

Chapter 4

APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

When a family wishes to receive Section 8 HCV assistance, the family must submit an application that provides the TCHAO with the information needed to determine the family's eligibility. HUD requires the TCHAO to place all families that apply for assistance on a waiting list. When HCV assistance becomes available, the TCHAO must select families from the waiting list in accordance with HUD requirements and TCHAO policies as stated in the administrative plan and the annual plan.

The TCHAO is required to adopt a clear approach to accepting applications, placing families on the waiting list, selecting families from the waiting list and must follow this approach consistently. The actual order in which families are selected from the waiting list can be affected if a family has certain characteristics designated by HUD or the TCHAO to receive preferential treatment. Funding earmarked exclusively for families with particular characteristics may also alter the order in which families are served.

HUD regulations require that all families have an equal opportunity to apply for and receive housing assistance, and that the TCHAO affirmatively further fair housing goals in the administration of the program [24 CFR 982.53, HCV GB p. 4-1]. Adherence to the selection policies described in this chapter ensures that the TCHAO will be in compliance with all relevant fair housing requirements, as described in Chapter 2.

This chapter describes HUD and TCHAO policies for taking applications, managing the waiting list and selecting families for HCV assistance. The policies outlined in this chapter are organized into three sections, as follows:

Part I: The Application/Pre-Application Process. This part provides an overview of the application/pre-application process, and discusses how applicants can obtain and submit applications/pre-applications. It also specifies how the TCHAO will handle the applications/pre-applications it receives.

Part II: Managing the Waiting List. This part presents the policies that govern how the TCHAO waiting list is structured, when it is opened and closed, and how the public is notified of the opportunity to apply for assistance. It also discusses the process the TCHAO will use to keep the waiting list current.

Part III: Selection for HCV Assistance. This part describes the policies that guide the TCHAO in selecting families for HCV assistance as such assistance becomes available. It also specifies how in-person interviews will be used to ensure that the TCHAO has the information needed to make a final eligibility determination.

PART I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

4-I.A. OVERVIEW

This part describes the policies that guide the TCHAO's efforts to distribute and accept applications and pre-applications, and to make preliminary determinations of applicant family eligibility that affect placement of the family on the waiting list. This part also describes the TCHAO's obligation to ensure the accessibility of the application process to elderly persons, people with disabilities, and people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

4-I.B. APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE [HCV GB, pp. 4-11 – 4-16]

Any family that wishes to receive HCV assistance must apply for admission to the program, unless otherwise provided by federal law (see Special Admissions below and on following pages). HUD permits the TCHAO to determine the format and content of HCV applications, as well how such pre-applications/applications will be made available to interested families and how applications will be accepted by the TCHAO. However, the PHA must include Form HUD-92006, Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing, as part of the PHA's application.

TCHAO Policy

1. TCHAO may, at its discretion, select pre-applicants/applicants to be placed on the waiting list based upon preference, date and time or lottery. The selection method will be stated in the Public Notice announcing the opening of the Waiting List.
2. Depending upon the length of time that pre-applicants/applicants may need to wait to receive assistance, the TCHAO may use a two-step application process.

A two-step process (*1. pre-application; 2. application*) may be used when it is expected that a family may not be selected from the waiting list for up to 60 days or more from the date of pre-application. Under the two-step application process, the TCHAO initially will require families to provide only the information needed to determine the family's placement on the waiting list (pre-application). The family will be required to provide all of the information necessary to establish family eligibility and level of assistance when the family is selected from the waiting list.

3. TCHAO will announce and give public notice on what method (electronic, mail, FAX, in person, etc.) will be used to accept applications/pre-applications to the wait list.
4. In the event applications/pre-applications will be accepted on-line (electronically), application/pre-application data will be automatically downloaded into the TCHAO computer database and arranged by preference, date and time or entered into the Lottery Pool for random selection, as indicated in the Public Notice.

The local preferences are as follows:

1. TCHAO will also accept applications from families and youths certified by the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) as eligible for the Family Unification Program (FUP). Upon receipt of the PCWA list of families and youths currently in the PCWA caseload, TCHAO must compare the names with those of families and youths already on the TCHAO HCV waiting list (if any).

Any family or youth on the TCHAO HCV waiting list that matches with the PCWA's list must be assisted in order of their position on the waiting list in accordance with TCHAO admission policies.

