

**Chapter 3  
ELIGIBILITY**

INTRODUCTION ..... 3

    PART I: DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS..... 4

        3-I.A. OVERVIEW..... 4

        3-I.B. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD..... 4

        3-I.C. FAMILY BREAKUP AND REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY ..... 4

        3-I.D. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD ..... 5

        3-I.E. SPOUSE, COHEAD, AND OTHER ADULT ..... 6

        3-I.F. DEPENDENT ..... 6

        3-I.G. FULL-TIME STUDENT..... 6

        3-I.H. ELDERLY AND NEAR-ELDERLY PERSONS, AND ELDERLY FAMILY ..... 7

        3-I.I. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND DISABLED FAMILY ..... 7

        3-I.J. GUESTS ..... 7

        3-I.K. FOSTER CHILDREN AND FOSTER ADULTS..... 8

        3-I.L. ABSENT FAMILY MEMBERS ..... 8

        3-I.M. LIVE-IN AIDE ..... 9

    PART II: BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA..... 11

        3-II.A. INCOME ELIGIBILITY AND TARGETING..... 11

        3-II.B. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS ..... 12

        3-II.C. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS..... 14

        3-II.D. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION]..... 14

        3-II.E. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ..... 15

        3-II.F. EIV SYSTEM SEARCHES ..... 18

    PART III: DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE..... 20

        3-III.A. OVERVIEW ..... 20

        3-III.B. MANDATORY DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.553(a)]..... 20

3-III.D. SCREENING..... 24

3-III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO DENY ASSISTANCE..... 25

3-III.F. NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY OR DENIAL ..... 26

3-III.G. PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING  
..... 27

EXHIBIT 3-1: DETAILED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO DISABILITIES ..... 29

EXHIBIT 3-2: DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION..... 32

## INTRODUCTION

The GRHC is responsible for ensuring that every individual and family admitted to the HCV program meets all program eligibility requirements. This includes any individual approved to join the family after the family has been admitted to the program. The family must provide any information needed by the GRHC to confirm eligibility and determine the level of the family's assistance.

To be eligible for the HCV program:

- The applicant family must:
  - Qualify as a family as defined by HUD and the GRHC.
  - Have income at or below HUD-specified income limits.
  - Qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigrant status of family members.
  - Provide social security number information for household members as required.
  - Consent to the GRHC's collection and use of family information as provided for in GRHC-provided consent forms.
  - Not currently be receiving a duplicative subsidy.
- The GRHC must determine that the current or past behavior of household members does not include activities that are prohibited by HUD or the GRHC.

This chapter contains three parts:

Part I: Definitions of Family and Household Members. This part contains HUD and GRHC definitions of family and household members and explains initial and ongoing eligibility issues related to these members.

Part II: Basic Eligibility Criteria. This part discusses income eligibility, and rules regarding citizenship, social security numbers, and family consent.

Part III: Denial of Assistance. This part covers factors related to an applicant's past or current conduct (e.g. criminal activity) that can cause the GRHC to deny assistance.

## **PART I: DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**

### **3-I.A. OVERVIEW**

Some eligibility criteria and program rules vary depending upon the composition of the family requesting assistance. In addition, some requirements apply to the family as a whole and others apply to individual persons who will live in the assisted unit. This part provides information that is needed to correctly identify family and household members, and to apply HUD's eligibility rules.

### **3-I.B. FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 982.201(C); FR NOTICE 02/03/12; NOTICE PIH 2014-20]**

The terms *family* and *household* have different meanings in the HCV program.

#### **Family**

To be eligible for assistance, an applicant must qualify as a family.

*Family* as defined by HUD includes, but is not limited to the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, a single person, who may be an elderly person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person; or a group of persons residing together.

Such group includes, but is not limited to a family with or without children (a child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family), an elderly family, a near-elderly family, a disabled family, a displaced family, or the remaining member of a tenant family.

A family also includes two or more individuals who are not related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other operation of law but who either can demonstrate that they have lived together previously or certify that each individual's income and other resources will be available to meet the needs of the family. The GRHC has the discretion to determine if any other group of persons qualifies as a family. Each family must identify the individuals to be included in the family at the time of application, and must notify the GRHC if the family's composition changes.

*Gender Identity* means actual or perceived gender characteristics.

*Sexual orientation* means homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

#### **Household**

*Household* is a broader term that includes additional people who, with the GRHC's permission, live in an assisted unit, such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults.

### **3-I.C. FAMILY BREAKUP AND REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY**

#### **Family Breakup [24 CFR 982.315; Notice PIH 2017-08]**

Except under the following conditions, the GRHC has discretion to determine which members of an assisted family continue to receive assistance if the family breaks up:

- If the family breakup results from an occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the GRHC must ensure that the victim retains assistance. (For documentation requirements and policies related to domestic violence, dating violence,

sexual assault, and stalking, see section 16-IX.D of this plan.)

- In accordance with Notice PIH 2017-08, for HUD–Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD–VASH) vouchers, when the veteran is the perpetrator of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the victim must continue to be assisted. Upon termination of the perpetrator’s HUD–VASH voucher, the victim should be given a regular HCV if one is available, and the perpetrator’s HUD–VASH voucher should be used to serve another eligible family. If a regular HCV is not available, the victim will continue to use the HUD–VASH voucher, which must be issued to another eligible family upon the voucher’s turnover.
- If a court determines the disposition of property between members of the assisted family, the GRHC is bound by the court’s determination of which family members continue to receive assistance.

When a family on the waiting list breaks up into two otherwise eligible families, only one of the new families may retain the original application date. Other former family members may make a new application with a new application date if the waiting list is open.

If a family breaks up into two otherwise eligible families while receiving assistance, only one of the new families will continue to be assisted.

In the absence of a judicial decision or an agreement among the original family members, the GRHC will determine which family will retain their placement on the waiting list or continue to receive assistance. In making its determination, the GRHC will take into consideration the following factors:

- (1) The interest of any minor children, including custody arrangements;
- (2) The interest of any ill, elderly, or disabled family members;
- (3) The interest of any family member who is the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including a family member who was forced to leave an assisted unit as a result of such actual or threatened abuse;
- (4) Any possible risks to family members as a result of criminal activity; and
- (5) The recommendations of social service professionals

### **Remaining Member of a Tenant Family [24 CFR 5.403]**

The HUD definition of family includes the *remaining member of a tenant family*, which is a member of an assisted family who remains in the unit when other members of the family have left the unit. Household members such as live-in aides, foster children, and foster adults do not qualify as remaining members of a family.

If dependents are the only “remaining members of a tenant family” and there is no family member able to assume the responsibilities of the head of household, see Chapter 6, Section 6-I.B, for the policy on “Caretakers for a Child.”

### **3-I.D. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD [24 CFR 5.504(B)]**

*Head of household* means the adult member of the family who is considered the head for purposes of determining income eligibility and rent. The head of household is responsible for

ensuring that the family fulfills all of its responsibilities under the program, alone or in conjunction with a cohead or spouse.

The family may designate any qualified family member as the head of household.

The head of household must have the legal capacity to enter into a lease under state and local law. A minor who is emancipated under state law may be designated as head of household.

