

**\*New Language in Red\***

**Chapter 4**

**APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION**

**INTRODUCTION**

When a family wishes to reside in public housing, 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 eligible families that apply for public housing on a waiting list. When a unit becomes available, the PHA must select families from the waiting list in accordance with HUD requirements and PHA policies as stated in its Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) and its annual plan.

The PHA is required to adopt a clear approach to accepting applications, placing families on the waiting list, and selecting families from the waiting list, and must follow this approach 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 to receive preferential treatment.

HUD regulations require that the PHA comply with all equal opportunity requirements and it must affirmatively further fair housing goals in the administration of the program [24 CFR 960.103, PH Occ GB p. 13]. 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 from the waiting list. The PHAs policies for assigning unit size and making unit offers are contained in Chapter 5. Together, Chapters 4 and 5 of the ACOP comprise the PHA's Tenant Selection and Assignment Plan (TSAP).

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 public housing. It also discusses the process the PHA will use to keep the waiting list current.

Part III: Tenant Selection. This part describes the policies that guide the PHA in selecting families from the waiting list as units become 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.



## **PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **4-I.A. OVERVIEW**

This part describes the policies that guide the PHA's efforts to distribute and accept applications, and to make preliminary determinations of applicant family eligibility that affect placement of the family on the waiting list. This part also describes the PHA's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process.

### **4-I.B. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE**

Any family that wishes to reside in public housing must apply for admission to the program [24 CFR 1.4(b)(2)(ii), 24 CFR 960.202(a)(2)(iv), and PH Occ GB, p. 68]. HUD permits the PHA to determine the format and content of its applications, as well how such applications will be made available to interested families and how applications will be accepted by the PHA. However, the PHA must include Form HUD-92006, Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing, as part of the PHA's application [Notice PIH 2009-36].

#### **GHA Policy**

The application process will involve a two-step application process. The first step is an on-line process that requires 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 first phase involves an on-line preliminary application process. Applications will be made available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.

The second phase is the full-application which takes place when the family reaches the top of the waiting list. At this point, the PHA conducts a formal interview in person and request verifications that are required by HUD and the PHA. The family must provide all of the information necessary to establish family eligibility and level of assistance when the family is selected from the waiting list.

Completed applications must be returned to the PHA by mail, by fax, or submitted in person during scheduled appointment. Applications must be complete in order to be accepted by the PHA for processing. If an application is incomplete, the PHA will notify the family of the additional information required. PHA will give the family no more than 10 business day to return the required information. Failure to return may result in being removed from the waiting list.

#### **4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

The PHA must take a variety of steps to ensure that the application process is accessible to those people who might have difficulty complying with the normal, standard PHA application process.

##### **Disabled Populations [24 CFR 8; PH Occ GB, p. 68]**

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 equal 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 meaningful 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).

#### **4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST**

The PHA must review each completed application received and make a preliminary assessment of the family's eligibility. The PHA must place on the waiting list families for whom the list is open unless the PHA determines the family to be ineligible. Where the family is determined to be ineligible, the PHA must notify the family in writing [24 CFR 960.208(a); PH Occ GB, p. 41]. 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.

#### **Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List**

##### **GHA Policy**

If the PHA can determine from the information provided that a family is ineligible, the family will not be placed on the waiting list. Where a family is determined to be ineligible, the PHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 10 business days of receiving a completed application. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal hearing and explain the process for doing so (see Chapter 14).

#### **Eligible for Placement on the Waiting List**

##### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will send written notification of the preliminary eligibility determination within 10 business days of receiving a completed application. If applicable, the notice will also indicate the waiting list preference(s) for which the family appears to qualify.

Placement on the waiting list does not indicate that the family is, in fact, eligible for admission. A final determination of eligibility and qualification for preferences will be made when the family is selected from the waiting list.

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

The PHA will assign families on the waiting list according to the bedroom size for which a family qualifies as established in its occupancy standards (see Chapter 5). Families may request to be placed on the waiting list for a unit size smaller than designated by the occupancy guidelines (as long as the unit is not overcrowded according to PHA standards and local codes). However, in these cases, the family must agree not to request a transfer for two years after admission, unless they have a change in family size or composition.



## **PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST**

### **4-II.A. OVERVIEW**

The PHA must have policies regarding the type of waiting list it will utilize as well as the 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 public housing, and conducting outreach to ensure a sufficient number of applicants.

