Chapter 9

9.0 MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

9.1 OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST

Opening of the waiting list will be announced with a public notice stating that applications for public housing will again be accepted. The public notice will state where, when, and how to apply. The notice will be published in a local newspaper of general circulation and also by any available minority media. The public notice will state any limitations to who may apply.

The notice will state that applicants already on waiting lists for other housing programs must apply separately for this program and such applicants will not lose their place on other waiting lists when they apply for public housing. The notice will include the Fair Housing logo and slogan and will be in compliance with Fair Housing requirements.

Closing of the waiting list will also be announced with a public notice. The public notice will state the date the waiting list will be closed and for what bedroom sizes. The public notice will be published in a local newspaper of general circulation and also by any available minority media.

If an applicant applies for an LRPH unit at one of the IHFA Branch Office that does not have LRPH in that region, that Branch Office will transfer the application to the applicable Branch Office with LRPH units. The date the application is transferred to the appropriate Branch Office will become the application date. If the applicant applies at Idaho Falls or Coeur d’Alene Branch Office for an LRPH unit, the original application date will be used. The non-LRPH Branch office will transfer the application to the appropriate Branch Office within five (5) business days of receiving the application.

9.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST

The waiting list will be maintained in accordance with the following guidelines:

A. All applications will be maintained in order of bedroom size, preference, and then in order of date and time of application; and

B. Any contacts between IHFA and the applicant will be documented in the applicant file.

9.3 FAMILIES NEARING THE TOP OF THE WAITING LIST

When a family appears to be nearing the top of the waiting list, the family will be invited to an interview and the verification process will begin. It is at this point in time that the family’s waiting list preference will be verified. If the family no longer qualifies to be near the top of the list, the family’s name will be returned to the appropriate spot on the waiting list. IHFA must notify the family in writing of this determination and give the family the opportunity for an informal review.
Once the preference has been verified, the family will complete a full application, present Social Security number information, citizenship/eligible immigrant information, and sign the Consent for Release of Information forms.

The applicant will be asked for **two (2) rental references**; current landlord and at least one previous landlord. If it is not possible to obtain two references, one reference may be acceptable. Two references are preferable and will be obtained whenever possible.

IHFA will send questionnaires to the references to be completed. The questionnaires will be evaluated to determine if the prospective tenant(s) meets the standards for admissions.

If only one previous landlord reference is available, or the applicant has no rental history, three (3) personal references will be required. Personal references should be provided by a current or former employer, minister, teacher or professor, or other non-family member who can provide references as to the tenant's history, character and living or housekeeping habits.

Should the prospective tenant's references reveal detrimental information, IHFA will do an investigation to determine if mitigating circumstances exist, which should be considered before declaring the applicant unsuitable. Such circumstances may include:

1. Housekeeping or yard keeping habits were not acceptable to the previous landlord. In this case, extra attention will be paid during the home visit to assure that the applicant's habits will not lead to deterioration of IHFA units.

2. If the rent payment history of the applicant is unacceptable, IHFA will evaluate the payment history. IHFA will determine if: (a) The applicant worked with the current or previous landlord for an acceptable solution to the problem; (b) If the applicant is likely to improve his/her financial solution due to the rent being lower on the LRPH Program; (c) If the applicant is participating in a job training or job experience program or will have either improved income or job prospects available soon.

IHFA will NOT require:

- That applicants have a minimum income;
- That applicants work;
- That applicants participate in job training programs
- That applicants who are eligible for various forms of welfare or benefits programs apply for those benefits.

IHFA WILL NOT EXCLUDE applicants solely on the following basis:

- They have children;
- They have children born out of wedlock;
- They are on welfare or another type of benefit program;
- They are students.

Applicants will be determined acceptable or unacceptable for participation in the Low Rent Public Housing Program. Justification for the decision(s) will be fully documented in the applicant’s file and the applicant will be promptly notified of their status.
If it is determined that an applicant is eligible and meets IHFA’s admission standards, the applicant will be promptly notified that:

- They are eligible
- They meet the admission standards;
- IHFA has an appropriate size unit;
- The approximate waiting period.

If it is determined that the applicant is ineligible or does not meet the admission standards, the applicant will be promptly notified that:

- They are ineligible or do not meet the admission standards;
- The basis for the determination;
- Procedures and timeline to request an Informal Review.

The Informal Review procedure does not require a hearing officer. These procedures simply allow the applicant an opportunity to be heard by an IHFA official, other than the person who made the determination of ineligibility.

When a unit becomes available, or is expected to be available, the first applicant from the appropriate bedroom size list will be contacted and referred to the available unit. An applicant may turn down ONE (1) unit and remain at the top of the waiting list. If an applicant turns down a second unit, the applicant's application will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list.

