

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 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 V Cooper Towers Describes all of the above processes as they pertain to only the Cooper Towers site.

PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

4-I.A. OVERVIEW

This part describes the policies that guide WHA 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 WHA 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]. WHA is required 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 WHA.

WHA Policy

The WHA maintains a separate waiting list for family housing, a community-wide waiting list for senior/disabled public housing, which includes five (5) of our six (6) buildings and a separate site-based waiting list for Cooper Towers only. The family program accepts applications at specific times and dates, when the number of applicants on the waiting list begins to dwindle. When this list is opened, it is advertised in the newspaper of choice as approved by the Board of Commissioners (BOC), and a lottery system is used to ensure that the waiting list remains manageable. All potential applicants will affix their name, address and phone number to an index card provided by the WHA. These index cards will be entered into the vessel used at a public selection forum, where a pre-determined number of potential applicant's names will be selected to complete an application to be added to the waiting list.

When open to application, eligible families (Head of Household or spouse must be 62 or over /50-61 and permanently disabled) may complete an application, compile the required documents and schedule an intake appointment to be interviewed for eligibility determination and addition to the senior/disabled waiting list maintained for the five (5) sites known as Greiner, Stern, Finn, Adams and Olsen Towers. (Applications are available at the administration building, or may be downloaded on the WHA website.) Positioning on this waiting list is directly driven by the cumulative number of preference points the applicant is eligible for. The preferences for this waiting list, as well as the family waiting list are detailed later in this chapter.

However, our designated housing plan requires that elderly families (62 and older) take preference of placement in all but the 20 units classified as accessible, and therefore open to mixed, elderly/disabled population. Because our six sites, with the exception of the 20 noted accessible units, carry an elderly only designation, near elderly (50-61) families [24CFR 5.403] should only be leased to occupy units if we do not have enough elderly applicants to fill all vacancies. [24 CFR 945.303 (c) (1)]

When an applicant applies for housing they must complete an application. Applicants who are officers or employees of the Woodbridge Housing Authority or public officials of local

governing bodies whose responsibilities relate to the Public Housing Program must have their applications processed by a third party to avoid a conflict of interest.

Using the application documentation, the WHA will verify the applicant's eligibility status. The application gathers the following information:

1. Name, address and telephone number of the applicant
2. Age, if a determining factor for eligibility
3. Racial or ethnic designation of the head of household
4. Eligible family unit size
5. Date and time of application
6. Qualifications for any local preferences
7. Estimate of annual income
8. Other information as determined by the HA
9. Citizenship status of all household members
10. Photocopies of social security card, birth certificates, driver's licenses for all household member

The site-based, Cooper Towers waiting list will be maintained by the Woodbridge Housing Authority after Community Grants, Planning & Housing (CGP&H) located in Windsor, New Jersey has generated a randomized list.

CGP&H will conduct a random selection method of the pre-applications received during a specific time frame, after the current WHA waiting list that has been randomized by CGP&H has been depleted. This random selection of applications will determine the applicant's placement on the list. Anyone deemed ineligible because their income exceeds the established limits, will be deleted from the list and noticed of their ineligible status. The same income guidelines that the WHA uses to determine eligibility will be used. The only preferential treatment that can be allotted, due to New Jersey State Affordable Housing rules, is one (1) point for applicants who reside or work in the COAH region 3. Region 3 includes Middlesex, Somerset and Hunterdon counties.

As with our community-wide waiting list, only households where the head or spouse is 62 years or older, or 50/61 and permanently disabled are eligible to make application.

(The remainder of this section will refer only to WGA, Stern, Finn, Adams, Olsen and Greiner Towers)

4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

WHA will 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 WHA application process.

