

Chapter 12

RECERTIFICATIONS

[24 CFR 982.516]

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with HUD requirements, the PHA will reexamine the income and household composition of all families at least annually. Families will be provided accurate annual and interim rent adjustments. Recertifications and interim examinations will be processed in a manner that ensures families are given reasonable notice of rent increases. All annual activities will be coordinated in accordance with HUD regulation. It is a HUD requirement that families report all changes in household composition. This Chapter defines the PHA's policy for conducting annual recertifications and coordinating annual activities. It also explains the interim reporting requirements for families, and the standards for timely reporting.

A. ANNUAL ACTIVITIES [24 CFR 982.516, 982.405]

There are two activities the PHA must conduct on an annual basis. These activities will be coordinated whenever possible:

Recertification of Income and Family Composition

HQS Inspection

The PHA produces a monthly listing of units under contract to ensure that timely reviews of rent to owner, housing quality, and factors related to Total Tenant Payment/Family Share can be made.

Reexamination of the family's income and composition must be conducted at least annually.

Annual inspections: See "Housing Quality Standards and Inspections" chapter.

Rent Adjustments: See "Owner Rents, Rent Reasonableness and Payment Standards" chapter.

B. ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION/REEXAMINATION [24 CFR 982.516]

Families are required to be recertified at least annually.

Pre-Merger Reexamination Issues

For all pre-merger certificate (regular) tenancies the rent calculation methods will not change until the effective date of the second regular reexamination of family income and composition, following the merger date, unless the family moves or accepts a new lease from the owner.

All pre-merger voucher tenancies shall be considered and treated as voucher tenancies and will be subject to the voucher program requirements under 24 CFR 982.502, including housing

assistance payments calculation at 982.505.

If there has been an increase in the payment standard prior to the effective date of the first regular reexamination of a premerger Voucher or Over Fair Market Rent Tenancy Certificate following the merger date, the family will receive the benefit of the higher payment standard, provided there has not been a change in family size or composition that would require the PHA to adjust the family unit size.

(Prior to the family's second annual reexamination on or after 10/1/99, the applicable payment standard for the family will be used in rent calculation. At the second annual reexamination on or after the merger date, the lesser of the payment standard or gross rent will be used in rent calculation.)

Moves Between Reexaminations

When families move to another dwelling unit:

A recertification will be scheduled and the anniversary date will be changed.

Income limits are not used as a test for continued eligibility at recertification.

Reexamination Notice to the Family

The PHA will maintain a reexamination tracking system and the household will be notified by mail of the date and time for their interview at least 90 calendar days in advance of the anniversary date. If requested as an accommodation by a person with a disability, the PHA will provide the notice in an accessible format. The PHA will also mail the notice to a third party, if requested as reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. These accommodations will be granted upon verification that they meet the need presented by the disability.

Procedure

The PHA's procedure for conducting annual recertifications will be:

Schedule the date and time of appointments and mail a notification to the family.

Completion of Annual Recertification

The PHA will have all recertifications for families completed before the anniversary date. This includes notifying the family of any changes in rent at least 30 days before the scheduled date of the change in family rent.

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities who are unable to come to the PHA's office will be granted an accommodation by conducting the interview by mail, upon verification that the accommodation requested meets the need presented by the disability.

Collection of Information [24 CFR 982.516(f)]

The PHA has established appropriate recertification procedures necessary to ensure that the income data provided by families is complete and accurate.

The PHA will allow the family to complete the recertification form.

Or

The PHA representative will interview the family and enter the information provided by the family on the recertification form.

Or

The PHA will require the family to complete a Personal Declaration Form prior to all recertification interviews.

Requirements to Attend

The following family members will be required to attend the recertification interview:

All adult household members

If all adult household members are unable to attend the interview:

The appointment will be rescheduled

Failure to Respond to Notification to Recertify

The written notification must state which family members are required to attend the interview. The family may call to request another appointment date.

If the family does not appear for the recertification interview, and has not rescheduled or made prior arrangements with the PHA, the PHA will send the family notice of termination and offer them an informal hearing.

Exceptions to these policies may be made if the family is able to document an emergency situation that prevented them from canceling or attending the appointment or if requested as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability.

Documents Required From the Family

In the notification letter to the family, the PHA will include instructions for the family to bring the following:

Documentation of income for all Family members

Documentation of all liquid or non-liquid assets

Documentation of any deductions/allowances

Personal Declaration Form completed by all adult members

Verification of Information

The PHA will follow the verification procedures and guidelines described in this Plan. Verifications for reexaminations must be less than 120 days old.

Tenant Rent Increase

If tenant rent increases, a thirty day notice is mailed to the family prior to the anniversary date.

