

Chapter 5

SELECTING FAMILIES FROM THE WAITING LIST

5.1 WAITING LIST ADMISSION AND SPECIAL ADMISSIONS

IHFA may admit an applicant for participation in the program either as a special admission or as a waiting list admission.

If HUD awards funding that is targeted for families with specific characteristics or families living in specific units, IHFA will use the assistance for those families. Currently IHFA has targeted funding for the Mainstream Housing for Persons with Disabilities, the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program, and for the Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities program. IHFA also receives as necessary, funding for families residing in multifamily projects where owners have exercised a prepayment or an opt-out.

5.2 PREFERENCES

Consistent with IHFA's Agency Plan, IHFA will select families in order of the following preferences:

- A. Low Rent Public Housing Disposition (temporary preference)
- B. Public Housing Residents Under- or Over-housed; Shelter Plus Care participants who are no longer in need of supportive services.
- C. Federal Disaster Victims
- D. Terminal Illness
- E. Families/Disabled/Elderly Families with one (1) or more children (under the age of 18 or disabled) or elderly/disabled head or co-head of the household.
- F. No Preference

IHFA allocates fifty (50) set-aside vouchers for the following preferences:

- A. Families First (limited to 40 vouchers-referrals only)
- B. Housing First for Chronically Homeless (limited to 10 vouchers-referrals only)

DEFINITION OF LOCAL PREFERENCE CATEGORIES

Low Rent Public Housing Disposition Preference

IHFA is currently disposing of its Low Rent Public Housing (LRPH) single family scattered site homes in Idaho Falls, utilizing the Section 32 Homeownership program of Section 18 Demolition Disposition.

The LRPH Disposition preference will be used to house LRPH residents who are affected by the disposition of LRPH properties in Idaho Falls. This is a temporary preference that will be discontinued once the 29 LRPH properties have been sold or vacated. To be eligible for the LRPH Disposition preference, remaining LRPH residents that do not purchase the LRPH home they currently reside in will be offered a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher provided the household is income eligible to receive at least \$1.00 in Housing Assistance Payments, and they have received a relocation letter from the LRPH Department.

Under- or Over-housed Public Housing Resident's/Shelter Plus Care participants, no longer in need of supportive services.

Households currently residing in IHFA Low Rent Public Housing who, due to a change in household composition, become under or over-housed. Households in this category will be assisted ahead of any applicants on the waiting list. Also in the category are Shelter Plus Care participants who are no longer in need of supportive services.

Federal Disaster Victims Preference

Households who are victims of a Federally Declared Disaster and who have been certified as such by a Federal Agency (provided adequate budget authority/special funding is available).

Terminal Illness Preference

Households with a family member that can be classified, by a medical professional, as being in the final stages of a terminal illness.

Family Preference

An applicant family whose household includes one or more children (under the age of 18 or disabled) or consists of an elderly or disabled head or co-head of household.

No Preference

An applicant family unable to list any preference category.

Families First Preference – Set-aside

The Families First Preference replaces the expired Family Unification Program (FUP) which was a targeted rental voucher program designed to address the needs of families who are at risk of losing their children or will be prevented from having their children placed back in the home due, in part, to the lack of adequate housing. IHFA will administer the Families First Preference in the same manner and using the same referral process as with FUP.

Applicants referred by an appropriate agency for participation in the Families First Preference will be required to complete a pre-application for assistance. When placed on the waiting list, they will be entered according to the established preference for which they qualify. The pre-application will also be designated as Families First by completing the appropriate field in the computerized waiting list screen. The Families First Preference will be limited to 40 vouchers, so families will be categorized by the Family Preference as well as Families First, and will be housed in proper order for whichever program first becomes available.

Additional information regarding the administration of the Families First can be found in Appendix A.

Housing First Preference – Set-aside

The Housing First preference will be used to house chronically homeless individuals who have been referred to IHFA by an appropriate agency because they have been determined to meet the criteria of being chronically homeless and chronic consumers of public resources. The Housing First preference will be limited to a minimum of 2 vouchers and a maximum of 10 vouchers. Initially this preference will only be offered in Idaho Falls.

