy

MaineHousing will not apply SAFMRs to its PBV program.

Redetermination of Rent [24 CFR §983.302]

The PHA must re-determine 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 PHA, 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 PHA. The PHA 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).

MaineHousing Policy

An owner's request for a rent increase must be submitted in writing to MaineHousing 60 days prior to the anniversary date of the HAP contract, and must include the new rent amount the owner is proposing.

The PHA may not approve and the owner may not receive any increase of rent to owner until and unless the owner has complied with all 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 **[24 CFR §983.302(c)]**

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 PHA 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 re-determined by written notice by the PHA to the owner specifying the amount of the re-determined rent. The PHA 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.

MaineHousing Policy
MaineHousing will provide the owner with at least 30 days written notice of any change in the amount of rent to owner.

PHA-Owned Units [24 CFR §983.301(g)]
For PHA-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 PHA 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 PHA, except where the PHA has elected in the HAP contract to not reduce rents below the initial rent under the initial HAP contract.

When Rent Reasonable Determinations Are Required
The PHA must re-determine 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 PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA. The comparability analysis may be performed by PHA 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.

PHA-Owned Units

For PHA-owned units, the amount of the reasonable rent must be determined by an independent agency approved by HUD in accordance with 24 CFR §983.59, rather than by the PHA. The reasonable rent must be determined in accordance with this section.

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 PHA 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, a PHA 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:

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- 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 Rural Development;
- 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.

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PART IX: PAYMENTS TO OWNER

17-IX.A. HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS [24 CFR §983.351]

During the term of the HAP contract, the PHA 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 PHA agree on a later date.

Except for discretionary vacancy payments, the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA determines that the vacancy is the owner's fault.

At the discretion of the PHA, the HAP contract may provide for vacancy payments to the owner. The PHA may only make vacancy payments if:

- The owner gives the PHA prompt, written notice certifying that the family has vacated the unit and identifies the date when the family moved out (to the best of the owner's knowledge);
- The owner certifies that the vacancy is not the fault of the owner and that the unit was vacant during the period for which payment is claimed;
- The owner certifies that it has taken every reasonable action to minimize the likelihood and length of vacancy; and
- The owner provides any additional information required and requested by the PHA to verify that the owner is entitled to the vacancy payment.

The owner must submit a request for vacancy payments in the form and manner required by the PHA and must provide any information or substantiation required by the PHA to determine the amount of any vacancy payment.

> **<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>**
> **If MaineHousing determines that the owner is responsible for a vacancy and, as a result, is not entitled to the keep the housing assistance payment, MaineHousing will notify the owner of the amount of housing assistance payment that the owner**

must repay. MaineHousing will require the owner to repay the amount owed in accordance with the policies in Section 16-IV.B.

MaineHousing will not make vacancy payments.

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 PHA in accordance with HUD requirements. Any changes in the amount of tenant rent will be effective on the date stated in the PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA. The owner must immediately return any excess payment to the tenant.

Tenant and PHA 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 PHA.

Likewise, the PHA is responsible only for making the housing assistance payment to the owner in accordance with the HAP contract. The PHA is not responsible for paying tenant rent, or any other claim by the owner, including damage to the unit. The PHA 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 PHA 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 PHA may pay the utility reimbursement directly to the family or to the utility supplier on behalf of the family. If the PHA chooses to pay the utility supplier directly, the PHA must notify the family of the amount paid to the utility supplier.

<u>MaineHousing Policy</u>
MaineHousing 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.

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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.

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GLOSSARY

A. ACRONYMS USED IN THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

AAF	Annual adjustment factor (published by HUD in the *Federal Register* 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

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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 sub module 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

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UA	Utility allowance
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
UIV	Upfront income verification
URP	Utility reimbursement payment
VAWA	Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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. Felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by 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.

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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 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:

(1) A single person, who may be an elderly person, displaced person, disabled person, near-elderly person or any other single person; or

(2) A group of persons residing together, and such group includes, but is not limited to:

a. 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, but is not considered in the determination of family composition or family size);

b. An elderly family;

c. A near-elderly family;

d. A disabled family;

e. A displaced family; and

f. The remaining member of the tenant family.

The PHA may include other persons or groups of persons in the term "family." See Chapter 3 – I.B.

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.)

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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 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.

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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

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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).

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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.

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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 benefits 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

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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).

Tenancy addendum. For the housing choice voucher program, the lease language required by HUD in the lease between the tenant and the owner.

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Tenant. The person or persons (other than a live-in aide) who execute 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

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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

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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.

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