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

WHA will provide reasonable accommodation to the needs of individuals with disabilities. The application-taking facility and the application process will be fully accessible, or WHA will make their best effort to provide an alternate approach that provides equal

access to the application process. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of WHA policies related to providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Limited English Proficiency

WHA will take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to our programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency [24 CFR 1]. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion on WHA policies related to ensuring access to people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE COMMUNITY-WIDE, SENIOR/DISABLED AND THE SITE-BASED FAMILY WAITING LIST

WHA will review each completed application received and make a pre-assessment of the family's eligibility and appropriate placement on the Waiting List and Bedroom Size Sub-list. Each applicant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of its application, at the time submitted, but the actual letter confirming a preliminary determination of eligibility and placement along with position on the waiting list, will be mailed as soon as possible, not exceeding six months after receipt of application. Placement on the waiting list does not indicate that the family is, in fact, eligible for admission. Prior to admission, a criminal background check and tenancy history will be conducted.

If WHA determines the family to be ineligible WHA will notify the family in writing in accordance with 24 CFR 960.208(a), as may be amended from time to time, and PH Occ. GB, p. 41.

Where the family is not determined to be ineligible, the family will be placed on a certified 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.

Applicants placed on the waiting lists will be updated annually as to their status.

Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting

List WHA Policy

If WHA 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, WHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination when it is made within 15 calendar days. 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 WHA Policy

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 WHA preferences and the date and time their completed application is received by WHA, or the order in which their name was selected in the lottery drawing.

WHA will assign families on the waiting list according to the bedroom size (Waiting List Sub-Lists) for which a family qualifies as established in its occupancy standards (see Chapter 5). Based on WHA Occupancy Standards for each of its properties, public housing families may qualify for two different bedroom size sub-wait lists. The family may request to be placed on either the smaller or larger bedroom size sub-wait list. However, if the family requests to be placed on the smaller bedroom size wait list, the family must be informed that their request for transfer to the larger unit size will not be approved, unless they have a change in family size due to birth, adoption, court order or WHA approved adult addition to family composition, **or some other extraordinary change in life style.**

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 **COMMUNITY-WIDE SENIOR/DISABLED AND SITE-BASED FAMILY WAITING LIST**

The PHA 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.

WHA Policy

Applications placed on WHA **community-wide** waiting lists may contain the following information for each applicant listed:

Name and social security number of head of household and all members of the family/household (except where mixed families have non-eligible members, those members will be listed without a Social Security Number)

Number of family/household members, age and

relationship Amount and source of income from all sources

for all members 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 based on WHA selection of property-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)].

WHA Policy

WHA will organize WGA (family) property site based lists by bedroom size sub-lists and qualified preferences. There will be one community-wide list by bedroom size for five of the six senior/disabled developments. A site-based waiting list, by bedroom size, will be established for Cooper Towers.

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)].

WHA Policy

The WHA will not merge the public housing waiting list with the waiting list for any other program the WHA operates, but will advise all applicants of their eligibility to also apply for housing under other programs.

4-IL.C. OPENING AND CLOSING THE LISTS

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].

WHA Policy

WHA usually maintains an open application status, wait list placement at its senior/disabled sites. However, due to the scarce resources available and overwhelming demand, the application process for wait list placement at its family site is generally closed and opened only when the pool of applicants dwindles to a point where we may run short of eligible families to fill upcoming vacancies.

Reopening the Waiting List

If the waiting list has been closed, it may be reopened at any time. WHA should publish a notice in local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable media outlets that WHA 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.

WHA Policy

WHA will announce the reopening of any, or any portion of its waiting lists at least 15 calendar 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.

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

The Star Ledger

WHA Official Website:

www.woodbridgehousingauthority.org

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

WHA Policy

The WHA will monitor the characteristics of the population being served and the characteristics of the population as a whole in WHA jurisdiction. Targeted outreach efforts will be undertaken if a comparison suggests that certain potential eligible populations are being underserved.

4-ILE. REPORTING CHANGES IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

WHA Policy

While the family is on the waiting list, the family must inform WHA, within 15 calendar days, of each or any 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.

Applicants should report these changes to the following address:

The Woodbridge Housing Authority
 20 Bunns Lane
 Woodbridge, NJ 07095
 Attn.: Low Rent Dept.

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.