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

### **4-II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST**

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

#### **GHA Policy**

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

Name and social security number of head of household

Unit size required (number of family members)

Amount and source of annual income

Accessibility requirement, if any

Date and time of application or application number

Household type (family, elderly, disabled)

Admission preference, if any

Race and ethnicity of the head of household

The specific site(s) selected (only if PHA offers site-based waiting lists)

The PHA may adopt one community-wide waiting list or site-based waiting lists. The PHA must obtain approval from HUD through submission of its Annual Plan before it may offer site-based waiting lists. Site-based waiting lists allow families to select the development where they wish to reside and must be consistent with all applicable civil rights and fair housing laws and regulations [24 CFR 903.7(b)(2)].

**GHA Policy**

The PHA will maintain one single community-wide waiting list for its developments. Within the list, the PHA will designate subparts to easily identify who should be offered the next available unit (i.e. mixed populations, general occupancy, unit size, and accessible units).

The PHA will adopt a site-based waiting lists should the Executive Director deemed necessary to be determined at a later date and time.

HUD directs that a family that applies to reside in public housing must be offered the opportunity to be placed on the waiting list for any tenant-based or project-based voucher or moderate rehabilitation program that the PHA operates if 1) the other programs' waiting lists are open, and 2) the family is qualified for the other programs [24 CFR 982.205(a)(2)(i)].

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 [24 CFR 982.205(a)(1)].

**GHA Policy**

The PHA will not merge the public housing waiting list with the waiting list for any other program the PHA operates.

## **4-II.C. OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST**

### **Closing the Waiting List**

The PHA is permitted to close the waiting list, in whole or in part, if it has an adequate pool of families to fill its developments. The PHA may close the waiting list completely, or restrict intake by preference, type of project, or by size and type of dwelling unit. [PH Occ GB, p. 31].

#### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will close the waiting list when the estimated waiting period for housing applicants on the list reaches 24 months for the most current applicants. Where the PHA has particular preferences or other criteria that require a specific category of family, the PHA 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 may be reopened at any time. The PHA should publish a notice in local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable media outlets that the PHA is reopening the waiting list. Such notice must comply with HUD fair housing requirements. The PHA should specify who may apply, and where and when applications will be received.

#### **GHA Policy**

The PHA 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 notice will specify where, when, and how applications are to be received.

The PHA will give public notice by publishing the relevant information in suitable media outlets including, but not limited to:

- *The Gainesville Sun*
- *Gainesville Housing Authority website*
- *Minority media*
- *Local churches*
- *Community groups and agencies*

#### **4-II.D. FAMILY OUTREACH [24 CFR 903.2(d); 24 CFR 903.7(a) and (b)]**

The PHA should conduct outreach as necessary to ensure that the PHA has a sufficient number of applicants on the waiting list to fill anticipated vacancies and to assure that the PHA is affirmatively furthering fair housing and complying with the Fair Housing Act.

Because HUD requires the PHA to serve a specified percentage of extremely low income families, the PHA may need to conduct special outreach to ensure that an adequate number of such families apply for public housing.

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 units 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

#### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will monitor the characteristics of the population being served and the characteristics of the population as a whole in the PHA'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**

##### **GHA Policy**

While the family is on the waiting list, the family must inform the PHA, within 10 business days, of changes in family size or composition, preference status, or contact information, including current residence, mailing address, and phone number. The changes must be submitted in writing.

Changes in an applicant's circumstances while on the waiting list may affect the family's qualification for a particular bedroom size or entitlement to a preference. When an applicant reports a change that affects their placement on the waiting list, the waiting list will be updated accordingly.

#### **4-II.F. UPDATING THE WAITING LIST**

HUD requires the PHA to establish policies to use when removing applicant names from the waiting list [24 CFR 960.202(a)(2)(iv)].

##### **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 the PHA's request for information or updates because of the family member's disability, the PHA must, upon the family's request, reinstate the applicant family to their former position on the waiting list as a reasonable accommodation [24 CFR 8.4(a), 24 CFR 100.204(a), and PH Occ GB, p. 39 and 40]. See Chapter 2 for further information regarding reasonable accommodations.

##### **GHA Policy**

The waiting list will be updated as needed to ensure that all applicants and applicant information is current and timely.