If less than thirty days are remaining before the scheduled effective date of the annual recertification, the tenant rent increase will be effective on the first of the month following the thirty day notice.

If there has been a misrepresentation or a material omission by the family, or if the family causes a delay in the reexamination processing, there will be a retroactive increase in rent to the anniversary date.

Tenant Rent Decreases

If tenant rent decreases, it will be effective on the first day of the month following the month in which the PHA was notified by the Family.

If the family causes a delay so that the processing of the reexamination is not complete by the anniversary date, rent change will be effective on the first day of the month following completion of the reexamination processing by the PHA.

C. REPORTING INTERIM CHANGES [24 CFR 982.516]

Program participants must report all changes in household composition to the PHA between annual reexaminations. This includes additions due to birth, adoption and court-awarded custody. The family must obtain PHA approval prior to all other additions to the household. All interim changes must be reported in person. An exception may be granted for this requirement in the case of a disability or other valid reason approved by the housing authority.

If any new family member is added, family income must include any income of the new family member. The PHA will conduct a reexamination to determine such additional income and will make the appropriate adjustments in the housing assistance payment and family unit size.

The U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status of additional family members must be declared and verified as required at the first interim or regular recertification after moving into the unit.

Increases in Income

Interim Reexamination Policy

Effective August 1, 2004, the family will be required to report any and all increases in family income, assets, household composition and household size, excluding cost-of-living increases for pensions, Social Security and SSI income. The PHA will conduct interim reexaminations when families have an increase in income, family size or family composition.

Families are required to report all changes of family income, assets, household composition or household size within 14 calendar days of the event.

The PHA will conduct an interim reexamination for these families to determine such additional income/assets and, the PHA will make the appropriate adjustments in housing assistance payments and tenant rent amounts.

Decreases in Income

Participants may report a decrease in income and other changes that would reduce the amount of tenant rent, such as an increase in allowances or deductions. The PHA must calculate the change if a decrease in income is reported.

PHA Errors

If the PHA makes a calculation error at admission to the program or at an annual reexamination, an interim reexamination will be conducted, if necessary, to correct the error, but the family will not be charged retroactively. Families will be given decreases, when applicable, retroactive to when the decrease for the change would have been effective if calculated correctly.

D. OTHER INTERIM REPORTING ISSUES

An interim reexamination does not affect the date of the annual recertification.

An interim reexamination will be scheduled for families with zero income every 90 days.

In the following circumstances, the PHA may conduct the interim recertification by mail:

Changes that will not result in a change in tenant rent or voucher size.

As a reasonable accommodation when requested. (See "Statement of Policies and Objectives" chapter)

Any changes reported by participants other than those listed in this section will be noted in the file by the staff person but will not be processed between regularly-scheduled annual recertifications.

E. INCOME CHANGES RESULTING FROM WELFARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 5.615]

The PHA will not reduce the family share of rent for families whose welfare assistance is reduced by the welfare agency due to a “specified welfare benefit reduction,” which is a reduction in benefits by the welfare agency specifically because of:

Fraud in connection with the welfare program; or

Non-compliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.

However, the PHA will reduce the rent if the welfare assistance reduction is a result of:

The expiration of a lifetime time limit on receiving benefits; or

A situation where the family has complied with welfare program requirements but cannot or has not obtained employment; or

A situation where a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements.

Definition of Covered Family

A household that receives benefits for welfare or public assistance from a State or public agency program which requires, as a condition of eligibility to receive assistance, the participation of a family member in an economic self-sufficiency program.

Definition of “Imputed Welfare Income”

The amount of annual income, not actually received by a family, as a result of a specified welfare benefit reduction, that is included in the family’s income for purposes of determining rent.

The amount of imputed welfare income is determined by the PHA, based on written information supplied to the PHA by the welfare agency, including:

The amount of the benefit reduction

The term of the benefit reduction

The reason for the reduction

Subsequent changes in the term or amount of the benefit reduction

The family's annual income will include the imputed welfare income, as determined at the family's annual or interim reexamination, during the term of welfare benefits reduction (as specified by the welfare agency).

The amount of imputed welfare income will be offset by the amount of additional income the family receives that commences after the sanction was imposed. When additional income from other sources is at least equal to the imputed welfare income, the imputed welfare income will be reduced to zero.

If the family was not an assisted resident when the welfare sanction began, imputed welfare income will not be included in the annual income.

If the family claims the amount of imputed welfare income has been calculated incorrectly, the PHA will review the calculation for accuracy. If the imputed welfare income amount is correct, the PHA will prove a written notice to the family that includes:

A brief explanation of how the amount of imputed welfare income was determined;

A statement that the family may request an informal hearing if they do not agree with the PHA determination.