WHA Policy

WHA waiting lists will be updated annually to ensure that all applicants and applicant information is current and timely.

To update the waiting list, WHA 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 WHA 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 in writing and may be by mail, or hand delivery. Responses should be postmarked or received by WHA by the date noted on the WHA letter.

If the family fails to respond within the allotted time, the family will be removed from the waiting list with notice.

If the update is returned by the post office with or without a forwarding address, the applicant 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 WHA 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 or their designee may reinstate the family if s/he determines the lack of response was due to WHA error, circumstances beyond the family's control, or as a reasonable accommodation.

Removal from the Waiting List

WHA Policy

WHA will remove applicants from the waiting list if they have requested that their name be removed. In such cases no informal hearing is required. A written request or WHA form will be completed stating the request that their name be removed.

If WHA 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 WHA 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 WHA 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 selection policies [24 CFR 960.206(e)(2)]. The PHA 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)].

WHA Policy

When an applicant or resident family requests a copy of WHA tenant selection policies, WHA will provide copies to them for a charge **commensurate with the current fee provided in the OPRA rule..**

4-III.B. SELECTION METHOD

PHA 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)].

For placement on the Site-Based Family Housing wait list, a lottery drawing will take place publicly and the names chosen by someone other than a WHA employee will be eligible to complete an application. When the names are drawn at the lottery drawing, they are placed in chronological number order. Applications are then given to the people who are chosen at the lottery. The completed applications are returned in person at a specified time, date and place. At that time, the Lease and Occupancy Specialist will review the application, take all pertinent copies from the family and determine the preferences and bedroom size that the applicant is eligible for. After all applications are received, they will be input into the system in the chronological order that they were assigned at the lottery. Once the applications have been input, the applicants will receive

notification by mail of their eligibility or ineligibility for the public housing program and their current position on the waiting list.

For placement on the Community-Wide Senior/Disabled wait list, prospective applicants are assigned an appointment to meet with the Housing Specialist. All relevant information to determine eligibility will be accessed and verified by the Housing Specialist. Valid applications are then processed and applicants are positioned on the waiting list according to the preference points they are eligible for and within equal point categories, in order of the date and time their application was taken.

Preference Categories

The Woodbridge Housing Authority has established a system of preferences that place applicants on the waiting list according to the order in which they were selected in the lottery, or the date & time of application, within preference status. Each of the five preferences that can be claimed is assigned a point value and applicants can qualify for as many preferences as apply to them. The more preference points an applicant has, the closer to the top of the waiting list they will be.

Preferences adopted by the Woodbridge Housing Authority are:

- ◆ Woodbridge Residency.....5 points
- ◆ Working Family.....1 point
- ◆ Homeless..... 1 point
- ◆ Education/Job Training.....1 point
- ◆ Veteran1 point

Woodbridge Resident Preference shall be given to families currently living in the Township of Woodbridge. In addition, applicants (head, co-head, spouse, or sole member) who are currently working full-time or have been hired (verified in writing) to begin working full-time in the Township of Woodbridge shall qualify for this preference. (Full-time employment is 30 hours or more.) The following will be accepted as proof of residency: driver’s license, utility bill, lease, pay stub. The following will be accepted as proof of employment: pay stub, current employee ID, verifiable letter from employer.

Working Family Preference shall be given to the household if the head, co-head, spouse or sole member is employed for a minimum of 21 hours of work per week. The employment must be countable under HUD’s definition of annual income. In addition, any households where the head, co-head, spouse, or sole member is age 62 or older OR permanently disabled will also receive this preference.

- (a) To receive the Working Family Preference, the head, co-head, spouse or sole member of the applicant family must be employed at the time of the HA’s offer of housing and have established a pattern of continuous employment over a two year period. Continuous employment over a two year period means working at least 20 month out of 24. Exceptions

can be made at the discretion of the Housing Director if age or completion of school prevent this possibility. If not, they will lose the preference. The employment must provide a minimum of 21 hours of work per week, must be permanent (non-seasonal) and cannot be split between several family members.