2. TCHAO will also accept applications from families and youths certified by the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) as eligible for the Family Unification Program (FUP) and Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Demonstration in the next order of priority on the waiting list. Eligibility requires a dual-agency (PCWA/TCHAO) determination. Program participants with a FUP Youth voucher who agree to sign an FSS Contract of Participation (Form HUD 52650) will maintain their housing assistance for a period not exceeding the length of the FSS Contract of Participation (in most cases, this limit will be no more than 5 years), however if the FSS contract is extended the FUP voucher can be extended for the entire length of the FSS Contract of Participation.

Any family or youth on the TCHAO HCV waiting list that matches with the PCWA's list must be assisted in order of their position on the waiting list in accordance with TCHAO admission policies.

3. Elderly and non-elderly persons with disabilities shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.
4. Non-elderly persons with disabilities shall be assisted in the order of priority on the waiting list for special vouchers set aside exclusively for this population.
5. Homeless veterans shall be assisted via special program vouchers identified as Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) in order of priority on the waiting list.
6. Homeless non-veterans shall be assisted in accordance with TCHAO policy stated herein.
7. Families presently residing within the boundaries of Tarrant County, Texas, at the time of application, shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.
8. In the event of a major disaster displacing large numbers of individuals and families, TCHAO will provide HCV assistance on a preferred selection basis to evacuees and/or victims of disasters, and will follow guidance established by HUD, FEMA, State and County officials, if any.

Applications/pre-applications must be fully completed in order to be accepted by the TCHAO for placement on the waiting list. Incomplete applications/pre-applications WILL NOT be accepted, and will not be returned for corrections.

Special program vouchers identified above will be issued in strict accordance with HUD guidance and direction for the special program vouchers.

4-I.C. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Elderly and Disabled Populations [24 CFR 8 and HCV GB, pp. 4-11 – 4-13]

The PHA must take a variety of steps to ensure that the application process is accessible to those people who might have difficulty complying with the normal, standard PHA application process. This could include persons with disabilities, certain elderly individuals, as well as persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). The PHA must provide reasonable accommodation to the needs of individuals with disabilities. The application-taking facility and the application process must be fully accessible, or the PHA must provide an alternate approach that provides full access to the application process. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of the PHA's policies related to providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Limited English Proficiency

PHA is required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency [24 CFR 1]. Chapter 2 provides a full discussion on the PHA's policies related to ensuring access to people with limited English proficiency (LEP).

TCHAO Policy

Upon request in advance during regular business hours, TCHAO will provide reasonable staff assistance to the elderly individuals, persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency.

In the event electronic applications are being accepted, TCHAO will provide a minimum of two (2) computers, for the use of elderly (62 years and older), persons with disabilities, and persons with Limited English Proficiency, during regular business hours and/or during other days, hours and times as may be published. Reasonable technical assistance may be provided by TCHAO staff, upon participant request in advance and staff availability.

Applicants may apply on-line by submission of an electronic application at: housing.tarrantcounty.com or as published in the Public Notice.

Upon advance request, reasonable staff assistance will be provided, if available, during stated business hours, to elderly persons, persons with disabilities and persons with Limited English Proficiency.

Homeless Preference: TCHAO will give preference to homeless applicants. Each fiscal year TCHAO will set aside a preference to no more than 50 Vouchers (depending on availability of funding) to individuals or families meeting all of the following criteria:

- a) Meet the TCHAO definition of homeless according to HUD's definition of homeless.
- b) Referrals submitted to TCHAO by a homeless service provider with whom TCHAO has executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the provider's responsibilities with respect to the provision of housing search assistance and supportive services/case management for the referred household.
- c) Have received a written commitment from the referring homeless service provider for housing search/location assistance.
- d) Have received a written commitment from the homeless service provider to offer support services/case management on an as needed basis to help the household transition from homelessness to permanent housing; and
- e) Have received a written commitment from the homeless service provider to offer supportive services/case management to help the household maintain housing and comply with HCV rules.

While a referral from the coalition of homeless service providers is required for this preference, use of the offered supportive services/case management is not a requirement. The choice of the applicant to refuse the offered services will not jeopardize any housing assistance for which they are eligible.

TCHAO will execute a Memorandum of Understanding with one entity representing a coalition of homeless service providers that will serve as the primary point of contact for communicating homeless referrals to TCHAO. TCHAO reserves the right to establish additional MOUs as necessary to ensure that homeless applicants have the opportunity to apply for housing assistance under this preference.