### **3-I.E. SPOUSE, COHEAD, AND OTHER ADULT**

A family may have a spouse or cohead, but not both [HUD-50058 IB, p. 13].

*Spouse* means the marriage partner of the head of household.

A *marriage partner* includes the partner in a "common law" marriage as defined in state law. The term "spouse" does not apply to friends, roommates, or significant others who are not marriage partners. A minor who is emancipated under state law may be designated as a spouse.

A *cohead* is an individual in the household who is equally responsible with the head of household for ensuring that the family fulfills all of its responsibilities under the program, but who is not a spouse. A family can have only one cohead. Minors who are emancipated under state law may be designated as a cohead.

*Other adult* means a family member, other than the head, spouse, or cohead, who is 18 years of age or older. Foster adults and live-in aides are not considered other adults.

### **3-I.F. DEPENDENT [24 CFR 5.603]**

A *dependent* is a family member who is under 18 years of age or a person of any age who is a person with a disability or a full-time student, except that the following persons can never be dependents: the head of household, spouse, cohead, foster children/adults and live-in aides. Identifying each dependent in the family is important because each dependent qualifies the family for a dependent allowance as described in Chapter 6.

#### **Joint Custody of Dependents**

Dependents that are subject to a joint custody arrangement will be considered a member of the family, if they live with the applicant or participant family 50 percent or more of the time. Documentation confirming residency of the dependents may be required.

When more than one applicant or participant family is claiming the same dependents as family members, the family with primary custody at the time of the initial examination or reexamination will be able to claim the dependents. If there is a dispute about which family should claim them, the GRHC will make the determination based on available documents such as court orders, or an IRS return showing which family has claimed the child for income tax purposes.

### **3-I.G. FULL-TIME STUDENT [24 CFR 5.603; HCV GB, P. 5-29]**

A *full-time student* (FTS) is a person who is attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis. The time commitment or subject load that is needed to be full-time is defined by the educational institution. Identifying each FTS is important due to: (1) each family member that is an FTS, other than the head, spouse, or cohead, qualifies the family for a dependent allowance, and (2) the earned income of such an FTS is treated differently from the income of other family members.

### **3-I.H. ELDERLY AND NEAR-ELDERLY PERSONS, AND ELDERLY FAMILY [24 CFR 5.100 AND 5.403, FR NOTICE 02/03/12]**

#### **Elderly Persons**

An *elderly person* is a person who is at least 62 years of age.

#### **Near-Elderly Persons**

A *near-elderly person* is a person who is 50-61 years of age.

#### **Elderly Family**

An *elderly family* is one in which the head, spouse, cohead, or sole member is an elderly person. Identifying elderly families is important because elderly families qualify for the elderly family allowance as described in Chapter 6.

### **3-I.I. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND DISABLED FAMILY [24 CFR 5.403, FR NOTICE 02/03/12]**

#### **Persons with Disabilities**

Under the HCV program, special rules apply to persons with disabilities and to any family whose head, spouse, or cohead is a person with disabilities. The technical definitions of individual with handicaps and persons with disabilities are provided in Exhibit 3-1 at the end of this chapter. These definitions are used for a number of purposes including ensuring that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against based upon disability.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the GRHC must make all aspects of the HCV program accessible to persons with disabilities and consider reasonable accommodations requested based upon a person's disability.

#### **Disabled Family**

A *disabled family* is one in which the head, spouse, or cohead is a person with disabilities. Identifying disabled families is important because these families qualify for the disabled family allowance as described in Chapter 6.

Even though persons with drug or alcohol dependencies are considered persons with disabilities, this does not prevent the GRHC from denying assistance for reasons related to alcohol and drug abuse in accordance with the policies found in Part III of this chapter, or from terminating assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

### **3-I.J. GUESTS [24 CFR 5.100]**

A *guest* is a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a member of the household who has expressed or implied authority to so consent.

A guest can remain in the assisted unit no longer than 30 consecutive days or a total of 90 cumulative calendar days during any 12-month period.

Children who are subject to a joint custody arrangement or for whom a family has visitation privileges, that are not included as a family member because they live outside of the assisted household more than 50 percent of the time, are not subject to the time limitations of guests as described above.

A family may request an exception to this policy for valid reasons (e.g., care of a relative recovering from a medical procedure is expected to last 40 consecutive days). An exception will not be made unless the family can identify and provide documentation of the residence to which the guest will return.

### **3-I.K. FOSTER CHILDREN AND FOSTER ADULTS**

*Foster adults* are usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone [24 CFR 5.609].

The term *foster child* is not specifically defined by the regulations.

Foster children and foster adults who are living with an applicant or who have been approved by the GRHC to live with a participant family are considered household members but not family members. The income of foster children/adults is not counted in family annual income, and foster children/adults do not qualify for a dependent deduction [24 CFR 5.603; HUD-50058 IB, p. 13].

A *foster child* is a child that is in the legal guardianship or custody of a state, county, or private adoption or foster care agency, yet is cared for by foster parents in their own homes, under a short-term or long-term foster care arrangement with the custodial agency.

A foster child or foster adult may be allowed to reside in the unit if their presence would not result in a violation of HQS space standards according to 24 CFR 982.401.

### **3-I.L. ABSENT FAMILY MEMBERS**

Individuals may be absent from the family, either temporarily or permanently, for a variety of reasons including educational activities, placement in foster care, employment, illness, incarceration, and court order.

#### **Definitions of Temporarily and Permanently Absent**

Generally an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for 180 consecutive calendar days or less is considered temporarily absent and continues to be considered a family member. Generally an individual who is or is expected to be absent from the assisted unit for more than 180 consecutive calendar days is considered permanently absent and no longer a family member. Exceptions to this general policy are discussed below.

#### **Absent Students**

When someone who has been considered a family member attends school away from home, the person will continue to be considered a family member unless information becomes available to the GRHC indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household.

#### **Absences Due to Placement in Foster Care [24 CFR 5.403]**

If a child has been placed in foster care, the GRHC will verify with the appropriate agency whether and when the child is expected to be returned to the home. Unless the agency confirms that the child has been permanently removed from the home, the child will be counted as a family member. The GRHC may remove the child from the household if the absence is greater than 180 consecutive calendar days.



### **Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead**

An employed head, spouse, or cohead absent from the unit more than 180 consecutive calendar days due to employment will continue to be considered a family member.

### **Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons [HCV GB, p. 5-22]**

If a family member is confined to a nursing home or hospital on a permanent basis, that person is no longer considered a family member and the income of that person is not counted [HCV GB, p. 5-22]. The GRHC will request verification of the family member's permanent absence from a responsible medical professional. If the responsible medical professional cannot provide a determination, the person will be considered temporarily absent. If the family certifies that the family member is confined on a permanent basis, they may present, and the GRHC will consider, any additional documentation or evidence.

### **Return of Permanently Absent Family Members**

The family must request GRHC approval for the return of any adult family members that the GRHC previously determined to be permanently absent. The individual is subject to the eligibility and screening requirements discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

### **3-I.M. LIVE-IN AIDE**

A *live-in aide* is a person who resides with one or more elderly persons, or near-elderly persons, or persons with disabilities, and who: (1) is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the persons, (2) is not obligated for the support of the persons, and (3) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services [24 CFR 5.403].