- (b) The following will be accepted as proof of working status: pay stub or verifiable letter from employer.

Homeless Preference shall be given to families who are homeless, which is defined by HUD regulation as families lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This would include:

(1) Persons whose primary nighttime residence is a publicly or privately operated shelter or hotel/motel, institutionalized persons and persons regularly spending their nights in public or private places that are not ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings. A homeless family does not include any person imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of the Congress or a State law or persons living with family members. The documentation that will serve as proof of homeless status includes letters from a social service agency/shelter or hotel/motel receipts.

(2) Those who face the imminent loss of their primary nighttime residence. A court documented eviction notice, or documentation that a person's dwelling has been destroyed, or is scheduled for demolition.

(3) Those who are unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal laws who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under the definition. Certified documentation must be presented for review by the ED.

(4) Those who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against them that has either taken place within their primary nighttime residence, or has made them afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing. Applicant must supply police reports, or other substantial documentation to support this claim.

A family not residing in a shelter can receive the preference for Homelessness if they are able to provide documentation from a local, county, state, or federal agency that their residency was lost as a result of any of the following:

- Disaster such as fire or flood, resulting in extensive damage or destroying the unit;
- An activity carried on by an agency of the United States or State or by local governmental body or agency in connection with code enforcement of public improvement or development program;
- Family members have provided information on criminal activities to a law enforcement agency and based on a threat assessment, the law enforcement recommended re-housing the family to avoid or minimize a risk of violence against the family members as reprisal for providing such information;

- The applicant has vacated a housing unit because one or more members of the applicant's family have been the victim of one or more hate crimes. The hate crime(s) **must** be recent (within the last three years) OR is of a continuing nature. The definition of a Hate Crime is actual or threatened physical violence or intimidation that is directed against a person or his or her property and that is based on the person's race, color, religion, sex, national original, handicap or familial status;
- An action by an owner which resulted in the applicant having to vacate his/her unit, where:
 - ✓ The reason for the owner's action was beyond the applicant's ability to control or prevent.
 - ✓ The action occurred despite the applicant having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy.
 - ✓ The action was taken for a reason other than a rent increase.

An applicant will only be afforded this preference if he or she is not living in a safe, standard housing unit at the time of admission to the program. Temporary residence with family members or friends does not qualify a family as homeless.

Education/Job Training Preference shall be given to the applicant household if the head, co-head, spouse or sole member is an active participant, in or graduate of a certified educational or training program that is designed to prepare individuals for the job market. Applicants must provide either documentation of current enrollment or documentation of successful completion. The course must have been completed no more than 10 years prior to the time of admission to the program and should relate to the applicant's employment. (This preference point is only assigned to working individuals.)

Veteran Preference shall be given to a head, co-head, or sole household member who has been honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States. The preference shall also be given to the spouse of an honorably discharged veteran, a veteran who is now deceased or a serviceman killed in a war/conflict, even if divorced. The family member claiming the preference must be eligible at the time of application and must provide documentation (DD214) of their or their spouse's military service.

The Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge shall notify all applicants on the waiting list of the opportunity to show that they qualify for a preference. Preferences can be claimed at the initial application or any time up to receiving the offer of a unit.

Reassignment to a Different Preference Category

If the Woodbridge Housing Authority determines through legitimate documentation that a family should be given a different preference than what the family had when it applied, the Lease & Occupancy Specialist can reassign the proper preference to the family. The waiting list will be updated once a month to determine proper adjusted order of applicants for upcoming apartments.

Order of Selection [24 CFR 960.206(e)]

(Family, Site-Based & Senior/Disabled, Community-Wide Waiting Lists)

Following the PHA system of preference point assignment, the PHA may select families either according to the date and time of application or by a random selection process.

WHA Policy

Families will be selected from the waiting list based on preference. Among applicants with the same number of preference points, families will be selected according to order picked in lottery (for family site) or according to time and date of application (for seniors/disabled sites).