Applicants will be accepted only upon preference from a Housing First partner agency.

An Appendix with additional information regarding the administration of Housing First is pending.

Mainstream Housing for Persons with Disabilities Preference

IHFA currently administers the Mainstream Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program, a voucher program targeting disabled families.

Disabled families (to include disabled single person households) will be placed on the waiting list according to the preference for which they qualify. A designation will also be made in the appropriate field in the computerized waiting list screen for disabled families. Each branch office maintains a designated number of Mainstream slots. As a Mainstream slot becomes available, the branch office runs a listing of all those families that are on the waiting list and designated disabled. The system is configured so that this listing will run all those that qualify as disabled by date and time of application. As this targeted funding is limited, by placing the family in the system in this manner the family will be categorized by preference as well as

disability status, which will enable them to be housed in proper order for whichever program, regular Section 8 HCV or Mainstream, first becomes available.

Additional information regarding the administration of the Mainstream Housing for Persons with Disabilities program can be found in Appendix B.

IHFA also administers the Shelter Plus Care Program, and the HOPWA program. For more information on these programs please refer to Appendix C and D.

PREFERENCE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Low Rent Public Housing Disposition Preference

For the Low Rent Public Housing Disposition Preference, a relocation letter from IHFA's LRPH Department is required.

Federal Disaster Victims Preference

For the Federal Disaster Victims Preference, documentation from the Federal agency that declared the applicant as a victim, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is required.

Terminal Illness Preference

For the Terminal Illness Preference, an explanation of the verification process will be discussed with the family. The family will be required to supply IHFA with a letter from their medical professional stating that the family member is considered to be in the final stages of a terminal illness. If the family is unable to obtain a letter from the medical professional, a request may be made in writing for IHFA to send a third-party verification form. This applies to any member of the household.

Family Preference

For the purpose of the Family Preference, IHFA considers a family to include the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status:

- A. A family with children (children who are temporarily out of the household due to placement in foster care will be considered household members when determining family composition).
- B. Two or more elderly or disabled persons living together, or one or more elderly or disabled persons living with one or more live-in aides.
- C. A single person who is disabled or elderly.

- D. Family members include all household members, except live-in aides, foster children and foster adults, and all family members permanently residing in the unit, though they may be temporarily absent.

For the age or disability portion: The applicant must provide evidence of their age (62 or older), or disability status through documentation such as is required for granting the disability deduction in the income calculation section of the Section 8 Assistance program. Documentation should be in the form of IHFA's disability certification from a medical or social services provider. Other acceptable documentation of disability status may be SSI or SSD award letters or other similar documentation. This certification must indicate that the individual meets the HUD definition of a person with disabilities as contained in 24CFR403. The definition is:

A person who complies with any one of the following:

1. Has a disability, as defined in 42 U.S.C. 423
- OR**
2. Is determined to have a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that:
 - a. Is expected to be of a long-continued and indefinite duration;
 - b. Substantially impedes his/her ability to live independently, and
 - c. Is of such a nature that the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions.
- OR**
3. Has a developmental disability as defined in 42 U.S.C. 6001

For purposes of housing assistance eligibility, a person with disabilities does not exclude persons who have the disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or any condition from the etiologic agent for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The definition does not include a person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence.

The age or disability criteria are applied to the Head or Co-Head only.

Families First Preference

For the Families First Preference, a referral from an appropriate agency is required.

Housing First Preference

For the Housing First Preference, a referral from a Housing First partner agency is required.

PREFERENCE PROCESS

- A. Applicants may claim a preference in the pre-application when they apply for housing assistance simply by certifying that they meet the required standards. When they are to be offered housing assistance and have completed the formal application, their actual qualification for the preference claimed at the time must be verified by appropriate documentation.