The GRHC will approve a live-in aide if needed as a reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR 8, to make the program accessible to and usable by the family member with disabilities.

The income of a live-in aide is not counted in the calculation of annual income for the family [24 CFR 5.609(b)]. Relatives may be approved as live-in aides if they meet all of the criteria defining a live-in aide. Because live-in aides are not *family* members, a relative who serves as a live-in aide would not be considered a remaining member of a tenant family.

A family's request for a live-in aide must be made in writing. Written verification will be required from a reliable, knowledgeable professional, such as a doctor, social worker, or case worker, that the live-in aide is essential for the care and well-being of the elderly, near-elderly, or disabled family member. For continued approval, the family must submit a new, written request-subject to GRHC verification-at each annual reexamination unless a permanent approval for a live-aide has been granted by GRHC.

The GRHC will not approve a particular person as a live-in aide, and may withdraw such approval if [24 CFR 982.316(b)]:

- The person commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;
- The person commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity; or
- The person currently owes rent or other amounts to the GRHC or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

The GRHC will notify the family of its decision in writing within 15 calendar days of receiving a request for a live-in aide, including all required documentation related to the request. The family is required to report when the live-in-aide is no longer a part of the household within 15 calendar days of the event.

The GRHC shall document the following annually or when there is a change in live-in aides:

- If the Live-in Aide was approved for one year, a new Request for Reasonable Accommodation must be submitted by the family and approved at the next annual reexamination. In addition, the Live-In Aide must be identified on the request form.
- If the Request for Reasonable Accommodation was approved on a permanent basis, GRHC will verify at annual reexamination that a Live-In Aide has been identified on the request form.
- A certification of Live-In Aide Status must be completed at the annual reexamination for all approved Live-In Aides.

Live-in aide family members and/or their minor children do not count as dependents. Additional bedrooms on the voucher are not granted for the live-in aide's family members.

A person who is currently a live-in aide can become a family member and be added to the family composition if they meet eligibility requirements.

At the annual HQS Inspection, the GRHC must verify that the extra bedroom for the live-in aide is being utilized for that purpose.

## PART II: BASIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### 3-II.A. INCOME ELIGIBILITY AND TARGETING

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| <b>Income Limits</b> |
|----------------------|

HUD establishes income limits for all areas of the country and publishes them annually in the *Federal Register*. They are based upon estimates of median family income with adjustments for family size. The income limits are used to determine eligibility for the program and for income targeting purposes as discussed in this section.

#### **Definitions of the Income Limits [24 CFR 5.603(b)]**

*Low-income family.* A family whose annual income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area, adjusted for family size.

*Very low-income family.* A family whose annual income does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the area, adjusted for family size.

*Extremely low-income family.* A family whose annual income does not exceed the federal poverty level or 30 percent of the median income for the area, whichever number is higher.

Area median income is determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families. HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30, 50, or 80 percent of the median income for an area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

#### **Using Income Limits for Eligibility [24 CFR 982.201]**

Income limits are used for eligibility only at admission. Income eligibility is determined by comparing the annual income of an applicant to the applicable income limit for their family size. In order to be income eligible, an applicant family must be one of the following:

- A *very low-income* family
- A *low-income* family that has been "continuously assisted" under the 1937 Housing Act. A family is considered to be continuously assisted if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program at the time the family is admitted to the HCV program [24 CFR 982.4]
- A low-income family that qualifies for voucher assistance as a non-purchasing household living in HOPE 1 (public housing homeownership), HOPE 2 (multifamily housing homeownership) developments, or other HUD-assisted multifamily homeownership programs covered by 24 CFR 248.173
- A low-income or moderate-income family that is displaced as a result of the prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract on eligible low-income housing as defined in 24 CFR 248.101

The GRHC has not established any additional categories of eligible low-income families.

#### **Using Income Limits for Targeting [24 CFR 982.201]**

At least 75 percent of the families admitted to the GRHC's program during a its fiscal year must be extremely low-income families. HUD may approve exceptions to this requirement if the

GRHC demonstrates that it has made all required efforts, but has been unable to attract an adequate number of qualified extremely low-income families.

Families continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act and families living in eligible low-income housing that are displaced as a result of prepayment of a mortgage or voluntary termination of a mortgage insurance contract are not counted for income targeting purposes.

### **GRHC MTW Flexibility**

The GRHC will ensure that at least 75 percent of households admitted during each fiscal year in the public housing, Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), and local, non-traditional programs—will be very low-income (50%).

### **3-II.B. CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE IMMIGRATION STATUS [24 CFR 5, SUBPART E]**

Housing assistance is available only to individuals who are U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals (herein referred to as citizens and nationals), or noncitizens that have eligible immigration status. At least one family member must be a citizen, national, or noncitizen with eligible immigration status in order for the family to qualify for any level of assistance.

All applicant families must be notified of the requirement to submit evidence of their citizenship status when they apply. Where feasible, and in accordance with the PHA's Limited English Proficiency Plan, the notice must be in a language that is understood by the individual if the individual is not proficient in English.

#### **Declaration [24 CFR 5.508]**

HUD requires each family member to declare whether the individual is a citizen, a national, or an eligible noncitizen, except those members who elect not to contend that they have eligible immigration status. Those who elect not to contend their status are considered to be ineligible noncitizens. For citizens, nationals and eligible noncitizens the declaration must be signed personally by the head, spouse, cohead, and any other family member 18 or older, and by a parent or guardian for minors. The family must identify in writing any family members who elect not to contend their immigration status (see Ineligible Noncitizens below). No declaration is required for live-in aides, foster children, or foster adults.

#### ***U.S. Citizens and Nationals***

In general, citizens and nationals are required to submit only a signed declaration as verification of their status, unless the GRHC receives information indicating that an individual's declaration may not be accurate.

#### ***Eligible Noncitizens***

In addition to providing a signed declaration, those declaring eligible noncitizen status must sign a verification consent form and cooperate with GRHC efforts to verify their immigration status as described in Chapter 7. The documentation required for establishing eligible noncitizen status varies depending upon factors such as the date the person entered the U.S., the conditions under

which eligible immigration status has been granted, the person's age, and the date on which the family began receiving HUD-funded assistance.

Lawful residents of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, together known as the Freely Associated States, or FAS, are eligible for housing assistance under section 141 of the Compacts of Free Association between the U.S. Government and the Governments of the FAS [Public Law 106-504].

### ***Ineligible Noncitizens***

Those noncitizens who do not wish to contend their immigration status are required to have their names listed on a noncontending family members listing, signed by the head, spouse, or cohead (regardless of citizenship status), indicating their ineligible immigration status. The GRHC is not required to verify a family member's ineligible status and is not required to report an individual's unlawful presence in the U.S. to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Providing housing assistance to noncitizen students is prohibited [24 CFR 5.522]. This prohibition extends to the noncitizen spouse of a noncitizen student as well as to minor children who accompany or follow to join the noncitizen student. Such prohibition does not extend to the citizen spouse of a noncitizen student or to the children of the citizen spouse and noncitizen student. Such a family is eligible for prorated assistance as a mixed family.