Reason(s) for the preference denial - Applicants have the right to appeal the denial of eligibility for the homeless preference using the established process for informal hearings.

Persons transitioning out of the Tarrant County Court's Treatment Programs will be included as a priority group as part of this preference. This would require a referral from the current case manager as well as documentation that the family was homeless prior to entering into the current program. This documentation must be provided as part of the referral.

Individuals and families transitioning, or "moving up," from Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units will also be included as a priority group as part of this homeless preference. These are persons that were previously homeless prior to entry into a PSH program but who no longer require that level of supportive services. This would require a referral from the current case manager or PSH provider as well as documentation that the family was homeless prior to entering into the PSH unit. This documentation must be provided as part of the referral.

To qualify for this preference an applicant must present evidence to TCHAO that the family is homeless by meeting one of the following definitions:

- An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence meaning:
- An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state or local government programs for low-income individuals)
- An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution
- A primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport or camping ground
- Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who-
- Have experienced a long term period, more than 60 days, without living independently in permanent housing; and
- Have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves, more than two moves in 60 days, over such period; and
- Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability or multiple barriers to employment.

4-I.D. PLACEMENT ON THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 9 and HCV GB p.2-7]

The PHA must accept applications/pre-applications from families for whom the list is open unless there is good cause for not accepting the application (such as denial of assistance) for the grounds stated in the regulations [24 CFR 982.206(b)(2)]. Where the family is determined to be ineligible, the PHA must notify the family in writing [24 CFR 982.201(f)]. Where the family is not determined to be ineligible, the family will be placed on a waiting list of applicants either by local preference, date and time or placed in the Lottery pool for random selection, as stated in the Public Notice.

No applicant has a right or entitlement to be listed on the waiting list, or to any particular position on the waiting list [24 CFR 982.202(c)].

Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List

TCHAO Policy

Where a family is determined to be ineligible, the TCHAO will send written notification of the ineligibility determination. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal review and explain the process for doing so (see Chapter 16).

Eligible for Placement on the Waiting List

TCHAO Policy

- Any family or youth certified by the PCWA as eligible, homeless veterans (VASH) and not on the HCV waiting list must be placed on the waiting list.
- Elderly and/or persons with disabilities shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list. Some applicants may qualify for the TCHAO NED Special Voucher Program.
- Families presently residing within the boundaries of Tarrant County, Texas, at the time of application, shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.
- Additionally, in the event of a major disaster displacing large numbers of individuals and families, TCHAO will provide HCV assistance on a preferred selection basis to evacuees and/or victims of disasters, and will follow guidance established by HUD, FEMA, State and County officials, if any.

The TCHAO will make available to all pre-applicants/applicants their status (wait list number) on the waiting list, at least sixty (60) calendar days after the closing of the waiting list.

Placement on the waiting list does not indicate that the family is, in fact, eligible for assistance. A final determination of eligibility will be made when the family is selected from the waiting list and a complete application has been submitted, verified and approved by TCHAO.

Applicants will be placed on the waiting list according to TCHAO preference(s) and the date and time their fully completed pre-application/application is received by the TCHAO.

PART II: MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

4-II.A. OVERVIEW

The TCHAO must have policies regarding various aspects of organizing and managing the waiting list of applicant families. This includes opening the list to new applicants, closing the list to new applicants, notifying the public of waiting list openings and closings, updating waiting list information, purging the list of families that are no longer interested in or eligible for assistance, as well as conducting outreach to ensure a sufficient number of applicants.

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

4-II.B. ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204 and 205]

The TCHAO's HCV waiting list must be organized in such a manner to allow the TCHAO to accurately identify and select families for assistance in the proper order, according to the admissions policies described in this plan.

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

- Applicant name;
- Family unit size;
- Date and time of application;
- Qualification for any local preference;
- Racial or ethnic designation of the head of household;

HUD requires the PHA to maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program unless it serves more than one county or municipality. Such PHAs are permitted, but not required, to maintain a separate waiting list for each county or municipality served.

TCHAO Policy

The TCHAO will maintain a single waiting list for the HCV program.

HUD directs that a family that applies for assistance from the HCV program must be offered the opportunity to be placed on the waiting list for any public housing, project-based voucher or moderate rehabilitation program the PHA operates if 1) the other programs' waiting lists are open, and 2) the family is qualified for the other programs.