To update the waiting list, the PHA will send an update request via first class mail to each family on the waiting list to determine whether the family continues to be interested in, and to qualify for, the program. This update request will be sent to the last address that the PHA has on record for the family. 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 family's response must be via PHA online web based program unless applicant requests a reasonable accommodation.

If the family fails to respond within 15 business days from the date of the annual update letter, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

If there are no changes, the family must mail back the annual update letter stating that there are no changes within 15 business days. If the family fails to respond within 15 business days, 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, 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 notice will be re-sent to the address indicated. The family will have 15 business days to respond from the date the letter was re-sent. If the family fails to respond within this time frame, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

When a family is removed from the waiting list during the update process for failure to respond, no informal hearing will be offered. Such failures to act on the part of the applicant prevent the PHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore no informal hearing is required.

If a family is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, the Executive Director may reinstate the family if s/he determines the lack of response was due to PHA error.

## **Removal from the Waiting List**

### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will remove applicants from the waiting list if they have requested that their name be removed. In such cases no informal hearing is required.

If the PHA determines that the family is not eligible for admission (see Chapter 3) at any time while the family is on the waiting list the family will be removed from the waiting list.

If a family is removed from the waiting list because the PHA has determined the family is not eligible for admission, 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 hearing regarding the PHA's decision (see Chapter 14) [24 CFR 960.208(a)].



## **PART III: TENANT SELECTION**

### **4-III.A. OVERVIEW**

The PHA must establish tenant selection policies for families being admitted to public housing [24 CFR 960.201(a)]. The PHA must not require any specific income or racial quotas for any developments [24 CFR 903.2(d)]. The PHA must not assign persons to a particular section of a community or to a development or building based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin for purposes of segregating populations [24 CFR 1.4(b)(1)(iii) and 24 CFR 903.2(d)(1)].

The order in which families will be selected from the waiting list depends on the selection method chosen by the PHA and is impacted in part by any selection preferences that the family qualifies for. The availability of units 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 960.206(e)(2)]. The PHA's policies must be posted any place where the PHA receives applications. The PHA must provide a copy of its tenant selection policies upon request to any applicant or tenant. The PHA may charge the family for providing a copy of its tenant selection policies [24 CFR 960.202(c)(2)].

#### **GHA Policy**

When an applicant or resident family requests a copy of the PHA's tenant selection policies, the PHA will provide copies to them free of charge.

#### **4-III.B. 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.

##### **Local Preferences [24 CFR 960.206]**

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 [24 CFR 960.206(a)].

##### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will use the following local preference:

In order to bring higher income families into public housing, the PHA will establish a preference for “working” families, where the head, spouse, or sole member is employed at least 25 hours per week. As required by HUD, families where the head and spouse, or sole member is a person age 62 or older, or is a person with disabilities, will also be given the benefit of the working preference [24 CFR 960.206(b)(2)].

##### **Limited Preferences [PIH Notice 2012-34 (HA)]**

PHA may create a preference or limited preference specifically for people who are referred by a partnering homeless organization or consortium of organizations for example an organization that refers people transitioning, out of a shelter, transitional housing programs or rapid re-housing programs. The PHA may not limit the source of referrals to an agency, organization laws (race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or familial status).

##### **GHA Policy**

GHA has 28 units of main stream vouchers specifically designated for homeless persons referred by Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) program, the Center for Independent Living (“referral agency”).

GHA will rely on the partnering homeless consortium to prove that the applicants qualify for the preference.

##### **Special Admissions**

The Gainesville housing authority has established a limited preference for Woodland Park Phase 1 Redevelopment of 9 units of the extremely-low income unit for persons with a disabling condition that are referred by the link MOU. For “Special Needs Housing Services” as established under the Link MOU form 04 PDC. The Gainesville Housing Authority will work with the link Referral Agency and will 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 Gainesville Housing Authority will maintain records showing that such families were admitted with special program funding.

Disabling Condition as defined in 420.0004(7) F.S., means a diagnosable substance abuse disorder,

serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, or the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions, and a determination that the condition is:

- (a) Expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration; and
- (b) Not expected to Impair the ability of the person with a disabling condition to live independently with appropriate supports.

GHA has a limited housing preference for victims of federally declared natural disasters. This preference allows for the immediate housing of directly impacted families living in the declared disaster area at the time of the disaster.