### **Mixed Families**

A family is eligible for assistance as long as at least one member is a citizen, national, or eligible noncitizen. Families that include eligible and ineligible individuals are considered *mixed families*. Such families will be given notice that their assistance will be prorated, and that they may request a hearing if they contest this determination. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of how rents are prorated, and Chapter 16 for a discussion of informal hearing procedures.

### **Ineligible Families [24 CFR 5.514(d), (e), and (f)]**

The GRHC will not provide assistance to a family before the verification of at least one family member [24 CFR 5.512(b)]. Verification of eligibility for this purpose occurs when the individual or family members have submitted documentation to the GRHC in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 5.512(a)].

When GRHC determines that an applicant family does not include any citizens, nationals, or eligible noncitizens, following the verification process, the family will be sent a written notice within 15 calendar days of the determination.

The notice will explain the reasons for the denial of assistance, that the family may be eligible for proration of assistance, and will advise the family of its right to request an appeal to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), or to request an informal hearing with the GRHC. The informal hearing with the GRHC may be requested in lieu of the USCIS appeal, or at the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process. The notice must also inform the applicant family that assistance may not be delayed until the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process, but that it may be delayed pending the completion of the informal hearing process (Chapter 16).

### **Timeframe for Determination of Citizenship Status [24 CFR 5.508(g)]**

For new occupants joining the assisted family, the GRHC will verify status at the first interim or regular reexamination following the person's occupancy, whichever comes first.

If an individual qualifies for a time extension for the submission of required documents, the GRHC will grant such an extension for no more than 30 calendar days [24 CFR 5.508(h)].

Each family member is required to submit evidence of eligible status only one time during continuous occupancy.

### **3-II.C. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS [24 CFR 5.216 AND 5.218, NOTICE PIH 2018-24]**

The applicant and all members of the applicant's household must disclose the complete and accurate social security number (SSN) assigned to each household member, and the documentation necessary to verify each SSN. If a child under age 6 has been added to an applicant family within 6 months prior to voucher issuance, an otherwise eligible family may be admitted to the program and must disclose and document the child's SSN within 90 calendar days of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. A detailed discussion of acceptable documentation is provided in Chapter 7.

*Note:* These requirements do not apply to noncitizens who do not contend eligible immigration status.

In addition, each participant who has not previously disclosed an SSN, has previously disclosed an SSN that HUD or the SSA determined was invalid, or has been issued a new SSN must submit their complete and accurate SSN and the documentation required to verify the SSN at the time of the next interim or annual reexamination or recertification. Participants age 62 or older as of January 31, 2010, whose determination of eligibility was begun before January 31, 2010, are exempt from this requirement and remain exempt even if they move to a new assisted unit.

The GRHC will deny assistance to an applicant family if they do not meet the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements contained in 24 CFR 5.216.

### **3-II.D. FAMILY CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION [24 CFR 5.230; HCV GB, P. 5-13]**

HUD requires each adult family member, and the head of household, spouse, or cohead, regardless of age, to sign form HUD-9886, Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice, the form HUD-52675 Debts Owed to Public Housing Agencies and Terminations, and other consent forms as needed to collect information relevant to the family's eligibility and level of assistance. Chapter 7 provides detailed information concerning the consent forms and verification requirements.

The GRHC will deny admission to the program if any member of the applicant family fails to sign and submit the consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with 24 CFR 5, Subparts B and F [24 CFR 982.552(b)(3)].

### **3-II.E. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION [24 CFR 5.612, FR NOTICE 4/10/06, FR NOTICE 9/21/16]**

Section 327 of Public Law 109-115 and the implementing regulation at 24 CFR 5.612 established new restrictions on the eligibility of certain students (both part- and full-time) who are enrolled in institutions of higher education.

If a student enrolled at an institution of higher education:

- Is under the age of 24,
- Is not a veteran, is not married,
- Does not have a dependent child, and
- Is not a person with disabilities receiving HCV assistance as of November 30, 2005,

the student's eligibility must be examined along with the income eligibility of the student's parents. In these cases, both the student and the student's parents must be income eligible for the student to receive HCV assistance. If, however, a student in these circumstances is determined independent from his/her parents in accordance with GRHC policy, the income of the student's parents will not be considered in determining the student's eligibility.

The new law does not apply to students who reside with parents who are applying to receive HCV assistance. It is limited to students who are seeking assistance on their own, separately from their parents.

#### **Definitions**

In determining whether and how the new eligibility restrictions apply to a student, the GRHC will rely on the following definitions [FR Notice 4/10/06, FR Notice 9/21/16].

#### ***Dependent Child***

In the context of the student eligibility restrictions, *dependent child* means a dependent child of a student enrolled in an institution of higher education. The dependent child must also meet the definition of *dependent* in 24 CFR 5.603, which states that the dependent must be a member of the assisted family, other than the head of household or spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability, or is a full-time student. Foster children and foster adults are not considered dependents.

#### ***Independent Student***

The GRHC will consider a student "independent" from his or her parents and the parents' income will not be considered when determining the student's eligibility if the following four criteria are all met:

- The individual is of legal contract age under state law.
- The individual has established a household separate from his/her parents for at least one year prior to application for occupancy or the individual meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of independent student.
- To be considered an *independent student* according to the Department of Education, a student must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The individual is at least 24 years old by December 31 of the award year for which aid is sought
- The individual is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court, or was an orphan, in foster care, or ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older
- The individual is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual's state of legal residence
- The individual is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or is currently serving on active duty in the Armed Forces for other than training purposes
- The individual is a graduate or professional student
- The individual is married
- The individual has one or more legal dependents other than a spouse (for example, dependent children or an elderly dependent parent)The individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting by:
  - A local educational agency homeless liaison
  - The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or a designee of the director
  - A financial aid administrator
- The individual is a student for whom a financial aid administrator makes a documented determination of independence by reason of other unusual circumstances
- The individual was not claimed as a dependent by his/her parents pursuant to IRS regulations, as demonstrated on the parents' most recent tax forms.
- The individual provides a certification of the amount of financial assistance that will be provided by his/her parents. This certification must be signed by the individual providing the support and must be submitted even if no assistance is being provided.

If the GRHC determines that an individual meets the definition of a *vulnerable youth* such a determination is all that is necessary to determine that the person is an *independent student* for the purposes of using only the student's income for determining eligibility for assistance. The GRHC will verify that a student meets the above criteria in accordance with the policies in Section 7-II.E.

### ***Institution of Higher Education***

The GRHC will use the statutory definition under section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to determine whether a student is attending an *institution of higher education* (see Exhibit 3-2).



### ***Parents***

For purposes of student eligibility restrictions, the definition of *parents* includes biological or adoptive parents, stepparents (as long as they are currently married to the biological or adoptive parent), and guardians (e.g., grandparents, aunt/uncle, godparents, etc).

### ***Person with Disabilities***

The GRHC will use the statutory definition under section 3(b)(3)(E) of the 1937 Act to determine whether a student is a *person with disabilities* (see Exhibit 3-1).

### ***Veteran***

A *veteran* is a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable.

