ADMISSION AND CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICY (ACOP) UPDATES

PUBLIC HEARING

November 17, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

I. ACOP Proposed Changes

DCHA staff will review key proposed changes to the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy.

II. Public Comments

Members of the public will be provided the opportunity to share their comments on the proposed ACOP changes.

ACOP PROPOSED CHANGES

- **DCHA is proposing updates to its Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy ("ACOP")**
  - The ACOP outlines the rules, eligibility requirements, and operational policies for DCHA's Public Housing program.

- **The proposed changes reflect:**
  1. HUD required **cost-savings measures** due to DCHA's funding shortfall.
  2. Compliance with federal requirements currently in effect or scheduled to take effect under the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (**HOTMA**).
  3. Alignment with DCHA's **Moving to Work (MTW)** policies.
  4. Additional **administrative and operational** updates.

1. COST SAVINGS MEASURES

BACKGROUND

- Housing Authorities nationwide face rising costs and limited federal funding.
- DCHA estimates its current funding shortfall at $65 million.
- DCHA remains committed to creating and preserving affordable housing, as well as minimizing the impact on currently assisted households.
- As required by HUD, DCHA must implement cost savings measures to address DCHA's budget shortfall, including:
  - *Implementing a $50 minimum rent*

MINIMUM RENT - BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

- Most public housing residents pay 30% of adjusted household income (after allowable deductions) for rent.
- HUD regulations allow for a minimum rent of up to $50, provided that residents/participants have the right to request a hardship exemption.
- The majority of PHAs nationwide have adopted minimum rents of at least $50

CURRENT POLICY: Current minimum rent in the Voucher and Public Housing programs is Zero ($0) dollars.

MINIMUM RENT – PROPOSED CHANGE

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGE

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Immediately
Transfers	Immediately
Current Families	October 1, 2027

- **Minimum Rent is $50.**
  - Total Tenant Payment (TTP) will be the highest of:
    - 30% of family's monthly adjusted income
    - 10% of family's monthly gross income
    - A minimum rent of $50
  - DCHA will grant a financial hardship exemption from the $50 minimum rent if the family meets certain qualifying conditions.

MINIMUM RENT – HARDSHIP POLICY

HARDSHIP POLICY

- If a family requests a hardship exemption, **DCHA will suspend the minimum rent beginning the month following** the request and continuing until DCHA makes a determination.
- DCHA will determine whether the hardship is temporary or long-term, or there was no hardship.
    - ***Temporary Hardship:*** DCHA will suspend the minimum rent for 90 days beginning the month following the date of the request. DCHA will reinstate the beginning rent at the end of the 90-day suspension period. DCHA will offer a reasonable repayment agreement for the amount of back rent owed by the family.
    - ***Long-Term Hardship:*** DCHA will suspend the minimum rent for as long as the hardship continues. The exemption will apply from the beginning month following the request.
    - ***No Hardship:*** DCHA will reinstate in minimum rent, including back rent owed from the beginning of the suspension; and require the family to pay the back rent.
- **Exemption only applies to payment of the minimum rent** and not to other elements used to calculate the total tenant payment.

Qualifying Conditions for a Hardship Exemption
a. **Family lost eligibility for**, or is awaiting an eligibility determination for, **a Federal, State, or local assistance program**. And the loss of eligibility affects the family's ability to pay the minimum rent.
b. The **family would be evicted** due to inability to pay the minimum rent.
c. **Income of family has decreased** because of changed circumstances, including loss of employment
d. A **death occurred in the family** and the death created a financial hardship.
e. **Other circumstances** determined by DCHA or HUD

MINIMUM RENT – COST SAVINGS

- **PROJECTED COST SAVINGS**
  - Below are DCHA's projected cost savings by enacting a $50 minimum rent in the public housing & voucher programs program.
  - DCHA anticipates that **approx. 10-20% of impacted households may qualify for a hardship exemption**. The actual number will depend on individual household circumstances.