In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), GHA allows residents who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to request an emergency transfer from the resident's current unit to another unit. The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. If a unit is available, the transferred resident must agree to abide by the terms and conditions that govern occupancy in the unit to which the resident has been transferred. GHA may be unable to transfer a resident to a particular unit if the resident has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

If GHA has no safe and available units for which a resident who needs an emergency is eligible, GHA will assist the resident in identifying other housing providers who may have safe and available units to which the resident could move. At the residents request, GHA will also assist residents in contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

### **Income Targeting Requirement [24 CFR 960.202(b)]**

HUD requires that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 40% of the families admitted to public housing during the PHA's fiscal year. ELI families are those with annual incomes at or below 30% of the area median income. To ensure this requirement is met, the PHA may skip non-ELI families on the waiting list in order to select an ELI family.

If a PHA also operates a housing choice voucher (HCV) program, admissions of extremely low-income families to the PHA's HCV program during a PHA fiscal year that exceed the 75% minimum target requirement for the voucher program, shall be credited against the PHA's basic targeting requirement in the public housing program for the same fiscal year. However, under these circumstances the fiscal year credit to the public housing program must not exceed the lower of: (1) ten percent of public housing waiting list admissions during the PHA fiscal year; (2) ten percent of waiting list admissions to the PHA's housing choice voucher program during the PHA fiscal year; or (3) the number of qualifying low-income families who commence occupancy during the fiscal year of PHA public housing units located in census tracts with a poverty rate of 30 percent or more. For this purpose, qualifying low-income family means a low-income family other than an extremely low-income family.

### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will monitor progress in meeting the ELI requirement throughout the fiscal

year. ELI families will be selected ahead of other eligible families on an as-needed basis to ensure that the income targeting requirement is met.

## **Mixed Population Developments [24 CFR 960.407]**

A mixed population development is a public housing development or portion of a development that was reserved for elderly families and disabled families at its inception (and has retained that character) or the PHA at some point after its inception obtained HUD approval to give preference in tenant selection for all units in the development (or portion of a development) to elderly and disabled families [24 CFR 960.102]. Elderly family means a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age. Disabled family means a family whose head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is a person with disabilities [24 CFR 5.403]. The PHA must give elderly and disabled families equal preference in selecting these families for admission to mixed population developments. The PHA may not establish a limit on the number of elderly or disabled families that may occupy a mixed population development. In selecting elderly and disabled families to fill these units, the PHA must first offer the units that have accessibility features for families that include a person with a disability and require the accessibility features of such units. The PHA may not discriminate against elderly or disabled families that include children (Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988).

## **Units Designated for Elderly or Disabled Families [24 CFR 945]**

The PHA may designate projects or portions of a public housing project specifically for elderly or disabled families. The PHA must have a HUD-approved allocation plan before the designation may take place.

Among the designated developments, the PHA must also apply any preferences that it has established. If there are not enough elderly families to occupy the units in a designated elderly development, the PHA may allow near-elderly families to occupy the units [24 CFR 945.303(c)(1)]. Near-elderly family means a family whose head, spouse, or cohead is at least 50 years old, but is less than 62 [24 CFR 5.403].

If there are an insufficient number of elderly families and near-elderly families for the units in a development designated for elderly families, the PHA must make available to all other families any unit that is ready for re-rental and has been vacant for more than 60 consecutive days [24 CFR 945.303(c)(2)].

The decision of any disabled family or elderly family not to occupy or accept occupancy in designated housing shall not have an adverse affect on their admission or continued occupancy in public housing or their position on or placement on the waiting list. However, this protection does not apply to any family who refuses to occupy or accept occupancy in designated housing because of the race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin of the occupants of the designated housing or the surrounding area [24 CFR 945.303(d)(1) and (2)].

This protection does apply to an elderly family or disabled family that declines to accept occupancy, respectively, in a designated project for elderly families or for disabled families, and requests occupancy in a general occupancy project or in a mixed population project [24 CFR 945.303(d)(3)].

### **GHA Policy**

The PHA does have designated elderly or designated disabled housing at the Sunshine Park property.

## **Deconcentration of Poverty and Income-Mixing [24 CFR 903.1 and 903.2]**

The PHA's admission policy must be designed to provide for deconcentration of poverty and income-mixing by bringing higher income tenants into lower income projects and lower income tenants into higher income projects. A statement of the PHA's deconcentration policies must be included in its annual plan [24 CFR 903.7(b)].