HUD permits, but does not require, that PHA maintain a single merged waiting list for their public housing, Section 8, and other subsidized housing programs.

A family's decision to apply for, receive, or refuse other housing assistance must not affect the family's placement on the HCV waiting list, or any preferences for which the family may qualify.

TCHAO Policy

The TCHAO administers the HCV Program only, therefore will maintain a single waiting list for the HCV Program.

The organization of the TCHAO Waiting List is as follows:

1. Any family or youth certified by the PCWA as eligible and not on the HCV waiting list must be placed on the waiting list.

The TCHAO will determine if any families with children, or youths age 18 through 24 on its HCV waiting list are living in temporary shelters or on the street and may qualify for the Family Unification Program, and refer such applicants to the PCWA.

TCHAO will then determine if families with children, or youths age 18 through 24 referred by the PCWA are eligible for HCV assistance and place eligible families/youths on the HCV waiting list.

2. Elderly and/or persons with disabilities shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.

3. Families presently residing within the boundaries of Tarrant County, Texas, at the time of application, shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.

4. Additionally, in the event of a major disaster displacing large numbers of individuals and families, TCHAO will provide HCV assistance on a preferred selection basis to evacuees and/or victims of disasters, and will follow guidance established by HUD, FEMA, State and County officials, if any.

4-II.C. OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.206]

Closing the Waiting List

TCHAO is permitted to close the waiting list if it has an adequate pool of families to use its available HCV assistance. Alternatively, the TCHAO may elect to continue to accept applications only from certain categories of families that meet particular preferences or funding criteria.

TCHAO Policy

The TCHAO may elect to close the waiting list and will announce the closing by the same methods used for opening the waiting list.

Any applications not returned by the close of the waiting list will not be accepted and notice will be sent to the applicant.

Reopening the Waiting List

If the waiting list has been closed, it cannot be reopened until the PHA publishes a notice in local newspapers of general circulation, minority media, and other suitable media outlets. The notice must comply with HUD fair housing requirements and must specify who may apply, and where and when applications will be received.

TCHAO Policy

The TCHAO will announce the reopening of the waiting list at least 10 calendar days prior to the date applications will first be accepted. If the list is only being reopened for certain categories of families, this information will be contained in the notice.

TCHAO will also accept applications, despite the fact that the waiting list may be closed, from a FUP applicant family or youth who is not currently on the TCHAO's HCV waiting list.

The TCHAO will give public notice by publishing the relevant information on its website, in suitable media outlets and/or by distribution of flyers at major, commonly known, community organizations located within the broad jurisdiction of TCHAO.

4-II.D. FAMILY OUTREACH [HCV GB, pp. 4-2 to 4-4]

The PHA must conduct outreach as necessary to ensure that the PHA has a sufficient number of applicants on the waiting list to use the HCV resources it has been allotted.

Because HUD requires the PHA to serve a specified percentage of extremely low income families (see Chapter 4, Part III), the PHA may need to conduct special outreach to ensure that an adequate number of such families apply for assistance [HCV GB, p. 4-20 to 4-21].

PHA outreach efforts must comply with fair housing requirements. This includes:

- Analyzing the housing market area and the populations currently being served to identify underserved populations.
- Ensuring that outreach efforts are targeted to media outlets that reach eligible populations that are under-represented in the program.
- Avoiding outreach efforts that prefer or exclude people who are members of a protected class.

PHA outreach efforts must be designed to inform qualified families about the availability of assistance under the program. These efforts may include, as needed, any of the following activities:

- Submitting press releases to local and minority media sources (including print and electronic media).
- Developing informational materials and flyers to distribute to other agencies.
- Providing application forms to other public and private agencies that serve the low income population.
- Developing partnerships with other organizations that serve similar populations, including agencies that provide services for persons with disabilities.

TCHAO Policy

Appropriate press releases will be submitted to local and minority media sources including both electronic and print media.

4-II.E. REPORTING CHANGES IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

TCHAO Policy

While the family is on the waiting list, the family must immediately inform the TCHAO of changes in contact information, including current residence, mailing address, and phone number. The changes will only be accepted in writing or electronically.

4-II.F. UPDATING THE WAITING LIST [24 CFR 982.204]

HUD requires the TCHAO to establish policies to use when removing applicant names from the waiting list.