### ***Vulnerable Youth***

A *vulnerable youth* is an individual who meets the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of *independent student* in paragraphs (b), (c), or (h), as adopted in Section II of FR Notice 9/21/16:

- The individual is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court, or was an orphan, in foster care, or ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older
- The individual is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual’s state of legal residence
- The individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting by:
  - A local educational agency homeless liaison
  - The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or a designee of the director
  - A financial aid administrator

### **Determining Student Eligibility**

If a student is applying for assistance on his/her own, apart from his/her parents, the GRHC will determine whether the student is subject to the eligibility restrictions contained in 24 CFR 5.612. If the student is subject to those restrictions, the GRHC will ensure that:

- (1) The student is individually eligible for the program,
- (2) Either the student is independent from his/her parents or the student’s parents are income eligible for the program, and
- (3) The “family” with which the student is applying is collectively eligible for the program.

If the GRHC determines that the student, the student’s parents (if applicable), or the student’s “family” is not eligible, the GRHC will send a notice of denial in accordance with the policies in Section 3-III.F, and the applicant family will have the right to request an informal review in accordance with the policies in Section 16-III.B.

### ***Determining Parental Income Eligibility***

For any student who is subject to the 5.612 restrictions and who does not satisfy the definition of *independent student* in this section, the GRHC will determine the income eligibility of the student's parents as follows:

- If the student's parents are married and living together, the GRHC will obtain a joint income declaration and certification of joint income from the parents.
- If the student's parent is widowed or single, the GRHC will obtain an income declaration and certification of income from that parent.
- If the student's parents are divorced or separated, the GRHC will obtain an income declaration and certification of income from each parent.
- If the student has been living with one of his/her parents and has not had contact with or does not know where to contact his/her other parent, the GRHC will require the student to submit a certification under penalty of perjury describing the circumstances and stating that the student does not receive financial assistance from the other parent. The GRHC will then obtain an income declaration and certification of income from the parent with whom the student has been living or had contact.

In determining the income eligibility of the student's parents, the GRHC will use the income limits for the jurisdiction in which the parents live.

### **3-II.F. EIV SYSTEM SEARCHES [NOTICE PIH 2018-18; EIV FAQs; EIV SYSTEM TRAINING 9/30/20]**

#### **Existing Tenant Search**

Prior to admission to the program, the GRHC will search for all household members using the EIV Existing Tenant Search module. The GRHC will review the reports for any SSA matches involving another PHA or a multifamily entity and follow up on any issues identified. The GRHC will provide the family with a copy of the Existing Tenant Search results if requested. At no time may any family member receive duplicative assistance.

If the tenant is a new admission to the GRHC, and a match is identified at a multifamily property, the GRHC will contact the PHA or owner identified in the report to confirm that the family has moved out of the unit and obtain documentation of current tenancy status, including a form HUD-50058 or 50059, as applicable, showing an end of participation. The GRHC will only approve assistance contingent upon the move-out from the currently occupied assisted unit.

#### **Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations**

All adult household members must sign the form HUD-52675 Debts Owed to Public Housing and Terminations. The GRHC will search the Debts Owed to PHAs and Terminations module as part of the eligibility determination for new households and as part of the screening process for any household members added after the household is admitted to the program. If any information on debts or terminations is returned by the search, the GRHC will determine if this information warrants a denial in accordance with the policies in Part III of this chapter.

If a current or former tenant disputes the information in the module, the tenant should contact the PHA directly in writing to dispute the information and provide any documentation that supports the dispute. If the PHA determines that the disputed information is incorrect, the PHA will

update or delete the record from EIV. Former tenants may dispute debt and termination information for a period of up to three years from the end of participation date in the program.

### **Income and IVT Reports**

For each new admission, the GRHC is required to review the EIV Income and IVT Reports to confirm and validate family reported income within 120 days of the IMS/PIC submission date of the new admission. The GRHC will print and maintain copies of the EIV Income and IVT reports in the tenant file and resolve any discrepancies with the family within 60 calendar days of the EIV Income or IVT report dates.

## **PART III: DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE**

### **3-III.A. OVERVIEW**

A family that does not meet the eligibility criteria discussed in Parts I and II, must be denied assistance. In this section we will discuss other situations and circumstances in which denial of assistance is mandatory for the GRHC, and those in which denial of assistance is optional for the GRHC.

#### **Forms of Denial [24 CFR 982.552(a)(2); HCV GB, p. 5-35]**

Denial of assistance includes any of the following:

- Not placing the family's name on the waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Not approving a request for tenancy or refusing to enter into a HAP contract
- Refusing to process a request for or to provide assistance under portability procedures

#### **Prohibited Reasons for Denial of Program Assistance [24 CFR 982.202(b), 24 CFR 5.2005(b)]**

HUD rules prohibit denial of program assistance to the program based on any of the following criteria:

- Age, disability, race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (See Chapter 2 for additional information about fair housing and equal opportunity requirements.)
- Where a family lives prior to admission to the program
- Where the family will live with assistance under the program. Although eligibility is not affected by where the family will live, there may be restrictions on the family's ability to move outside the GRHC's jurisdiction under portability. (See Chapter 10.)
- Whether members of the family are unwed parents, recipients of public assistance, or children born out of wedlock
- Whether the family includes children
- Whether a family decides to participate in a family self-sufficiency program
- Whether or not a qualified applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking if the applicant is otherwise qualified for assistance (See section 3-III.G.)

### **3-III.B. MANDATORY DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE [24 CFR 982.553(A)]**

HUD requires the GRHC to deny assistance in the following cases:

- Any member of the household has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last three (3) years for drug-related criminal activity. The GRHC may admit an otherwise-eligible family if the household member has completed a verifiable drug rehabilitation program or the person who committed the crime, is no longer living in the household.

- The GRHC determines that any household member is currently engaged in the use of illegal drugs.
- The GRHC has reasonable cause to believe that any household member's current use or pattern of use of illegal drugs, or current abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol, may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. In determining reasonable cause, the GRHC will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of convictions, or evictions of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or the abuse of alcohol. The GRHC will also consider evidence from treatment providers or community-based organizations providing services to household members.
- Any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the production or manufacture of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing
- Any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program

### **3-III.C. OTHER PERMITTED REASONS FOR DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE**

HUD permits, but does not require, the GRHC to deny assistance for the reasons discussed in this section.

#### **Criminal Activity [24 CFR 982.553]**

If any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in any of the following criminal activities, within the past three years, the family will be denied assistance.

- Drug-related criminal activity, defined by HUD as the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use the drug [24 CFR 5.100].
- Violent criminal activity, defined by HUD as any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage [24 CFR 5.100].
- Criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity;
  - *Immediate vicinity means within a three-block radius of the premises.*
- Criminal activity that may threaten the health or safety of property owners, management staff, and persons performing contract administration functions or other responsibilities on behalf of the GRHC (including a GRHC employee or a GRHC contractor, subcontractor, or agent).

In making its decision to deny assistance, the GRHC will consider the factors discussed in Section 3-III.E. Upon consideration of such factors, the GRHC may, on a case-by-case basis, decide not to deny assistance.

