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Project-Based Voucher Wait List Procedures

Owner/Property Manager: (owner is synonymous with property manager)

During the term of the HAP contract the owner must lease vacant project-based units to eligible families selected from the applicable Portland Housing Authority (PHA) waiting list. The owner is responsible for adopting written tenant selection procedures that are consistent with the purpose of improving housing opportunities for very low-income families and reasonably related to program eligibility and an applicants ability to perform the lease obligations.

The PHA has no responsibility or liability to the owner or any other person for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. The owner is responsible for screening of families based on their tenancy histories. An owner may consider a family's background with respect to such factors as payment of rent and utility bills; caring for a unit and premises; respecting the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their housing; drug –related criminal activity or other criminal activity that is a threat to the health, safety, or property of others; and compliance with other essential conditions of tenancy.

Wait List/Tenant Selection Procedure:

1. When vacancies occur the owner must promptly notify PHA of the vacancy. Please contact Melissa Cote by phone 773-4753 or e-mail mcote@porthouse.org. She will send the updated wait list for your specific property if one was not sent the first of the month. (Eleanor Albert should also be notified of the vacancy so she can begin the move-out process for the current tenant).
2. The owner must consider each applicant on the wait list in chronological order and annotate the applicable wait list code to document if the applicant is accepted, rejected or has a lower priority. Use the code that best fits the situation. There is not much space on the wait list and notes can be very hard to read. If you want to include more detail it would be better to attach a separate page with any applicable notes.
3. You may call applicants to make the process quicker but you must document the date and time, who you spoke to and a brief summary of the phone call. If an applicant can not be reached by phone or does not respond after your initial phone contact you must send a letter to ensure they are provided equal opportunity for housing. Applicant's phone numbers change frequently and they often forget to notify us.

4. We recommend that you send letters to the first 15 – 30 applicants and reference that they were referred from the Portland Housing Authority Wait List to help the applicant make the connection between our agencies. You should give them a time frame in which to respond. The norm is 10 business days.
5. If a suitable applicant is not found send letters to the next 15 – 30 applicants. If a later applicant completes your application process before an earlier applicant they may be accepted and the earlier applicant may be coded as a 3, application in process, and will not be removed from the wait list.
6. The owner is responsible for tenant selection in accordance with their tenant selection plan. The owner may refuse any family provided that the owner does not unlawfully discriminate. All applicants should be treated the same using the same selection criteria.
7. You must retain all supporting documentation for each applicant's annotation on the wait list. For example, for "1" No response, if you contacted by letter you should have a copy of the letter mailed to the applicant and any returned mail. Another example, for applicants denied for criminal background, negative credit history or poor landlord reference, you should maintain the document or phone call that supports that decision.
8. Once an applicant is accepted you do not have to continue through the wait list but it may be to your advantage to do so in order to prepare for future vacancies.
9. When the wait list has been reviewed, coded and the applicant selection has been made the owner must return the annotated Wait List to PHA. The selection must be e-mailed to Melissa Cote (mcote@porthouse.org) and must include the applicant's name, apartment number, anticipated move-in date and contact information (phone number / caseworker contact) along with the annotated wait list. Please annotate "Accepted" for all chosen applicants and use the following numerical codes to comment on all other applicants on the Wait List:
 - 1. No Response (to Letter and/or Application)**
 - 2. Poor References (Criminal, Credit History & Landlord)**
 - 3. Application Approved for Unit (send e-mail with name of applicant, current contact information and units approved for)**
 - 4. Returned Mail /Unable to locate**
 - 5. No Longer Interested or Housed Elsewhere**
 - 6. Lower Priority/ Lower Preference***
 - 7. Denied Due to Pet Policy**
 - 8. Infestation Problem**
 - 9. Deceased**
 - 10. No Priority/Preference**

PHA PREFERENCES INCLUDE:

Head/Spouse or Co-head is considered ELDERLY (62+)

Head/Spouse or Co-head is an individual with a DISABILITY

FAMILY WITH DEPENDENTS – minors (17 years old or younger) or 18 years old or older who is a full-time student who is not the Head/Spouse or Co-head

***LOWER PRIORITY/PREFERENCE:**

A household with a PHA preference, but not necessarily a secondary preference required by the landlord/property manager such as homelessness, visual impairment, etc. #6 notation will apply only to a few project-based properties.

10. To expedite the process, the owner should obtain copies of social security cards and birth certificates for all household members and INS documentation for all non-citizens. The family should provide verification of all assets, income and child care expenses. Such verifications are current bank statements, three recent consecutive pay stubs, recent social security benefit statements, etc. For Elderly and disabled families only (head, spouse or co-head is elderly/disabled) the family should also provide verification of medical expenses such as recent pharmacy statements (prior year) and out of pocket medical expenses. If an owner is not able to obtain the above documentation the application should be forwarded to PHA for processing.

Note: It is best not to give specific details to applicants regarding their position on the waiting list because it can change. For example, a later applicant may have a higher preference/priority than an earlier applicant.

11. PHA will complete the application process for the first applicant on the wait list that has been accepted to fill the vacancy. The application process includes interviewing the applicant, verifying income, preferences and family composition, and completing criminal background checks. Once all verifications are complete, PHA will determine if the applicant is eligible for assistance. If the PHA determines the applicant is not eligible for assistance they will notify the owner and send the applicant a letter stating the reason they have been denied.

12. Once approved by the PHA, the owner and applicant will be notified. The applicant will be scheduled for a briefing and a HQS inspection will be requested. The unit must pass the HQS inspection before a family can be leased up. The lease must be signed by all parties to complete the lease-up process.

13. If an applicant is rejected by the owner or does not respond PHA will send a letter to the applicant stating that they are being withdrawn from the waiting list and the reason for withdrawal based on the coded wait list. If the applicant disputes the reason they have been withdrawn the PHA may add them back to the wait list.

PHA Contact Information:

Wait List and Intake Process – Melissa Cote, mcote@porthouse.org

Lease-up and Tenant Issues – Eleanor Albert, ealbert@porthouse.org

HAP Contract & Amendments, Rent Changes & Vacancy Claims - Linda Ballew
lballew@porthouse.org

Director of Housing Services – Janice Bosse, jbosse@porthouse.org