

## Chapter 3 APPLYING FOR ADMISSION [24 CFR 982.204]

### INTRODUCTION

The policy of the Housing Authority 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 Housing Authority 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 or preliminary application taking is to permit the Housing Authority to gather information and determine placement on the waiting list. The preliminary application will contain questions designed to obtain pertinent program information.

Families who wish to apply for any of the Housing Authority's programs must complete a preliminary application form when the waiting list is open.

When the waiting list is open, any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for HCV rental assistance will be given the opportunity to complete a preliminary application.

Preliminary applications will be available on-line through a link on the Housing Authority's website. Paper preliminary applications will only be provided to interested families as a reasonable accommodation for persons with a disability that prevents them from applying on-line.

The application process will involve two Housing Authorities. The first is the preliminary application for assistance (previously referred to as a questionnaire). This first Housing Authority's results in the family's placement on the waiting list.

The second Housing Authority 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 Housing Authority ensures that verification of all HUD and Housing Authority eligibility factors is current in order to determine the family's eligibility for the issuance of a voucher.

#### **B. OPENING/CLOSING OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.206, 982.54(d)(1)]**

The Housing Authority will utilize the following procedures for opening the waiting list. When the Housing Authority opens the waiting list, it will publicize the availability and

nature of housing assistance for very low income families through public notice in the following newspapers, minority publications and media entities.

### **Newspapers**

Argus Courier  
Bodega Bay Navigator  
Cloverdale Reveille  
Healdsburg Tribune  
Northern California Bohemian  
Press Democrat  
Sonoma Index Tribune  
Sonoma West Times  
Windsor Times

### **Television Stations**

Media Labs - A Community Media Center for the North Bay (Channel 26, 27, 28, 30)  
KRCB (Channel 22)

### **Radio Stations**

KBBF (Spanish) - 89.1 FM  
KFGY - 92.9 FM  
KXFX - 101.7 FM  
KRVR - 97.7 FM  
KSRO - 1350 AM  
KRSH - 95.9 FM  
KJZY - 93.7 FM  
KRRS (Spanish) - 1460 AM  
KTOB - 1490 AM  
KRCB - 91.1 FM  
KZST - 100.1 FM

To reach persons who cannot read the newspapers, the Housing Authority will distribute fact sheets to the broadcasting media, and initiate personal contacts with members of the news media and community service personnel. The Housing Authority will also utilize public service announcements.

**The following organizations, as well as others, will be notified of the opening of the**

## **Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List.**

Adult and Aging Services  
La Luz Bilingual Center  
Becoming Independent  
NAACP  
Boys and Girls Club of Cloverdale  
Oaks of Hebron  
Boys and Girls Club of Healdsburg  
Community Action Partnership  
Boys and Girls Club of Sonoma Valley  
Petaluma People Services Center  
California Human Development Corporation  
California Parenting Institute  
Fair Housing of Sonoma County  
Catholic Charities  
Sonoma County Human Services Dept.  
Committee On The Shelterless  
Sonoma County Dept. of Health Services  
Town of Windsor  
Community Support Network  
Veteran's Service Office  
Council on the Aging  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
Disability Services and Legal Center  
Face to Face AIDS Network  
Community and Family Service Agency  
Family Support Center  
YWCA

The notice will contain:

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

The programs for which preliminary applications will be taken.

A brief description of the program.

Limitations, if any, on who may apply.

The notices will provide potential applicants with information that includes the Housing Authority address and telephone number, how to submit a preliminary application and information on eligibility requirements. Notices will also be provided in Spanish.

The Housing Authority will submit press releases to local newspapers, including minority newspapers, develop informational materials to distribute to other agencies, provide application forms to other public and private agencies that serve the low income population, and develop partnerships with other organizations that serve similar populations, including agencies that provide services for persons with disabilities.

#### **Closing the Waiting List**

The Housing Authority will announce the closing of the waiting list by public notice. The Housing Authority will add the 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 preliminary application.