## **GRHC Criminal Background Policy and Procedure**

To treat all applicants equally and fairly, and to uphold Fair Housing principles and ensuring equal access to housing, the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) will conduct a limited criminal background screening on all individuals age 18 and older in the family/household composition. Limited criminal background screening will consider:

1. Registered Sex Offender
2. Convicted of manufacturing of methamphetamine.
3. Banned or Barred from GRHC Property
4. Felony or High Misdemeanor criminal convictions related to following offenses within the last three (3) years:
  - a. Property offenses
    - i. Property offenses include theft, burglary, vandalism, arson and other criminal damage to property
  - b. Major drug offenses
    - i. Major drug offenses include drug trafficking and the sale, smuggling, manufacture, or distribution of any controlled substance. This includes unspecified controlled substances. It also includes all 1st or 2nd degree controlled substance offenses. Major drug offenses do not include simple possession of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia, nor any past conduct that has since been decriminalized.
  - c. Fraud Offenses
    - i. Fraud offenses include identify theft, use of stolen checks, writing bad checks, counterfeiting, and forgery.
  - d. Major violent offenses against persons
    - i. Major violent offenses include assault, battery, and homicide.
  - e. Sex offenses
    - i. Sex offenses include rape, registration as a sexual offender, taking indecent liberties with a minor, pandering, sex trafficking, and sexual battery. Not included are victimless crimes such as prostitution or solicitation.

The GRHC's limited criminal background screening will not consider arrests, charges, expunged convictions, convictions reversed on appeal, vacated convictions, offenses where adjudication was withheld or deferred, pardoned convictions, and sealed juvenile records. It will not treat people differently based on whether the applicant is on probation or parole.

If an applicant is identified as having a felony or high misdemeanor conviction in one of the specified categories of offenses within the three (3) years prior to the application, a written notice will inform the applicant that covered criminal conduct was identified in the limited criminal background screening and will invite the applicant to provide additional information within 15 calendar days for consideration.

The requested information could include for example, Letters from Parole officers, caseworkers, counselors, family members, or community organizations commenting on the applicants response conduct and rehabilitation efforts.

GRHC will consider all applicants equally and render decisions in a fair and consistent manner. The GRHC will consider the following factors:

- The facts or circumstances surrounding the criminal conduct
- The age of the applicant at the time of the occurrence of the criminal offense;
- Evidence of a good tenant or employment history before or after the conviction or conduct;
- Evidence of rehabilitation efforts;
- The time that has elapsed since the occurrence of the conduct;
- Any information about the applicant that indicates good conduct since the offense occurred;
- Whether the conduct/conviction arose from the applicant's status as a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or dating violence;
- Whether the conduct/conviction arose from an applicant's disability, including mental illness; and
- Any other information related to whether the applicant's specific criminal history creates the potential that the property's current residents, employees, or property will be exposed to a heightened risk of crime.

If an applicant does not provide information for consideration within 15 calendar days of the notice, the GRHC will assess the applicant based on available information obtained during the applicant process including the criminal background. If the GRHC decides to reject an applicant, a denial letter will be sent to the applicant. The applicant will have 15 calendar days to request a review on the GRHC's determination. If no response is received, the applicant will be denied and removed from the waiting list.

#### **Previous Behavior in Assisted Housing [24 CFR 982.552(c)]**

HUD authorizes the GRHC to deny assistance based on the family's previous behavior in assisted housing. The GRHC will deny assistance to an applicant family if:

- The family does not provide information that the GRHC or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program.
- The family does not provide complete and true information to the GRHC.
- Any family member has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last three (3) years.
- Any family member has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.
- The family owes rent or other amounts to any federally assisted property in connection

with Section 8 or other public housing assistance under the 1937 Act, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.

- If the family has not reimbursed any PHA for amounts the PHA paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.
- The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with the GRHC, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt covered in the repayment agreement prior to being selected from the waiting list.
- A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward GRHC personnel.
  - *Abusive or violent behavior towards GRHC* personnel includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to intimidate may be considered abusive or violent behavior.
  - *Threatening* refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate intent to abuse or commit violence.

In making its decision to deny assistance, the GRHC will consider the factors discussed in Section 3-III.E. Upon consideration of such factors, the GRHC may, on a case-by-case basis, decide not to deny assistance.

### **3-III.D. SCREENING**

#### **Screening for Eligibility**

The GRHC is authorized to obtain criminal conviction records from law enforcement agencies/third-party entity to screen applicants for admission to the HCV program. This authority assists the GRHC in complying with HUD requirements and GRHC policies to deny assistance to applicants who are engaging in or have engaged in certain criminal activities. In order to obtain access to the records the GRHC will require every applicant family to submit a consent form signed by each adult household member [24 CFR 5.903].

While the GRHC has regulatory authority to use criminal conviction records for the purpose of applicant screening for admission, there is no corresponding authority to use these records to check for criminal and illegal drug activity by program participants, and therefore, the GRHC will not use records for this purpose.

The GRHC is required to perform criminal background checks necessary to determine whether any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender program in the state where the housing is located, as well as in any other state where a household member is known to have resided [24 CFR 982.553(a)(2)(i)]. The GRHC will use the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender database to screen applicants for admission.

Additionally, the GRHC will ask whether the applicant, or any member of the applicant's household, is subject to a lifetime registered sex offender registration requirement in any state [Notice PIH 2012-28].



If the GRHC proposes to deny assistance based on a criminal record or on lifetime sex offender registration information, the GRHC will notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the applicant a copy of the record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information prior to a denial of admission. [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)].

### **Screening for Suitability as a Tenant [24 CFR 982.307]**

The GRHC has no liability or responsibility to the owner for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. The owner is responsible for screening and selection of the family to occupy the owner's unit. The GRHC will inform the owner that screening and selection for tenancy is the responsibility of the owner. An owner may consider a family's history with respect to factors such as: payment of rent and utilities, caring for a unit and premises, respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing, criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety or property of others, and compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy. The GRHC will not provide any additional information to the owner, such as tenancy history or criminal history, etc.

HUD requires the GRHC to provide prospective owners with the family's current and prior address (as shown in GRHC records) and the name and address (if known) of the owner at the family's current and prior addresses.

The GRHC will not disclose to the owner any confidential information provided to the GRHC by the family in response to a GRHC request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking except at the written request or with the written consent of the individual providing the documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(a)(4)].

## **3-III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO DENY ASSISTANCE**

### **Evidence [24 CFR 982.553(c)]**

The GRHC will use the concept of the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all admission decisions.

*Preponderance of the evidence* is defined as evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

### **Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)]**

The GRHC will consider the following facts and circumstances prior to making its decision:

- The seriousness of the case, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents' safety or property
- The effects that denial of assistance may have on other members of the family who were not involved in the action or failure to act
- The extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, including whether the culpable family member is a minor or a person with disabilities, or (as discussed further

in section 3-III.G) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking

- The length of time since the violation occurred, including the age of the individual at the time of the conduct, as well as the family's recent history and the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future
- Any statements made by witnesses or the applicant not included in the police report
- Evidence of criminal conduct will be considered if it indicates a demonstrable risk to safety and/or property
- In the case of drug or alcohol abuse, whether the culpable household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully
- The GRHC will require the applicant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in or successful completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully.