	Public Housing
Annual Savings to DCHA (without hardship exemptions)	**$344,220**
Annual Savings to DCHA (with hardship exemptions*)	**$292,587**

**Assuming 15% of impacted households receive a hardship exemption.*

MINIMUM RENT – RESIDENT IMPACT

IMPACT ANALYSIS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING HOUSEHOLDS

- Under a minimum rent of $50, approximately **85% of households would have no change in rent**.
- Approximately **15% of households** would experience a **rent increase**.
- DCHA anticipates that **approx. 10-20% of impacted households may qualify for a hardship exemption**. The actual number will depend on individual household circumstances.

	Public Housing
Total Households	4,070
HHs with No Change in Rent	3,464 ***(85%)***
HHs with a Rent Increase	606 ***(15%)***

2. HOTMA COMPLIANCE

BACKGROUND

- The Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act ("HOTMA") is a federal law.
- HOTMA changes how public housing authority are required to calculate income, assets, and conduct income reviews for the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs.
- DCHA is making updates to its ACOP to comply with HOTMA requirements in effect, or soon to be in effect.
- DCHA adopted previous HOTMA policies under the last round of Admin Plan and ACOP updates. HUD has set a compliance deadline of January 1, 2027 for the remaining HOTMA provisions.

ASSET LIMITATIONS – HUD MANDATED CHANGES

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- HOTMA establishes voucher program eligibility restrictions due to family assets
- Families will be ineligible for assistance if the family's net assets exceed HUD's asset limitation and/or the family has real property that is suitable for occupancy.
    - HUD's asset limit is current $105,574 and is adjusted annually for inflation.

CURRENT POLICY: Not in current ACOP Plan.

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Immediately
Transfers	Does not apply.
Current Families	Does not apply.

MEDICAL & HEALTH DEDUCTION – HUD MANDATED CHANGES

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- HOTMA makes changes to deductions for health and medical expenses.
- Unreimbursed medical expenses can be deducted from income once they add up to **more than 10% of a family's annual income**.

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Immediately
Transfers	Immediately
Current Families	For families that qualify, there will be a phase-in-period of 24 months after the first regular recertification on/after implementation.

CURRENT POLICY: Unreimbursed medical expenses can be deducted from income once they add up to more than 3% of a family's annual income.

MEDICAL & HEALTH DEDUCTION – HUD MANDATED CHANGES

HARDSHIP POLICY

Families will have a 2-year phase in period if they qualify. A family qualifies if:

1. The family received a deduction for unreimbursed health and medical care and/or reasonable expenses and;
2. The family's expenses exceeded 5% of the family's annual income.

2-Year Phase-In Period

First Regular Recert.

DCHA will deduct unreimbursed health & medical expenses that ***exceed 5%*** of the family's annual income.

1 Year Later

DCHA will deduct unreimbursed health and medical expenses that ***exceed 7.5%*** of the family's annual income.

2 Years Later

DCHA will deduct unreimbursed health and medical expenses that ***exceed 10%*** of the family's annual income.

CHILDCARE EXPENSES DEDUCTION – HUD MANDATED CHANGES

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- HOTMA makes changes to deductions for childcare expenses.
- A family whose childcare expense deduction is ending may receive a hardship exemption to continue receiving the deduction for up to 90 days if:
  - The family's total unreimbursed childcare expenses are at least $2,000 per year
  - The family owes no balance to DCHA or the owner/landlord.

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Immediately
Transfers	Immediately
Current Families	Immediately

CURRENT POLICY: Not in current ACOP Plan.

3. MTW POLICY ALIGNMENT

BACKGROUND

- DCHA is a Moving to Work ("MTW") agency, which gives us additional flexibility to modify our Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher policies.

- MTW policies are authorized through the Annual MTW Plan and implemented through the Admin Plan and ACOP.

- DCHA is proposing updates to the ACOP to align with policies authorized under the agency's MTW Annual Plan.

WAITING LISTS – PROPOSED CHANGES

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES *(upon approval of the FY27 MTW Plan)*

Effective Date Upon Approval
Immediately

- Under its HUD approved MTW policy, DCHA can create site-based waiting lists for its public housing properties.
- DCHA will **transition the remaining applicants on the community-wide public housing** waiting list to the site-based waiting lists. **A community-wide waiting list will no longer be maintained.**

CURRENT POLICY: DCHA will maintain one community-wide public housing waiting list.