#### **Limits on Who May Apply**

When the waiting list is open:

Any family asking to be placed on the waiting list for HCV rental assistance will be given the opportunity to complete a preliminary application.

When the preliminary application is submitted to the Housing Authority:

It establishes the family's preference, income eligibility (See Chapter 2, Section C), and date and time of receipt of preliminary application for placement order on the waiting list.

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

The Housing Authority will utilize an on-line preliminary application. The information is to be filled out by the applicant whenever possible. Translations will be provided in Spanish.

The purpose of the preliminary application is to permit the Housing Authority to preliminarily assess family eligibility or ineligibility and to determine placement on the waiting list. Ineligible families will not be placed on the waiting list.

If the family is determined to be ineligible based on the information provided in the preliminary application, the Housing Authority will notify the family in writing, 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.

Preliminary applications will not require an interview. The information on the preliminary 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 Housing Authority in writing of changes in address. Applicants are also required to respond to requests from the Housing Authority to update information on their preliminary application and to determine their need for assistance.

If after a review of the preliminary application the family is determined to be preliminarily eligible, they will be notified in writing.

This written notification of preliminary eligibility will be mailed to the applicant by first class mail.

#### **E. REMOVAL FROM WAITING LIST AND PURGING [24 CFR 982.204(c)]**

The Waiting List may be updated ~~approximately every two years~~ as needed by contacting ~~all~~ applicants to ensure that the waiting list is current and accurate. The notice will ask for confirmation of continued interest. The Housing Authority may opt to purge only enough applicants to enable the Housing Authority to have current information on those applicant families who are likely to reach the top of the waiting list in the next 12 to 24 months.

Applicants who are notified must complete a new preliminary application providing all information needed for placement on the waiting list, such as address and phone number, household composition, income, preferences claimed, and minority designation of the head of household.

Any notices to the applicant which require a response will have a clear and reasonable response deadline and state that failure to respond by the deadline will result in the applicant's name being dropped from the waiting list.

An extension of 30 days to respond will be granted, if requested and needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

If a letter is returned by the Post Office with a forwarding address, a waitlist update form will be sent to the applicant at the new address. If the waitlist update form is not returned within fourteen days, the applicant will be withdrawn without further notice. If a letter is returned by the Post Office because of unknown whereabouts, the applicant will be withdrawn without further notice, an image of the envelope and letter will be maintained in the file.

If an applicant is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, they will not be entitled to reinstatement unless the Housing Authority determines there were circumstances beyond the person's control.

## **F. 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.

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

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

All preferences claimed on the preliminary application or while the family is on the waiting list will be verified after the family is selected from the waiting list, and prior to completing the full application.

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

After the preference is verified, when the Housing Authority is ready to select applicants, applicants will be required to participate in a full application interview with a Housing Authority representative. During the interview, the applicant will be required to furnish complete and accurate information as requested by the interviewer. The Housing Authority interviewer will complete the full application form with information supplied by the applicant. The applicant will sign and certify that all information is complete and accurate.

### **Requirement to Attend Interview**

The Housing Authority 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 Housing Authority services or programs which may be available.

All adult family members are required to attend the interview and sign the housing application.

Exceptions may be made for students attending school out of state or for members for whom attendance would be a hardship.

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

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 Housing Authority will make an administrative determination that the family is no longer seeking rental assistance and will withdraw the application.

Applicants who fail to appear and want to reschedule a missed appointment must make the request to reschedule no later than ten days from the original appointment date.

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

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

If the Housing Authority determines at or after the interview that additional information or document(s) are needed, the Housing Authority will request the document(s) or information in writing. The family will be given a minimum of 10 days to supply the information.

If the information is not supplied in the specific time period, the Housing Authority will make an administrative determination that the family is no longer seeking rental assistance and will withdraw the application.

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

Information provided by the applicant will be verified, using the verification procedures in Chapter 7, "Verification Procedures." 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.

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

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