- B. IHFA will inform all applicants of the availability of preferences and will give all applicants an opportunity to show that they qualify for a preference.
- C. Applicants may claim qualification for a preference when they apply for assistance by certifying to IHFA that they qualify for preferred status. IHFA will accept this certification, unless it verifies that the applicant is not qualified for preferred status.
- D. Before assisting an applicant on the basis of preference, IHFA requires the applicant to provide verification that he or she qualifies for preference by virtue of the applicant's current status.
- E. Applicants may claim a preference at any time while they are on a waiting list.
- F. If IHFA decides not to place an applicant on the waiting list, or it is determined that an applicant does not meet the criteria for receiving a preference, a written notice will be provided to the applicant within five (5) working days and the applicant will be offered the opportunity to request an Informal Review. An Informal Review of the decision will be made by a person other than the person who made or approved the original decision (see Section 15.3 Informal Review for Applicants)
- G. For determining selection among applicants with the same preference status, IHFA will select according to date and time of application.
- H. IHFA prohibits the granting of preference status to any applicant who has been evicted from Public Housing for drug-related criminal activity. This rule applies if any member of the household is a person who was evicted during the past five (5) years because of drug-related criminal activity from housing assisted under a 1937 Housing Act program. However, IHFA may give an admission preference if it determines that the evicted person has successfully completed a rehabilitation program.
- I. An applicant receiving tenant-based assistance under the HOME program will retain the preference they had at the time they began receiving assistance under the HOME program.
- J. Applicants currently residing in the public housing program may be eligible to retain the preference status that they had at the time they were admitted to the public housing program. To retain their preference status, the household must 1) be a resident of IHFA's jurisdiction and have their tenant-based application on file with IHFA, 2) have been admitted to IHFA's public housing program on or after April 26, 1993, and 3) the household must have qualified for a Section 8 preference based on the situation of the applicant at the time the applicant was admitted to the public housing.

- K. IHFA may not skip over the household at the top of the waiting list because of lack of funds to provide assistance to a large household. IHFA must admit the household at the top of the list when the funds become available. For exceptions to this policy refer to Section 5.3 of the Administrative Plan.
- L. IHFA retains the right to hold or reserve a household's place on the waiting list. This is applicable to households in the process of completing a transitional housing program, but who have not completed that program at the time their name comes to the top of IHFA waiting list. This does not preclude IHFA from assisting other households on the list while the top place is reserved for the household completing a prescribed transitional housing program. Once the program is completed, the household is given the assistance warranted.
- M. If an applicant has been offered assistance under the HCV program they may decline assistance and request to remain on the waiting list one time. If they are offered assistance again and decline to accept assistance at that time, their name may be removed from the waiting list (24 CFR 982.204(c) (1)). An applicant may be allowed to remain on the waiting list after being offered assistance for the second time only if there are extenuating circumstances that warrant exception such as, but not limited to, hospitalization or transitional housing as mentioned in L above.

Preferences must be consistent with HUD's affirmative fair housing objectives. IHFA will not discriminate against households or household members on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status or disability. IHFA will not deny a local preference, nor otherwise exclude or penalize a family in admission to the program, solely because the family resides in public housing.

5.3 SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST

Based on the above preferences, all families in preference A (LRPH Disposition), who have received a relocation letter from IHFA will be offered housing before any families in preference B (Under- or Over-housed Public Housing Resident and Shelter Plus Care participants). Preference B families will be offered housing before any families in preference C (Federal Disaster Victims). Preference C families will be offered housing before any families in preference D (Terminal Illness). Preference D families will be offered housing before any applicants in preference E (Family/Disabled/Elderly). Preference E families will be offered housing before any applicants in Preference F (all other applicants with No preference standing).

Applicants who qualify, and are referred by the proper agency, for the set-aside preferences of Mainstream, Families First and Housing First generally qualify for another preference as well. Both preferences will be listed on the waiting list and the family housed according to the preference that is available first. Families First and Housing First vouchers will be pulled as they become vacant.