The PHA's deconcentration policy must comply with its obligation to meet the income targeting requirement [24 CFR 903.2(c)(5)].

Developments subject to the deconcentration requirement are referred to as 'covered developments' and include general occupancy (family) public housing developments. The following developments are not subject to deconcentration and income mixing requirements: developments operated by a PHA with fewer than 100 public housing units; mixed population or developments designated specifically for elderly or disabled families; developments operated by a PHA with only one general occupancy development; developments approved for demolition or for conversion to tenant-based public housing; and developments approved for a mixed-finance plan using HOPE VI or public housing funds [24 CFR 903.2(b)].

### ***Steps for Implementation [24 CFR 903.2(c)(1)]***

To implement the statutory requirement to deconcentrate poverty and provide for income mixing in covered developments, the PHA must comply with the following steps:

Step 1. The PHA must determine the average income of all families residing in all the PHA's covered developments. The PHA may use the median income, instead of average income, provided that the PHA includes a written explanation in its annual plan justifying the use of median income.

#### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will determine the average income of all families in all covered developments on an annual basis.

Step 2. The PHA must determine the average income (or median income, if median income was used in Step 1) of all families residing in each covered development. In determining average income for each development, the PHA has the option of adjusting its income analysis for unit size in accordance with procedures prescribed by HUD.

#### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will determine the average income of all families residing in each covered development (not adjusting for unit size) on an annual basis.

Step 3. The PHA must then determine whether each of its covered developments falls above, within, or below the established income range (EIR), which is from 85% to 115% of the average family income determined in Step 1. However, the upper limit must never be less than the income at which a family would be defined as an extremely low income family (30% of median income).

Step 4. The PHA with covered developments having average incomes outside the EIR must then determine whether or not these developments are consistent with its local goals and annual plan.

Step 5. Where the income profile for a covered development is not explained or justified in the annual plan submission, the PHA must include in its admission policy its specific policy to provide for deconcentration of poverty and income mixing.

Depending on local circumstances the PHA's deconcentration policy may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Providing incentives to encourage families to accept units in developments where their income level is needed, including rent incentives, affirmative marketing plans, or added amenities
- Targeting investment and capital improvements toward developments with an average income below the EIR to encourage families with incomes above the EIR to accept units in those developments
- Establishing a preference for admission of working families in developments below the EIR
- Skipping a family on the waiting list to reach another family in an effort to further the goals of deconcentration
- Providing other strategies permitted by statute and determined by the PHA in consultation with the residents and the community through the annual plan process to be responsive to local needs and PHA strategic objectives

A family has the sole discretion whether to accept an offer of a unit made under the PHA's deconcentration policy. The PHA must not take any adverse action toward any eligible family for choosing not to accept an offer of a unit under the PHA's deconcentration policy [24 CFR 903.2(c)(4)].

If, at annual review, the average incomes at all general occupancy developments are within the EIR, the PHA will be considered to be in compliance with the deconcentration requirement and no further action is required.

### **GHA Policy**

For developments outside the EIR the PHA will take the following actions to provide for deconcentration of poverty and income mixing:

- PHA has a preference for admission of working families in developments below EIR.
- PHA will provide incentives to encourage families to accept units in developments where their income level is needed, including rent incentives, affirmative marketing plans, or added amenities.
- PHA will skip a family on the waiting list to reach another family in an effort to further the goals of deconcentration.

**Order of Selection [24 CFR 960.206(e)]**

The PHA system of preferences may select families either according to the date and time of application or by a random selection process. Factors such as our limited preferences of GHA policy and HUD requirements under tenant selection.

**GHA Policy**

Families will be selected from the waiting list based on preference. Among applicants with the same preference, families will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis according to the date and time their complete application is received by the PHA.

When selecting applicants from the waiting list the PHA will match the characteristics of the available unit (unit size, accessibility features, unit type) to the applicants on the waiting lists. The PHA will offer the unit to the highest ranking applicant who qualifies for that unit size or type, or that requires the accessibility features.

By matching unit and family characteristics, it is possible that families who are lower on the waiting list may receive an offer of housing ahead of families with an earlier date and time of application or higher preference status.

Factors such as deconcentration or income mixing and income targeting will also be considered in accordance with HUD requirements and PHA policy.