Once an applicant has indicated they are interested in a unit, IHFA will start verifying eligibility and household income in the manner prescribed in IHFA's LRPH Admissions & Continued Occupancy Policy. IHFA will rent units based on the order they were vacated; renting the unit that has been vacant the longest first. After applicants have been approved for occupancy, they will be shown the applicable unit.

9.4 PURGING THE WAITING LIST

The waiting list is updated at least once (1) each year to remove the names of applicants who are no longer interested or who no longer qualify. Applicants are given ten (10) days from the postmark of the notice to respond. If an applicant fails to respond, or if the household is apparently ineligible, IHFA will provide notification in writing that the household has been removed from the LRPH waiting list. The notification will also notify the household of their right to an Informal Review. (See Grievance and Hearing Procedures)

Applicants are informed of their responsibility to report any changes in household composition or circumstances that could affect their position on the waiting list or eligibility for the housing assistance program. The system for removing names must not violate the rights of the disabled. IHFA will take all necessary steps to provide reasonable accommodation to give an applicant the opportunity to respond. If an applicant fails to respond for a request for information because of the family member’s disability, IHFA will reinstate the applicant in the family’s former position on the waiting list.

Applicants are contacted in writing and given ten (10) days to provide updated information on family composition and income. Applicants who do not respond, or who are obviously ineligible, are notified that their name has been removed from the waiting list. The notification
includes the reason(s) that their name has been removed from the waiting list and informs them of their right to an Informal Review.

9.5 **REMOVAL OF APPLICANTS FROM THE WAITING LIST**

IHFA will not remove an applicant’s name from the waiting list unless:

A. The applicant requests in writing that the name be removed or the applicant informs staff they are no longer interested or have found housing elsewhere

B. The applicant fails to respond to a written request for information or a request to declare their continued interest in the program; or

C. The applicant does not meet either the eligibility or suitability criteria for the program.

When an applicant is removed from the waiting list, even at the applicant’s request, a notification letter will be mailed to the applicant informing the household of the removal.

9.6 **MISSED APPOINTMENTS**

An applicant or tenant who fails to keep an appointment without notifying IHFA shall be sent a second notice rescheduling the appointment which contains a warning of possible termination if the appointment is missed. If the applicant or tenant again fails to keep the appointment without notifying IHFA, they will be sent a Notice of Termination for violation of participant obligations in the following situations:

- Formal Application
- Lease Signature Briefing
- Recertification
- Request for Verification or Information

If the tenant is unavailable to schedule an inspection at reasonable times and after reasonable notice, IHFA retains the right to enter the unit and complete the inspection upon reasonable notice. Failure to accommodate an inspection after a period of three (3) days following the notice will be grounds for eviction.

If the applicant/tenant responds to the Notice of Termination, the applicant/tenant will be given an opportunity for an Informal Review or Hearing, as appropriate. If the applicant/tenant appeals the Notice of Termination for a missed second appointment, an informal conference may be held with the Branch Office Supervisor or person authorized to act in that capacity in an effort to settle the issue. If that is not possible, an Informal Review or Hearing will be scheduled. The applicant/tenant must submit acceptable documentation or evidence showing why they could not appear for the second appointment. If the documentation/evidence shows that the applicant/tenant could not have reasonably been expected to attend, another appointment should be scheduled.

**No more than three (3) appointments will be granted.**

If the missed appointment was due to the tenant’s error, the termination will be effective upon the first day of the second month following the month in which the missed appointment occurred.
If the missed appointment was due to an applicant’s error, the application will be terminated immediately following the Notice of Termination.

Following the Notice of Termination, the applicant or tenant will be given an opportunity for an Informal Review or Hearing, as appropriate.

9.7 NOTIFICATION OF NEGATIVE ACTIONS

Any applicant whose name is being removed from the waiting list will be notified by IHFA, in writing, that they have ten (10) calendar days from the date of the written correspondence to present mitigating circumstances or request an informal review. The letter will also indicate that their name will be removed from the waiting list if they fail to respond within the time frame specified. IHFA system of removing applicant names from the waiting list will not violate the rights of persons with disabilities. If an applicant claims that their failure to respond to a request for information or updates was caused by a disability, IHFA will verify that there is in fact a disability and the disability caused the failure to respond, and will provide a reasonable accommodation. An example of a reasonable accommodation would be to reinstate the applicant on the waiting list based on the date and time of the original application.

9.8 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

An applicant cannot (except with a waiver) be a member, officer, or employee of IHFA who formulates policy or influences decision with respect to the Low Rent Public Housing Program or a public official or member of local governing body or state legislator who exercises function or responsibilities with respect to the Low Rent Public Housing Program.

Family members (spouse, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, grandparents, and corresponding in-laws and step relations or persons enjoying a family like status) may be participants in the Low Rent Public Housing Program only after providing proper notification to and receiving acknowledgement from the Executive Director of IHFA. Notification should be made at the time of application. Staff members are restricted from taking part in any case management activity for a family member, as stated in the IHFA Employee Policy Manual.