### **Removal of a Family Member's Name from the Application**

Should the GRHC's screening process reveal that an applicant's household includes an individual subject to state lifetime registered sex offender registration, the GRHC will offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. In such instances, the head of household must certify that the family member will not be permitted to reside in the assisted unit. After admission to the program, the family must present evidence of the former family member's current address upon GRHC request. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, the GRHC will deny admission to the family [Notice PIH 2012-28].

For other criminal activity, the GRHC will permit the family to exclude the culpable family members as a condition of eligibility. [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(ii)].

### **Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 982.552(c)(2)(iv)]**

If the family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for the proposed denial of assistance, the GRHC will determine whether the behavior is related to the stated disability. If so, upon the family's request, the GRHC will determine whether admitting the family as a reasonable accommodation is appropriate. The GRHC will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed denial of assistance. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodation (24 CFR Part 8).

### **3-III.F. NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY OR DENIAL**

If the family is eligible for assistance, the GRHC will notify the family in writing and schedule a tenant briefing, as discussed in Chapter 5.

If the GRHC determines that a family is not eligible for the program for any reason, the family will be notified promptly. The notice will describe: (1) the reasons for which assistance has been denied, (2) the family's right to an informal review, and (3) the process for obtaining the informal review [24 CFR 982.554 (a)]. See Chapter 16, for informal review policies and

procedures. The family will be notified of a decision to deny assistance in writing within 15 calendar days of the determination.

If the GRHC uses a criminal record or sex offender registration information obtained under 24 CFR 5, Subpart J, as the basis of a denial, a copy of the record must precede the notice to deny, with an opportunity for the applicant to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before the GRHC can move to deny the application. In addition, a copy of the record must be provided to the subject of the record [24 CFR 5.903(f) and 5.905(d)]. The GRHC will give the family an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of that record, in the informal review process in accordance with program requirements [24 CFR 982.553(d)]. The family will be given 15 calendar days to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information. If the family does not contact the GRHC to dispute the information within that 15-day period, GRHC will proceed with issuing the notice of denial of admission. A family that does not exercise their right to dispute the accuracy of the information prior to issuance of the official denial letter will still be given the opportunity to do so as part of the informal review process.

Notice requirements related to denying assistance to noncitizens are contained in Section 3-II.B.

Notice policies related to denying admission to applicants who may be victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking are contained in Section 3-III.G.

### **3-III.G. PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING**

The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) and the HUD regulation at 24 CFR 5.2005(b) prohibit the GRHC from denying an applicant admission to the HCV program on the basis or as a direct result of the fact that the applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, if the applicant otherwise qualifies for assistance or admission.

Definitions of key terms used in VAWA are provided in section 16-IX of this plan, where general VAWA requirements and policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality are also located.

#### **Notification**

The GRHC acknowledges that a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking may have an unfavorable history (e.g., a poor credit history, poor rental history, a record of previous damage to an apartment, a prior arrest record) due to adverse factors that would warrant denial under the GRHC's policies.

While the GRHC is not required to identify whether adverse factors that resulted in the applicant's denial are a result of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the applicant may inform GRHC that their status as a victim is directly related to the grounds for the denial. The GRHC will request that the applicant provide enough information to the GRHC to allow the GRHC to make an objectively reasonable determination, based on all circumstances, whether the adverse factor is a direct result of their status as a victim.

The GRHC will include in its notice of denial the VAWA information described in section 16-IX.C of this plan as well as including a copy of the form HUD-5382. The PHA will request in writing that an applicant wishing to claim protection under VAWA notify the PHA within 15 calendar days.

## **Documentation**

### ***Victim Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007]***

If an applicant claims they are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking and are requesting protection against denial of assistance through VAWA, the GRHC will request in writing that the applicant provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with section 16-IX.D of this plan.

### ***Perpetrator Documentation***

If the perpetrator of the abuse is a member of the applicant family, the applicant must provide additional documentation consisting of one of the following:

- A signed statement (1) requesting that the perpetrator be removed from the application and (2) certifying that the perpetrator will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the assisted unit
- Documentation that the perpetrator has successfully completed, or is successfully undergoing, rehabilitation or treatment. The documentation must be signed by an employee or agent of a domestic violence service provider or by a medical or other knowledgeable professional from whom the perpetrator has sought or is receiving assistance in addressing the abuse. The signer must attest under penalty of perjury to his or her belief that the rehabilitation was successfully completed or is progressing successfully. The victim and perpetrator must also sign or attest to the documentation.

## EXHIBIT 3-1: DETAILED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO DISABILITIES

### Person with Disabilities [24 CFR 5.403]

The term *person with disabilities* means a person who has any of the following types of conditions:

Has a disability, as defined in 42 U.S.C. Section 423(d)(1)(A), which reads:

Inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months; *or*

In the case of an individual who has attained the age of 55 and is blind (within the meaning of “blindness” as defined in section 416(i)(1) of this title), inability by reason of such blindness to engage in substantial gainful activity, requiring skills or ability comparable to those of any gainful activity in which he has previously engaged with some regularity and over a substantial period of time.

Has a developmental disability as defined in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 [42 U.S.C.15002(8)], which defines developmental disability in functional terms as follows:

#### **(A) In General**

The term “developmental disability” means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

- (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
- (ii) is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
- (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely;
- (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: (I) Self-care, (II) Receptive and expressive language, (III) Learning, (IV) Mobility, (V) Self-direction, (VI) Capacity for independent living, (VII) Economic self-sufficiency; and
- (v) reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

## **(B) Infants and Young Children**

An individual from birth to age 9, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting 3 or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A) if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.

Has a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration; substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently, and is of such a nature that the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions.

People with the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for AIDS are not excluded from this definition.

A person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence does not qualify as a person with disabilities for the purposes of this program.

For purposes of reasonable accommodation and program accessibility for persons with disabilities, the term person with disabilities refers to an individual with handicaps.

### **Individual with Handicaps [24 CFR 8.3]**

*Individual with handicaps* means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. The term does not include any individual who is an alcoholic or drug abuser whose current use of alcohol or drugs prevents the individual from participating in the program or activity in question, or whose participation, by reason of such current alcohol or drug abuse, would constitute a direct threat to property or the safety of others. As used in this definition, the phrase:

(1) Physical or mental impairment includes:

- (a) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or
- (b) Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction and alcoholism.

(2) *Major life activities* means functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

(3) Has a record of such an impairment means has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

(4) *Is regarded as having an impairment* means:

- (a) Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit one or more major life activities but that is treated by a recipient as constituting such a limitation;
- (b) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or
- (c) Has none of the impairments defined in paragraph (1) of this section but is treated by a recipient as having such an impairment.

**EXHIBIT 3-2: DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**[20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002]**

**Eligibility of Students for Assisted Housing Under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937; Supplementary Guidance; Notice [Federal Register, April 10, 2006]**

*Institution of Higher Education* shall have the meaning given this term in the Higher Education Act of 1965 in 20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002.