When selecting applicants from the waiting list, WHA will match the characteristics of the available unit (unit size, accessibility features, unit type) to the applicants on the waiting lists. Applicants are assigned to unit size wait list based on need. WHA will offer the unit to the highest ranking applicant who qualifies for that unit size or type, or that requires the accessibility features.

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

(Not less than 40% of the families admitted to a PHA public housing program during the PHA fiscal year shall be extremely low-income families.)

4-III.C. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

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

WHA Policy

WHA will notify the family by phone call and then first class mail if unable to reach by phone, when they are selected from the waiting list. The family will be informed of the following:

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

- All household members over the age of 18 are 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 WHA 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 WHA 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.

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)].

WHA Policy

Families selected from the waiting list are required to reverify their eligibility – including current preferences.

The head of household and the spouse/co-head and all adults in the household over 18 are required to attend the interview together. Verification of information pertaining to adult members of the household is required and each must sign release of information statements. The head of household must notify the WHA if the required household members are unable to attend a scheduled interview 24 hours prior to the appointment and reschedule.

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, WHA will proceed with the interview. If WHA 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, 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, WHA will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted.

The first few families on the list will be asked to come in to update all necessary paperwork. If they do not come within the time allotted or the letter comes back UTF... applicants will be dropped. They will be given ten days to file a grievance explaining their justifications for non-compliance.

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, WHA will provide translation services in accordance with WHA's LEP plan.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family must contact WHA 24 hours in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In the case of an emergency, WHA will consider the nature of the emergency and make a decision on a case by case basis. The family will be informed in the appointment notice that if they cannot make the scheduled time to contact appropriate staff at WHA. In the case of an emergency, they need to call and inform WHA of the situation and reschedule the appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, WHA will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews without WHA approval

will have their applications removed from the waiting list. WHA will notify the applicant that their application has been removed based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. The first 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 removed from the waiting list. Such failure to act on the part of the applicant prevents WHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore the WHA 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)].

WHA Policy

WHA will notify a family in writing of their eligibility within 15 calendar 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)].

WHA Policy

If WHA determines that the family is ineligible, WHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 15 calendar 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).

When WHA 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 WHA can move to deny the application. See Section 3-III.G for WHA policy regarding such circumstances.

4-IV.A. INCOME TARGETING REQUIREMENT [24 CFR 960.208]

HUD requires that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 40% of the families admitted to public housing during the PHA 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 HCV program during a PHA fiscal year that exceed the 75% minimum target requirement for the voucher program, shall be credited against the PHA 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 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.

WHA Policy

If at some point it becomes necessary, the WHA will monitor progress in meeting the ELI requirement throughout the fiscal year. WHA will project average turnover and use that projection to identify ELI families targeting. ELI families will be selected ahead of other eligible families on an as-needed basis to ensure that the income targeting requirement is met.

4-IV.B 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 906.102]. Elderly family means a family whose head, spouse, co-head, 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 and 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).

WHA Policy

In mixed population property developments, Elderly and Disabled families will have an equal preference to working families.

4-IV.C. 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 © (1)]. Near-elderly family means a family whose head, spouse, or co-head is at least 50years old, but is less than 62 [24 CFR 5.403].

If there are an insufficient number of elderly families and near-elderly families for 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 more than 60 consecutive days [24 CFR 945.303(c)(2)].

The decision of any disabled family or elderly family not to accept occupancy in designated housing shall not have an adverse affect on their admission or continued occupancy in public housing, or their position 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 not apply to an elderly or disabled family that declines to accept occupancy, respectively, in a designated project for elderly or disabled families, and requests occupancy in a general occupancy project or in a mixed population project [24 CFR 945.303(d)(3)].

WHA Policy

WHA does have designated elderly housing.

PART V: COOPER TOWERS

4-V.A. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE

WHA Policy

Applicants must be 62 or older, or 50 – 61 and permanently disabled. The application process is closed until the current waiting list is depleted. Following depletion of said list, pre-applications will be accepted by Community Grants, Planning & Housing (CGP&H) during specified, open-application periods. Those pre-applications will be randomized by CGP&H and the randomized list will then be forwarded to the WHA for use when leasing any vacant unit at Cooper Towers only.