Notwithstanding the above, if necessary to meet the statutory requirement that 75% of newly admitted families in any fiscal year will be families who are extremely low-income (unless a

different target is agreed to by HUD); IHFA retains the right to skip higher income families on the waiting list to reach extremely low-income families. This measure will only be taken if it appears the goal will not otherwise be met. To ensure this goal is met, IHFA will monitor incomes of newly admitted families and the income of the families on the waiting list. For example, to accomplish the statutory requirement, IHFA may assist two (2) extremely low-income families, for every one (1) very low-income family, otherwise adhering strictly to preference, and date and time of application.

If there are not enough extremely low-income families on the waiting list, IHFA will conduct outreach on a non-discriminatory basis to attract extremely low-income families to reach the statutory requirement.

In the event that funding shortfalls are experienced, IHFA may stop issuing, or recall vouchers from families who are searching for units. When voucher issuance resumes, IHFA will first offer special purpose vouchers such as Mainstream vouchers, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers and Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities (NED) vouchers. Once the required number of special purpose vouchers has been filled, IHFA will begin offering vouchers in accordance with the above listed preference selection. (see 16.2(4) for IHFA's policy on Funding Shortfalls)

5.4 OTHER PROGRAMS

Homeownership Voucher Program

The Homeownership Voucher Program is designed to assist disabled, elderly, and FSS families to transition from rental assistance to homeownership by using the Section 8 monthly housing assistance payment to supplement the family's income towards the purchase of a home.

IHFA's program is targeted towards families in which the head, spouse or co-head are disabled, elderly, or enrolled in the FSS Program have been on the rental assistance program for at least twelve (12) months, and meet the minimum income requirements specified by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Families must attend and successfully complete homebuyer education classes through the "Finally Home" program. They must also be able to contribute a three percent (3%) down payment towards the purchase of the home with at least one percent (1%) of that amount provided by the family's own resources. In addition, eligible families must be able to qualify with a participating lender under the lender's requirements and pay for an independent inspection. Due to the multiple unique requirements of the specialty program, a waiting list will not be maintained. (See Appendix E for details)

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program is designed to enable and empower families to become economically self-sufficient, and whose active participants are Section 8 HCV program participants.

Applicants for the Section 8 HCV program are shown a video of the FSS program at their initial briefing, given a brochure, asked to complete a survey, and directed to the FSS Specialist for additional information. Participants are provided information about the FSS program at each annual recertification. Participation in the FSS program is voluntary and does not affect a participant's housing subsidy. To be eligible for the FSS program, applicants must be current Section 8 participants, reside within IHFA's jurisdiction, and have full-time employment goals. (IHFA does not currently maintain a waiting list for this program.)

See Appendix H for more information on the FSS program.

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing

The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program is designed to provide rental assistance to homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Eligible families for the VASH program are screened by the Veteran Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) and referred to IHFA for rental assistance. The VAMC will provide appropriate treatment and supportive services, housing search assistance, and regular ongoing case management. When ongoing case management is no longer needed and the participant is otherwise in good standing, IHFA will consider the participant to be continually assisted and may offer a regular Section 8 voucher. This enables another eligible family to utilize the VASH program. Currently vouchers for the IHFA VASH program are assigned to our Twin Falls Branch Office. VASH vouchers are not restricted to Twin Falls, or the counties covered by the Twin Falls office. Participants in the program are able to lease up within an area which allows them to effectively receive clinical serviced from the Twin Falls Veteran Affairs Office. Because participation in the VASH program is based on referrals from VAMC only, a waiting list will not be maintained by IHFA.

Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities

The Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities (NED) program is designed to provide non-elderly persons with disabilities access to affordable housing that meets their needs, through the Housing Choice Voucher program.

Eligible families for the NED program will be taken from IHFA's waiting list. IHFA will provide these families with referrals to appropriate supportive services within the community, although such services are not a requirement of continued participation in the program. As NED vouchers become available, they will be reissued to another eligible non-elderly person with disabilities.

NOTES