*Definition of “Institution of Higher Education” From 20 U.S.C. 1001*

- (a) Institution of higher education. For purposes of this chapter, other than subchapter IV and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of Title 42, the term “institution of higher education” means an educational institution in any State that
- (1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
  - (2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
  - (3) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
  - (4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
  - (5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.
- (b) Additional institutions included. For purposes of this chapter, other than subchapter IV and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of Title 42, the term “institution of higher education” also includes—
- (1) Any school that provides not less than a 1-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and that meets the provision of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of subsection (a) of this section; and
  - (2) A public or nonprofit private educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in subsection (a)(1) of this section, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.
- (c) List of accrediting agencies. For purposes of this section and section 1002 of this title, the Secretary shall publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies or associations that the Secretary determines, pursuant to subpart 2 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter, to be reliable authority as to the quality of the education or training offered.

*Definition of “Institution of Higher Education” From 20 U.S.C. 1002*

- (a) Definition of institution of higher education for purposes of student assistance programs



(1) Inclusion of additional institutions. Subject to paragraphs (2) through (4) of this subsection, the term “institution of higher education” for purposes of subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 includes, in addition to the institutions covered by the definition in section 1001 of this title—

(A) A proprietary institution of higher education (as defined in subsection (b) of this section);

(B) A postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in subsection (c) of this section); and

(C) Only for the purposes of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter, an institution outside the United States that is comparable to an institution of higher education as defined in section 1001 of this title and that has been approved by the Secretary for the purpose of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(2) Institutions outside the United States

(A) In general. For the purpose of qualifying as an institution under paragraph (1)(C), the Secretary shall establish criteria by regulation for the approval of institutions outside the United States and for the determination that such institutions are comparable to an institution of higher education as defined in section 1001 of this title (except that a graduate medical school, or a veterinary school, located outside the United States shall not be required to meet the requirements of section 1001 (a)(4) of this title). Such criteria shall include a requirement that a student attending such school outside the United States is ineligible for loans made, insured, or guaranteed under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter unless—

(i) In the case of a graduate medical school located outside the United States—

(I)(aa) At least 60 percent of those enrolled in, and at least 60 percent of the graduates of, the graduate medical school outside the United States were not persons described in section 1091(a)(5) of this title in the year preceding the year for which a student is seeking a loan under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter; and

(bb) At least 60 percent of the individuals who were students or graduates of the graduate medical school outside the United States or Canada (both nationals of the United States and others) taking the examinations administered by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates received a passing score in the year preceding the year for which a student is seeking a loan under part B of subchapter IV of this chapter; or

(II) The institution has a clinical training program that was approved by a State as of January 1, 1992; or

(ii) In the case of a veterinary school located outside the United States that does not meet the requirements of section 1001(a)(4) of this title, the institution’s students complete their clinical training at an approved veterinary school located in the United States.

(B) Advisory panel

- (i) In general. For the purpose of qualifying as an institution under paragraph (1)(C) of this subsection, the Secretary shall establish an advisory panel of medical experts that shall—
    - (I) Evaluate the standards of accreditation applied to applicant foreign medical schools; and
    - (II) Determine the comparability of those standards to standards for accreditation applied to United States medical schools.
  - (ii) Special rule if the accreditation standards described in clause (i) are determined not to be comparable, the foreign medical school shall be required to meet the requirements of section 1001 of this title.
- (C) Failure to release information. The failure of an institution outside the United States to provide, release, or authorize release to the Secretary of such information as may be required by subparagraph (A) shall render such institution ineligible for the purpose of part B of subchapter IV of this chapter.
- (D) Special rule. If, pursuant to this paragraph, an institution loses eligibility to participate in the programs under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, then a student enrolled at such institution may, notwithstanding such loss of eligibility, continue to be eligible to receive a loan under part B while attending such institution for the academic year succeeding the academic year in which such loss of eligibility occurred.
- (3) Limitations based on course of study or enrollment. An institution shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if such institution—
- (A) Offers more than 50 percent of such institution’s courses by correspondence, unless the institution is an institution that meets the definition in section 2471 (4)(C) of this title;
  - (B) Enrolls 50 percent or more of the institution’s students in correspondence courses, unless the institution is an institution that meets the definition in such section, except that the Secretary, at the request of such institution, may waive the applicability of this subparagraph to such institution for good cause, as determined by the Secretary in the case of an institution of higher education that provides a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards an associate or baccalaureate degree, respectively;
  - (C) Has a student enrollment in which more than 25 percent of the students are incarcerated, except that the Secretary may waive the limitation contained in this subparagraph for a nonprofit institution that provides a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree, or an associate’s degree or a postsecondary diploma, respectively; or
  - (D) Has a student enrollment in which more than 50 percent of the students do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and does not provide a 2-or 4-year program of instruction (or both) for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree or an associate’s degree, respectively, except that the Secretary may waive the

limitation contained in this subparagraph if a nonprofit institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the institution exceeds such limitation because the institution serves, through contracts with Federal, State, or local government agencies, significant numbers of students who do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

- (4) Limitations based on management. An institution shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if—
  - (A) The institution, or an affiliate of the institution that has the power, by contract or ownership interest, to direct or cause the direction of the management or policies of the institution, has filed for bankruptcy, except that this paragraph shall not apply to a nonprofit institution, the primary function of which is to provide health care educational services (or an affiliate of such an institution that has the power, by contract or ownership interest, to direct or cause the direction of the institution’s management or policies) that files for bankruptcy under chapter 11 of title 11 between July 1, 1998, and December 1, 1998; or
  - (B) The institution, the institution’s owner, or the institution’s chief executive officer has been convicted of, or has pled nolo contendere or guilty to, a crime involving the acquisition, use, or expenditure of funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, or has been judicially determined to have committed fraud involving funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42.
- (5) Certification. The Secretary shall certify an institution’s qualification as an institution of higher education in accordance with the requirements of subpart 3 of part G of subchapter IV of this chapter.
- (6) Loss of eligibility. An institution of higher education shall not be considered to meet the definition of an institution of higher education in paragraph (1) if such institution is removed from eligibility for funds under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 as a result of an action pursuant to part G of subchapter IV of this chapter.

(b) Proprietary institution of higher education

- (1) Principal criteria. For the purpose of this section, the term “proprietary institution of higher education” means a school that—
  - (A) Provides an eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;
  - (B) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1001 (a) of this title;
  - (C) Does not meet the requirement of paragraph (4) of section 1001 (a) of this title;
  - (D) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary pursuant to part G of subchapter IV of this chapter;
  - (E) Has been in existence for at least 2 years; and
  - (F) Has at least 10 percent of the school’s revenues from sources that are not derived from funds provided under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of

chapter 34 of title 42, as determined in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

(2) Additional institutions. The term “proprietary institution of higher education” also includes a proprietary educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in paragraph (1) of section 1001 (a) of this title, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.

(c) Postsecondary vocational institution.

(1) Principal criteria. For the purpose of this section, the term “postsecondary vocational institution” means a school that—

(A) Provides an eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation;

(B) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of section 1001 (a) of this title; and

(C) Has been in existence for at least 2 years.

(2) Additional institutions. The term “postsecondary vocational institution” also includes an educational institution in any State that, in lieu of the requirement in paragraph (1) of section 1001 (a) of this title, admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located.