

## CHAPTER 3

### APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

[24 CFR 982.204]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

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

#### **A. OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION TAKING PROCESS**

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

- ➔ *Families who wish to apply for any one of the HA's programs **must complete a written application** form when enrollment is **open**. Applications will be made available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.*
- ➔ *When the waiting list is open, any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance will be given the opportunity to complete an application. Applications will be mailed to interested families upon request.*
- ➔ *Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed for completeness. Applications with missing information will be returned to the applicant.*
- ➔ *The application process will involve two phases. The first is the "initial" application for assistance (referred to as a pre-application). This first phase results in the family's placement on the waiting list.*
- ➔ *The pre-application, once verified complete, will be dated, time-stamped, and referred to the Wait List manager (Office Associate IV) where it will be maintained until such time as it is needed for processing.*
- ➔ *The second phase is the "final determination of eligibility" (referred to as the full application). The full application takes place when the family reaches the top of the waiting list. At this time the HA ensures that verifications of all HUD and HA eligibility factors are current in order to determine the family's eligibility for the issuance of a voucher.*

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

The HA will utilize the following procedures for opening the waiting list.

When the HA opens the waiting list, the HA will advertise through public notice in the following newspaper, in addition to notifying each of the following organizations:

<b>Charlottesville Daily Progress</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>817-2447</b>
<b>Arc of the Piedmont</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>977-4002</b>
<b>Charlottesville Albemarle Legal Aid Society</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>977-0553</b>
<b>Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>970-3253</b>
<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>293-2222</b>
<b>Greater Charlottesville Habitat for Humanity</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>293-9066</b>
<b>Independent Resource Center</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>971-9629</b>
<b>Jefferson Area Board for Aging</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>817-5222</b>
<b>Monticello Area Community Action Agency (MACAA)</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>295-3171</b>
<b>Piedmont Housing Alliance</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>817-2436</b>
<b>Region Ten Community Service Board</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>972-1800</b>
<b>Salvation Army</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>295-4058</b>
<b>Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>979-7310</b>
<b>United Way Information &amp; Referral (I&amp;R)</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>972-1703</b>
<b>Albemarle County DSS</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>972-4010</b>
<b>Charlottesville DSS</b>	<b>(434)</b>	<b>970-3400</b>

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The notice will contain:

- **Name of Program Accepting Applications**
- **Date, Time and Places where families may apply**
- **Brief description of program**
- **Eligibility Limitations**

The notices will be made in an accessible format if requested. They will provide potential applicants with information that includes the HA address and telephone number, how to submit an application, information on eligibility requirements, and the availability of local preferences.

Upon request from a person with a disability, additional time will be given as an accommodation for submission of an application after the closing deadline. This accommodation is to allow persons with disabilities the opportunity to submit an application in cases when a social service organization provides inaccurate or untimely information about the closing date.

If the waiting list is open, the HA will accept applications from eligible families unless there is good cause for not accepting the application, such as denial of assistance because of action or inaction by members of the family for the grounds stated in the "Denial or Termination of Assistance" chapter of this Administrative Plan. [24 CFR 982.206(b)(2)].

### **1. Closing the Waiting List**

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

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

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

Separating the new applicants into groups based on preferences and ranking applicants within each group by date and time of application.

### **2. Limits on Who May Apply**

When the waiting list is open:

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

Depending upon the composition of the waiting list with regard to family types and preferences and to better serve the needs of the community, the HA may only accept applications from any family claiming preference(s).

When a completed application is submitted to and accepted by the HA:

It establishes the family's date and time of application for placement order on the waiting list.

### **C. PRELIMINARY APPLICATION PROCEDURES** [24 CFR 982.204(b)]

The HA will utilize a pre-application form. The information is to be filled out by the applicant whenever possible. To provide specific accommodation for persons with disabilities, the information may be completed by a staff person over the telephone. It may also be mailed to the applicant and, if requested, it will be mailed in an accessible format.

The purpose of the pre-application is to permit the HA to preliminarily assess family eligibility or ineligibility and to determine placement on the waiting list.

Duplicate applications, including applications from a segment of an applicant household, will not be accepted.

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Pre-applications will not require an interview. As a result, ineligible families may end up being placed on the waiting list. The information on the application will not be verified until the applicant has been selected for final eligibility determination. Final eligibility will be determined when the full application process is completed and all information is verified.

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

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

Upon addition to the waiting list, the family will be notified in writing or in an accessible format, upon request, as a reasonable accommodation.

This written notification of addition to the waiting list will be mailed to the applicant by first class mail

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

See "Complaints and Appeals" chapter.

### **E. TIME OF SELECTION** [24 CFR 982.204, 5.410]

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

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

Based on the HA's turnover and the availability of funding, groups of families will be selected from the waiting list to form a final eligibility "pool." Selection from the pool will be based on timing of completion of verification.

### **F. COMPLETION OF A FULL APPLICATION**

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

All adult family members, 18 years of age or older, are required to attend the interview and sign the housing application. Exceptions may be made for students attending school out of state/for members for whom attendance would be a hardship.

The head of household is required to attend the interview.

The head and spouse are both required to attend the interview.

If the head of household cannot attend the interview, the spouse may attend to complete the application and certify for the family. The head of household, however, will be required to attend an interview within 5 working days to review the information and to certify by signature that all of the information is complete and accurate.

It is the applicant's responsibility to reschedule the interview if s/he misses the appointment. If the applicant does not reschedule or misses two scheduled meetings, the HA will reject the application.

Applicants who fail to appear and want to reschedule a missed appointment must make the request to reschedule no later than three working days from the original appointment date. The request must be made to the staff person who scheduled the appointment.

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

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

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

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

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

### **G. VERIFICATION** [24 CFR 982.201(e)]

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

### **H. FINAL DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY** [24 CFR 982.201]

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