Purging the Waiting List

The decision to withdraw an applicant family that includes a person with disabilities from the waiting list is subject to reasonable accommodation. If the applicant did not respond to a PHA request for information or updates because of the family member's disability, the PHA must reinstate the applicant family to their former position on the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(c)(2)].

TCHAO Policy

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

To update the waiting list, the TCHAO will send an update request via first class mail to each family on the waiting list to determine whether the family continues to be interested in, and to qualify for, the program. This update request will be sent to the last address that the TCHAO has on record for the family. The update request will provide a deadline by which the family must respond and will state that failure to respond will result in the applicant's name being removed from the waiting list.

The family's response must be in writing and may be delivered in person, by mail, or by fax. Responses should be postmarked or received by the TCHAO not later than 15 calendar days from the date of the TCHAO letter.

If the family fails to respond within 15 calendar days, the family will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

If the notice is returned by the post office with no forwarding address, the TCHAO will attempt to contact the applicant at an alternate contact address if available. If an alternate contact address is unavailable the applicant will be removed from the waiting list without further notice.

If the notice is returned by the post office with a forwarding address, the notice will be re-sent to the address indicated. The family will have 15 calendar days to respond from the date the letter was re-sent.

If the notice is not returned to TCHAO by the post office, TCHAO presumes it was properly delivered by the post office and received by the addressee.

Similarly, any email or electronic transmission that is not returned to TCHAO electronically, the TCHAO presumes it was properly delivered and received by the addressee(s). It is the responsibility of all applicants to check their email and junk mail daily in order to keep abreast of all incoming communication.

If a family is removed from the waiting list for failure to respond, the Director or an appointed designee may reinstate the family if he/she determines the lack of response was due to TCHAO error, or to circumstances beyond the family's control.

Removal from the Waiting List

TCHAO Policy

If at any time an applicant family is on the waiting list, the TCHAO determines that the family is not eligible for assistance (see Chapter 3), the family will be removed from the waiting list.

If a family is removed from the waiting list because the TCHAO has determined the family is not eligible for assistance, a notice will be sent to the family's address of record as well as to any alternate address provided on the initial application. The notice will state the reasons the family was removed from the waiting and will inform the family how to request an informal review regarding the TCHAO's decision (see Chapter 16) [24 CFR 982.201(f)].

PART III: SELECTION FOR HCV ASSISTANCE

4-III.A. OVERVIEW

As vouchers become available, families on the waiting list must be selected for assistance in accordance with the policies described in this part.

The order in which families receive assistance from the waiting list depends on the selection method chosen by the TCHAO and is impacted in part by any selection preferences that the family qualifies for. The source of HCV funding also may affect the order in which families are selected from the waiting list.

The TCHAO must maintain a clear record of all information required to verify that the family is selected from the waiting list according to the TCHAO's selection policies [24 CFR 982.204(b) and 982.207(e)].

Persons and/or families selected for assistance under certain HUD funded program vouchers, i.e. Shelter Plus Care (S+C) and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD/VASH) vouchers are not selected from the Waiting List, but from rather from specified referral agencies as provided in the appropriate federal regulations.

4-III.B. SELECTION AND HCV FUNDING SOURCES

Special Admissions [24 CFR 982.203]

HUD may award funding for specifically-named families living in specified types of units (e.g., a family that is displaced by demolition of public housing; a non-purchasing family residing in a HOPE 1 or 2 projects; Shelter Plus Care (S+C); Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH), etc.

In these cases, the TCHAO may admit special admissions families outside of the regular waiting list process, i.e., families and individuals that are not on the waiting list, or without considering the family's position on the waiting list. These special admissions families do not have to qualify for any preferences, nor are they required to be on the HCV program Waiting List. The TCHAO must maintain records showing that such families were admitted with special program funding.

Targeted Funding [24 CFR 982.204(e)]

HUD may award a PHA funding for a specified category of families NOT on the waiting list. The TCHAO must use this funding only to assist the families within the specified category. Within this category of families, the order in which such families are assisted is determined according to the policies provided in the specific federal HUD program regulations.