Prior to being housed however, the applicant will have to complete our application and observe all requirements imposed on applicants for our other sites.

4-V.B. PLACEMENT ON THE COOPER TOWERS WAITING LIST

CGP&H will randomize the pool of applicants and submit the random order list to the WHA for use when leasing vacant units @ Cooper.

Ineligible for Placement on the

Waiting List WHA Policy

If WHA 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, WHA will send written notification of the ineligibility determination when it is made within 15 calendar days. 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 WHA Policy

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 the order in which their name was randomly placed on the list.

WHA will assign families on the waiting list according to the bedroom size (Waiting List Sub-Lists) for which a family qualifies as established in its occupancy standards (see Chapter 5). Based on WHA Occupancy Standards for

each of its properties, public housing families may qualify for two different bedroom size sub-wait lists. The family may request to be placed on either the smaller or larger bedroom size sub-wait list. However, if the family requests to be placed on the smaller bedroom size wait list, the family must be informed that their request for transfer to the larger unit size will not be approved, unless they have a change in family size due to birth, adoption, court order or WHA approved adult addition to family composition, or some other extraordinary change in life style.

4-V.C. ORGANIZATION OF THE PRE-APPLICATION COOPER WAIT LIST

WHA Policy

The WHA will ensure that minimally, the top ten (10) positions on the list, are applicants that have completed our application process and are eligible according to our criteria to be leased into the next vacant unit at Cooper Towers. (Please note that if the applicant does not reside in COAH Region 3, Middlesex, Somerset, or Hunterdon County, they will be skipped over until all region 3 residents have been serviced.)

4-V.D. OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST

This will be handled by CGP&H.

4-V.E. FAMILY OUTREACH

This will be handled by CGP&H.

4-V.F. SELECTION METHOD

We receive the list already in the randomized order. The next applicant on said list will be selected for the next vacant unit, unless they are not a resident of the COAH Region 3. Non-residents will be skipped over and the next resident selected. After all residents are serviced, those applicants on the list without the residency preference will be serviced in the order they are on the waiting list.

4-V.G. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

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

WHA Policy

WHA will notify the family by phone call and then first class mail if unable to reach by phone, when they are selected from the waiting list. The family will be informed of the following:

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

All household members over the age of 18 are 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 WHA 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 WHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore no informal hearing will be offered.

4-V.H. 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.

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)].

WHA Policy

Families selected from the waiting list are required to recertify their eligibility – including residency preference.

The head of household and the spouse/co-head and all adults in the household over 18 are required to attend the interview together. Verification of information pertaining to adult members of the household is required and each must sign release of information statements. The head of household must notify the WHA if the required household members are unable to attend a scheduled interview 24 hours prior to the appointment and reschedule.

If the family is claiming a residency preference, the family must provide documentation to verify their eligibility for said preference (see Chapter 7). If the family is verified as eligible for the preference, WHA will proceed with the interview. If WHA 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 in the same position as they were originally.

The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility, 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, WHA will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted.

The first few families on the list will be asked to come in to update all necessary paperwork. If they do not come within the time allotted or the letter comes back UTF...applicants will be dropped. They will be given ten days to file a grievance explaining their justifications for non-compliance.

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, WHA will provide translation services in accordance with WHA's LEP plan.

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family must contact the WHA 24 hours in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In the case of an emergency, WHA will consider the nature of the emergency and make a decision on a case by case basis. The family will be informed in the appointment notice that if they cannot make the scheduled time to contact appropriate staff at WHA. In the case of an emergency, they need to call and inform WHA of the situation and reschedule the appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, WHA will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews without WHA approval will have their applications removed from the waiting list. WHA will notify the applicant that their application has been removed based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. The first 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 removed from the waiting list. Such failure to act on the part of the applicant prevents WHA from making an eligibility determination; therefore the WHA will not offer an informal hearing.