FLAT RENT – PROPOSED CHANGES

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES *(upon approval of the FY27 MTW Plan)*

- **Flat rent option for public housing households will be removed.**
- New admissions will be placed on income-based rent only.
- Current flat rent households will transition to income-based rent on a three-year phase-in process.
  - Year 1: Current flat rent + 33% of difference in income-based rent;
  - Year 2: Current flat rent + 66% of difference in income-based rent;
  - Year 3: Full income-based rent.

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Immediately
Transfers	Immediately
Current Families	3-Year Phase In

CURRENT POLICY: Families have the option to choose a flat rent or an income-based rent on an annual basis.

INTERIM REEXAMS – PROPOSED CHANGES

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES *(upon approval of the FY27 MTW Plan)*

- Families are **required to report all increases in income** between regular biennial/triennial reexaminations.
- **DCHA will conduct an interim reexamination for increases in income**.

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Immediately
Transfers	Immediately
Current Families	October 1, 2027

CURRENT: Families are not required to report any changes in income or expenses between regulation biennial/triennial recertifications or reexaminations.

4. ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL UPDATES

BACKGROUND

- DCHA has identified additional operational and administrative proposed changes to the ACOP.
- These proposed changes reflect community feedback, best practices in housing administration, and HUD requirements.

OCCUPANCY STANDARDS - BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

- Occupancy Standards define the number of bedrooms that a household is eligible for. A larger Occupancy Standard has a direct impact on DCHA's costs.

- HUD requires that Occupancy Standards provide "…the smallest number of bedrooms needed (to avoid) overcrowding."

- HUD recommends "two persons per room" regardless of age, sex/gender, or family relationship. Under HUD's policy, Live-in-Aides get a separate bedroom, and reasonable accommodations must also be allowed.

CURRENT POLICY: DCHA has adopted more flexible Occupancy Standards that, for example, allow a 5-person household to occupy a 5-bedroom unit, under certain circumstances.

OCCUPANCY STANDARDS – PROPOSED CHANGE

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGE

- **One bedroom per two people, regardless of age, gender, or family relationship.**
  - Exceptions may be granted if DCHA approves it as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.
  - Live-in aides are allocated a separate bedroom.

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Immediately
Transfers	Immediately
Current Families	October 1, 2027

PREFERENCES – PROPOSED CHANGES

Effective Date Upon Approval
Immediately

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

Homelessness Preference

- A limited local preference will be established for referrals by the District's Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement (CAHP).
- **CURRENT POLICY:** Not in current ACOP.

Elderly Preference

- The following mixed-finance sites will be added to DCHA's elderly preference: **Edgewood Senior, Triangle View, and Victory Square**
- **CURRENT POLICY:** Not in current ACOP.

UNIT OFFERS – PROPOSED CHANGES

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- One-person households will be offered studio apartments at the time of offer.
- DCHA allows refusals of unit offers for good cause.
- **Refusals of studio apartments due to size will not be considered good cause** (unless the applicant is approved for a reasonable accommodation for a larger unit).

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Immediately
Transfers	Immediately
Current Families	Does not apply

CURRENT POLICY: Single member households will be offered 1-bedroom or 0-bedroom units.

UNIT OFFERS – PROPOSED CHANGES

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- **Additional adult family members will only be approved if:**
  - They are immediate family members (parent, sibling, or child) of the head or co-head of household and,
  - The addition does not change the unit size the family qualifies for.

Effective Date Upon Approval	
New Admissions	Does not apply
Transfers	Immediately
Current Families	Immediately

CURRENT POLICY: A household must request approval to add a new family member.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Members of public who signed up in advance will be called first
- When your name is called*, please accept invitation to become panelist and unmute
- Each person will have **3 minutes** to share their comments
- Attendees who did not sign up in advance but wish to speak, please click "raise hand" or send request to host in chat

**For those dialing in by phone, when your name is called, please press star six (*6) on your phone and you will come off mute*

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Submit Written Comments by December 7th, 2026

- Written comments on the proposed ACOP changes will be accepted until Monday, December 7th at 11:59pm E.T.
- Information on how to submit written comments can be found on DCHA's website: www.dchousing.org/acop
- Copies of the proposed ACOP changes can be found on DCHA's website: www.dchousing.org/acop
- Questions about the proposed ACOP changes can be sent to DCHA staff at publicationcomments@dchousing.org