(See "Verification Procedures" chapter.)

Verification Before Denying a Request to Reduce Rent

The PHA will obtain written verification from the welfare agency stating that the family's benefits have been reduced due to fraud or noncompliance with welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements *before* denying the family's request for rent reduction.

The PHA will rely on the welfare agency's written notice to the PHA regarding welfare sanctions.

Cooperation Agreements [24 CFR 5.613]

The PHA has executed a cooperation agreement with the local welfare agency in hopes of accomplishing three goals:

1. Target services and assistance to families who receive welfare assistance and receive Section 8 tenant-based assistance;
2. Improve the delivery of assistance to low-income families receiving welfare and federal housing assistance by transferring information to facilitate the administration of housing assistance in a manner that reinforces self-sufficiency; and
3. Reduce and discourage fraud and noncompliance with welfare self-sufficiency program requirements.

Family Dispute of Amount of Imputed Welfare Income

If the family disputes the amount of imputed income and the PHA denies the family's request to modify the amount, the PHA will provide the tenant with a notice of denial, which will include:

An explanation for the PHA's determination of the amount of imputed welfare income

A statement that the tenant may request an informal hearing.

F. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF RECERTIFICATIONS [HUD Notice PIH 98-6]

The HUD form 50058 will be completed and transmitted as required by HUD.

The Notice of Tenant Rent Change is mailed to the owner and the tenant. Signatures are not required by the PHA. If the family disagrees with the rent adjustment, they may request an informal hearing.

G. TIMELY REPORTING OF CHANGES IN INCOME (AND ASSETS) [24 CFR 982.516(c)]

Standard for Timely Reporting of Changes

The PHA requires that families report interim changes (due to a change in household composition or size) to the PHA within 14 calendar days of when the change occurs.

The PHA requires families with zero income to report all increases in income/assets of all household members to the PHA with 14 calendar days of such income change.

If the change is not reported within the required time period, or if the family fails to provide documentation or signatures, it will be considered untimely reporting.

Procedures when the Change is Reported in a Timely Manner

The PHA will notify the family and the owner of any change in the Housing Assistance Payment to be effective according to the following guidelines:

Increases in the Tenant Rent are effective on the first of the month following at least thirty days' notice.

Decreases in the Tenant Rent are effective the first of the month following the month in which the PHA was notified by the Family.

The change will not be made until the third party verification is received.

Procedures when the Change is Not Reported by the Family in a Timely Manner

If the family does not report the change as described under Timely Reporting (14 calendar days), the family will have caused an unreasonable delay in the interim reexamination processing and the following guidelines will apply:

Increase in Tenant Rent will be effective retroactive to the date it would have been effective had it been reported on a timely basis. The family will be liable for any overpaid housing assistance and may be required to sign a Repayment Agreement or make a lump sum payment.

Decreases in Tenant Rent are effective the first day of the month following the month in which the PHA was notified by the participant. If the family causes a delay so that the processing of the interim is not completed by the first day of the month following the month in which the PHA was notified by the participant, the interim will be effective the first day of the following month that all verifications are received and the interim process is complete.

Procedures when the Change is Not Processed by the PHA in a Timely Manner

"Processed in a timely manner," means that the change goes into effect on the date it should when the family reports the change in a timely manner. If the change cannot be made effective on that date, the change is not processed by the PHA in a timely manner.

In this case, an increase will be effective after the required thirty days' notice prior to the first of the month after completion of processing by the PHA.

If the change resulted in a decrease, the overpayment by the family will be calculated retroactively to the date it should have been effective, and the family will be credited for the amount.

H. CHANGES IN VOUCHER SIZE AS A RESULT OF FAMILY COMPOSITION CHANGES [24 CFR 982.516(c)]

(See "Subsidy Standards" chapter.)

I. CONTINUANCE OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED" FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.518]

Under the Noncitizens Rule, "Mixed" families are families that include at least one citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible members.

The Noncitizens Rule was implemented on or after November 29, 1996, and mixed families may receive prorated assistance only.

The Noncitizens rule was implemented prior to November 29, 1996, and "Mixed" families who were participants as of June 19, 1995, shall continue receiving full assistance if they meet all of the following criteria:

The head of household or spouse is a U.S. citizen or has eligible immigrant status; AND

All members of the family other than the head, the spouse, parents of the head or the spouse, and children of the head or spouse are citizens or eligible immigrants. The family may change the head of household to qualify under this provision.

J. MISREPRESENTATION OF FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

If any participant deliberately misrepresents the information on which eligibility or tenant rent is established, the PHA may terminate assistance and may refer the family file/record to the proper authorities for appropriate disposition. (See Program Integrity Addendum.)

Reserved