

**Proposed Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan, Administrative Plan
& FY2023 MTW Annual Plan Amendment
Frequently Asked Questions**

March 10, 2023

Waiting List

Q. How was the 15-business day timeframe selected for families to respond to waitlist updates? How will families be contacted?

A. DCHA will contact families by mail and email (if available). The 15-day timeframe is common in the industry, and DCHA extended it to 15 business days to provide additional time for families to respond.

Q. Will the public housing transfer list be site-based like the waitlist?

A. DCHA will investigate the feasibility of implementing a site-based transfer list.

Q. If an applicant who is on both the public housing and voucher waiting list is selected for and accepts a public housing unit, how does that impact their wait for a voucher?

A. The agency's current policy gives preference for vouchers to those experiencing homelessness. Under the proposed policy, the agency has removed all preferences and voucher participant selection is based solely on the date and time of application.

Initial Lease-Up

Q. Are age and gender considered in the two people per bedroom occupancy standard policy?

A. There are several exceptions. Public housing exceptions can be found in the Admissions and Occupancy Plan, Chapter 5-I.B. Voucher exceptions can be found in the Administrative Plan, Chapter 5-II.B.

Q. Why is the initial voucher term decreasing from 180 to 120 days?

A. This change helps allocate financial resources to families with active leases. It also incentivizes families to actively search for their new home.

Rent

Q. Can DCHA waive the minimum rent requirement for public housing? What happens when a zero-income household cannot pay?

A. Housing Authorities, including MTW agencies, must set a minimum rent. \$50 was selected because it is consistent with the amount charged by other housing authorities and to encourage self-sufficiency and resident investment in their community. Residents who cannot pay may request a hardship exemption.

Q. How is DCHA selecting its rent reasonableness tool and how will the agency ensure it is accurate, eliminating over- and under-payment?

A. With the goal of ensuring that Public Housing Authorities (PHA) pay no more and no less than market rent, HUD requires that PHAs:

- Set a payment standard annually;
- Complete a market study annually;
- Update the utility allowance schedule annually; and
- Follow a rent reasonableness process that includes checking comparable rents considering the units location, quality, size, type and age of the units and any amenities, maintenance or utilities that may be provided by the owner.

Together, these steps will ensure that DCHA is paying market rent to landlords.

Informed by feedback from HUD, other industry experts and the market study, DCHA is in the process of evaluating multiple rent reasonableness tools. The agency is also completing a fiscal impact analysis and developing a plan for implementation.

Q. Can DCHA make the adult with income responsible for rent and repayment agreements rather than the head of household?

A. Rent is calculated by family and the head of household is responsible for its household's rent payments.

Q. What are the terms of a repayment agreement and how many can a family enter?

A. Generally, a family may enter one repayment agreement at a time. A 25% down payment is generally required, and the monthly amount is generally set at the difference between 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income and the total tenant payment at the time the agreement is executed. Payments are due by the 15th day of the month, or the next business day if the 15th does not fall on a business day. Late or missed payments constitute default of the repayment agreement and may result in termination of tenancy.

Continued Occupancy—Public Housing

Q. Are there restrictions on dog breeds and sizes as part of the pet policy?

A. While there are not breed restrictions, all pets' adult weights must be under 25 pounds. No new pets will be registered beginning January 2024.

Q. What counts as community service and how will it be tracked?

A. Community service includes work at a variety public and non-profit organizations and on DCHA properties, as specified under the Exhibit 11-1 "Community Service and Self-Sufficiency Policy" in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy policy. Approximately 60 days prior to the end of the lease term, the DCHA will provide written notice requiring the family to submit documentation that all subject family members have complied with the service requirement. The family will have 10 business days to submit the DCHA-required documentation form(s).

Exhibit 11-1 will be provided to residents at lease-up, lease renewal, when a family member becomes subject to the community service requirement during the lease term, and at any time upon the family's request.

Q. What changes were made to the smoking policy?

A. No changes were made; however, the policy will be consistently enforced going forward.

Q. How many residents are expected to be found non-lease compliant once the ACOP is adopted?

A. DCHA has not completed an assessment and will work with residents to get them into compliance prior to any action being taken.

Q. What is the process for requesting an exception to the guest policy?

A. Residents with extenuating circumstances should contact their management office.

Q. Can DCHA simplify its recertification forms?

A. As DCHA creates the procedures to accompany the new ACOP, the agency will consider how the recertification forms may be simplified while meeting all HUD requirements.

Continued Occupancy—Housing Choice Voucher Program

Q. How can landlords enforce payment of late fees through DCHA?

A. Landlords are responsible for enforcing their lease terms.

Q. Can DCHA refine its procedures so landlords can transfer the electric bill to the tenant without a new lease-up package?

A. Changes in financial responsibilities require re-calculation of rent and a new lease-up package.

Termination

Q. Can DCHA terminate the HAP after 180 days of \$0 assistance while allowing the participant to remain in the voucher program?

A. When the HAP is terminated, participation ends.

Q. Does an informal hearing/grievance occur before a public housing resident is terminated?

A. Any resident who receives a termination notice is entitled to grieve the action except for terminations involving:

1. Criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees.
2. Violent or drug-related criminal activity on or off the premises.
3. Any criminal activity resulting in felony conviction of a household member.

Other

Q. What are the consequences when staff threaten/harass residents?

A. DCHA will follow the Human Resources Personnel policy regarding staff action/behavior.

Q. How will DCHA ensure housing managers share correct information?

A. After these policies are adopted, staff will undergo policy and procedures trainings with follow-up quality control measures in place.

Q. How will DCHA develop new public housing units to expand affordable housing?

A. DCHA evaluates its options for expanding access to affordable housing through each of its re-development projects. Additionally, public housing is only one of the tools the District of Columbia has employed to expand affordable housing.

Q. Is there a specific form to request reasonable accommodations?

A. DCHA's Reasonable Accommodation Forms are available online at <https://www.dchousing.org/wordpress/customers/people-with-disabilities/>. While submission via these forms is encouraged, DCHA will consider the accommodation anytime the family indicates that an accommodation is needed.