The TCHAO administers the following types of targeted funding:

1. Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers, as awarded by HUD
2. Mainstream Vouchers as awarded by HUD
3. Enhanced Vouchers/Preservation Vouchers as awarded by HUD
4. Shelter Plus Care (S+C)

5. Veterans Affairs Supportive Services (VASH)
6. Non-Elderly Disabled (NED), as awarded by HUD

The TCHAO may house families who are impacted by a disaster under Special Admissions. Special Admissions families may be assisted without regard to whether they are currently on the HCV waiting list or their status on the waiting list at the highest preference level. These families will be served based on available funding. This action is contingent on HUD's, state, federal and local designation disaster-related assistance and funding. See Chapter 16 – Part X for additional information

Regular HCV Funding

Regular HCV funding may be used to assist any eligible family on the waiting list. Families are selected from the waiting list according to the policies provided in Section 4-III.C.

4-III.C. SELECTION METHOD

PHA must describe the method for selecting applicant families from the waiting list, including the system of admission preferences that the PHA will use [982.202(d)] for families on the waiting list.

Local Preferences [24 CFR 982.207; HCV p. 4-16]

TCHAO is permitted to establish local preferences, and to give priority to serving families that meet those criteria. HUD specifically authorizes and places restrictions on certain types of local preferences. HUD also permits the TCHAO to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the TCHAO Administrative Plan and the Consolidated Plan, and must be based on local housing needs and priorities that can be documented by generally accepted data sources.

TCHAO Policy

TCHAO has established the following local preferences to be applied to all applicants for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Residency preference will not have the purpose or effect of delaying or otherwise denying admission to the program based on the race, color, ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, or age of any member of an applicant family.

1. The TCHAO will permit preferred selection of Family Unification Program (FUP) eligible families and/or FUP eligible youths over other eligible applicants on the waiting list whenever an FUP eligible family or youth applies, and will offer any available FUP vouchers to said eligible families or youths.
2. Elderly and/or non-elderly persons with disabilities shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.
3. Families presently residing within the boundaries of Tarrant/Navarro County, Texas, at the time of application, shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.

4. Additionally, in the event of a major disaster displacing large numbers of individuals and families, TCHAO will provide HCV assistance on a preferred selection basis to evacuees and/or victims of disasters, and will follow guidance established by HUD, FEMA, State and County officials, if any.
5. Homeless veterans (VASH)
6. The TCHAO has received Mainstream vouchers to assist non-elderly persons with disabilities who are transitioning out of institutional or other segregated settings, at risk of institutionalization, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

Income Targeting Requirement [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)]

HUD requires that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 75% of the families admitted to the HCV program during the PHA's fiscal year. ELI families are those with annual incomes at or below 30% of the area median income. To ensure this requirement is met, a PHA may skip non-ELI families on the waiting list in order to select an ELI family.

Low income families admitted to the program that are "continuously assisted" under the 1937 Housing Act [24 CFR 982.4(b)], as well as low-income or moderate-income families admitted to the program that are displaced as a result of the prepayment of the mortgage or voluntary termination of an insurance contract on eligible low-income housing, are not counted for income targeting purposes [24 CFR 982.201(b)(2)(v)].

TCHAO Policy

The TCHAO will monitor progress in meeting the ELI requirement throughout the fiscal year. Extremely low-income families will be selected ahead of other eligible families on an as-needed basis to ensure the income target requirement is met.

Order of Selection

The TCHAO order of selection from the Wait List will be according to local preferences as indicated below, the date and time of application, or lottery pool random selection [24 CFR 982.207(c)].

1. The TCHAO will permit preferred selection of Family Unification Program (FUP) eligible families and/or FUP eligible youths over other eligible applicants on the waiting list whenever an FUP eligible family or youth applies, and will offer any available FUP vouchers to said eligible families or youths.
2. Elderly and/or non-elderly persons with disabilities shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.
3. Families presently residing within the boundaries of Tarrant/Navarro County, Texas, at the time of application, shall be assisted in the next order of priority on the waiting list.
4. Additionally, in the event of a major disaster displacing large numbers of individuals and families, TCHAO will provide HCV assistance on a preferred selection basis to evacuees and/or victims of disasters, and will follow guidance established by HUD, FEMA, State and County officials, if any.
5. Homeless veterans (VASH)

6. The TCHAO has received Mainstream vouchers to assist non-elderly persons with disabilities who are transitioning out of institutional or other segregated settings, at risk of institutionalization, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

When selecting families from the waiting list TCHAO is required to use targeted funding to assist only those families who meet the specified criteria, and TCHAO is not permitted to skip down the waiting list to a family that it can afford to subsidize when there are not sufficient funds to subsidize the family at the top of the waiting list [24 CFR 982.204(d) and (e)].