No.	Preference	Points
1	Preference for single persons who are elderly, displaced, homeless, or persons with disabilities. 982.207 (b)(5)	1
2	Preference for person who is not currently receiving any federal subsidize housing assistance.	1
3	Preference for “working” families, where the head, spouse, or sole member is employed at least 25 – 30 hours per week.	1
4	Preference for “working” families, where the head, spouse, or sole member is employed at least 31 - 40 hours per week.	2
5	All others by the oldest date and time of applications.	0

#### **4-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION**

When the family has been selected from the waiting list, the PHA must notify the family.

##### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will notify the family by first class mail when it is selected from the waiting list.

The notice will inform the family of the following:

Date, time, and location of the scheduled application interview, including any procedures for rescheduling the interview

Who is required to attend the interview

Documents that must be provided at the interview to document the legal identity of household members, including information about what constitutes acceptable documentation

Documents that must be provided at the interview to document eligibility for a preference, if applicable

Other documents and information that should be brought to the interview

If a notification letter is returned to the PHA with no forwarding address, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice. Such failure to act on the part of the applicant prevents the PHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore no informal hearing will be offered.

#### **4-III.D. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW**

HUD recommends that the PHA obtain the information and documentation needed to make an eligibility determination through a private interview. 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 [24 CFR 8.4(a) and 24 CFR 100.204(a)].

##### **GHA Policy**

Families selected from the waiting list are required to participate in an eligibility interview.

The head of household and the spouse/cohead will be strongly encouraged to attend the interview together. However, either the head of household or the spouse/cohead may attend the interview on behalf of the family. Verification of information pertaining to adult members of the household not present at the interview will not begin until signed release forms are returned to the PHA.

The interview will be conducted only if the head of household or spouse/cohead provides appropriate documentation of legal identity (Chapter 7 provides a discussion of proper documentation of legal identity). If the family representative does not provide the required documentation, the appointment may be rescheduled when the proper documents have been obtained.

Pending disclosure and documentation of social security numbers, the PHA will allow the family to retain its place on the waiting list for **10 business days**. If not all household members have disclosed their SSNs at the next time a unit becomes available, the PHA will offer a unit to the next eligible applicant family on the waiting list.

If the family is claiming a waiting list preference, the family must provide documentation to verify their eligibility for a preference (see Chapter 7). If the family is verified as eligible for the preference, the PHA will proceed with the interview. If the PHA determines the family is not eligible for the preference, the interview will not proceed and the family will be placed back on the waiting list according to the date and time of their application.

The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility, including suitability, and to determine the appropriate amount of rent the family will pay. The family must also complete required forms, provide required signatures, and submit required documentation. If any materials are missing, the PHA will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at the interview must be provided within 10 business days of the interview (Chapter 7 provides details about longer submission deadlines for particular items, including documentation of Social Security numbers and 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 and the interview process.

Interviews will be conducted in English. For limited English proficient (LEP) applicants, the PHA will provide translation services in accordance with the PHA's LEP plan.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the PHA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, the PHA will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews without PHA approval will have their applications made inactive based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. The second appointment letter will state that failure to appear for the appointment without a request to reschedule will be interpreted to mean that the family is no longer interested and their application will be made inactive. Such failure to act on the part of the applicant prevents the PHA from making an eligibility determination, therefore the PHA will not offer an informal hearing.

#### **4-III.E. FINAL ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION [24 CFR 960.208]**

The PHA must verify all information provided by the family (see Chapter 7). Based on verified information related to the eligibility requirements, including PHA suitability standards, the PHA must make a final determination of eligibility (see Chapter 3).

When a determination is made that a family is eligible and satisfies all requirements for admission, including tenant selection criteria, the applicant must be notified of the approximate date of occupancy insofar as that date can be reasonably determined [24 CFR 960.208(b)].

##### **GHA Policy**

The PHA will notify a family in writing of their eligibility within 10 business days of the determination and will provide the approximate date of occupancy insofar as that date can be reasonably determined.

The PHA must promptly notify any family determined to be ineligible for admission of the basis for such determination, and must provide the applicant upon request, within a reasonable time after the determination is made, with an opportunity for an informal hearing on such determination [24 CFR 960.208(a)].

##### **GHA Policy**

If the PHA determines that the family is ineligible, the PHA 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 hearing (see Chapter 14).

If the 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 opportunity for the applicant to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before the PHA can move to deny the application. See Section 3-III.G for the PHA's policy regarding such circumstances.