TCHAO Policy

Families will be selected from the waiting list according to local preference on a first come, first-served basis according to the date and time their fully completed application is received by the TCHAO, or by random computerized lottery pool selection.

Individuals and families that qualify for a local preference shall be selected from the waiting list ahead of higher placed families that do not qualify for the preference. However, within any local preference category, applicants will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis according to the priority of the local preference, date and time their complete application is received or lottery pool. Documentation will be maintained by the TCHAO as to whether families on the list qualify for and are interested in targeted funding. If a higher placed family on the waiting list is not qualified or not interested in targeted funding, there will be a notation maintained so that the TCHAO does not have to ask higher placed families each time targeted selections are made.

4-III.D. NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

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

TCHAO Policy

The TCHAO will notify the family by first class mail, when it is selected from the waiting list. The notice will inform the family of the following:

- Date, time, and location of the scheduled application interview, including any procedures for rescheduling the interview,
- Who is required to attend the interview,
- Documents that must be provided at the interview to document the legal identity of household members, including information about what constitutes acceptable documentation
- Other documents and information that should be brought to the interview

If a notification letter is returned to the TCHAO with no forwarding address, the family will be removed from the waiting list. A notice of denial (see Chapter 3) will be sent to the family's address of record, as well as to any known alternate address.

4-III.E. THE APPLICATION INTERVIEW

HUD recommends that the PHA obtain the information and documentation needed to make an eligibility determination through a private interview [HCV GB, pg. 4-16]. Being invited to attend an interview does not constitute admission to the program.

Assistance cannot be provided to the family until all SSN documentation requirements are met. However, if the PHA determines that an applicant family is otherwise eligible to participate in the program, the family may retain its place on the waiting list for a period of time determined by the PHA [Notice PIH 2010-3].

Reasonable accommodation must be made for persons with disabilities who are unable to attend an interview due to their disability.

TCHAO Policy

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

The head of household and the spouse/co-head must attend the interview together. Verification of information pertaining to adult members of the household not present at the interview will not begin until signed release forms are returned to the TCHAO.

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

Pending disclosure and documentation of social security numbers, the TCHAO will allow the family to retain its place on the waiting list for **thirty (30) calendar days**. If not all household members have disclosed their SSNs at the next time the TCHAO is issuing vouchers, the TCHAO will issue a voucher to the next eligible applicant family on the waiting list.

The family must provide the information necessary to establish the family's eligibility and determine the appropriate level of assistance, as well as completing required forms, providing required signatures, and submitting required documentation. If any materials are missing, the TCHAO will provide the family with a written list of items that must be submitted.

Any required documents or information that the family is unable to provide at the interview must be provided within 10 calendar days of the interview (Chapter 7 provides details about longer submission deadlines for particular items, including documentation of Social Security numbers and eligible non-citizen status). If the family is unable to obtain the information or materials within the required time frame, the family may request an extension. If the required documents and information are not provided within the required timeframe (plus any extensions) the family will be sent a notice of denial (See Chapter 3).

An advocate, interpreter, or other assistant may assist the family with the application and the interview process.

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

If the family is unable to attend a scheduled interview, the family should contact the PHA in advance of the interview to schedule a new appointment. In all circumstances, if a family does not attend a scheduled interview, the PHA will send another notification letter with a new interview appointment time. Applicants who fail to attend two scheduled interviews without PHA approval will be denied assistance based on the family's failure to supply information needed to determine eligibility. A notice of denial will be issued in accordance with policies contained in Chapter 3.

4-III.F. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The PHA must verify all information provided by the family (see Chapter 7). Based on verified information, the PHA must make a final determination of eligibility (see Chapter 3) and must confirm that the family qualified for any special admission, targeted admission, or selection preference that affected the order in which the family was selected from the waiting list.

TCHAO Policy

If the TCHAO determines that the family is ineligible, the TCHAO will send written notification of the ineligibility determination within 10 calendar days of the determination. The notice will specify the reasons for ineligibility, and will inform the family of its right to request an informal review (Chapter 16).

If a family fails to qualify for any criteria that affected the order in which it was selected from the waiting list (e.g. targeted funding, extremely low-income), the family will be returned to its original position on the waiting list. The TCHAO will notify the family in writing that it has been returned to the waiting list, and will specify the reasons for it.

If TCHAO determines the family eligible to receive assistance, TCHAO will invite the family to attend a briefing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 5.