

Chapter 15

DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE

[24 CFR 5.902, 5.903, 5.905, 982.4, 982.54, 982.552, 982.553]

INTRODUCTION

The PHA may deny or terminate assistance for a family because of the family's action or failure to act. The PHA will provide families with a written description of the Family Obligations under the program, the grounds under which the PHA can deny or terminate assistance, and the PHA's informal hearing procedures. This Chapter describes when the PHA is required to deny or terminate assistance, and the PHA's policies for the denial of a new commitment of assistance and the grounds for termination of assistance under an outstanding HAP contract.

A. GROUNDS FOR DENIAL/TERMINATION [24 CFR 982.54, 982.552, 982.553]

If denial or termination is based upon behavior resulting from a disability, the PHA will delay the denial or termination in order to determine if there is an accommodation, that would negate the behavior resulting from the disability.

Form of Denial/Termination

Denial of assistance for an applicant may include any or all of the following:

- Denial for placement on the PHA waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a tenancy
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a tenancy
- Terminating housing assistance payments under an outstanding HAP contract
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Mandatory Denial and Termination [24 CFR 982.54(d), 982.552(b), 982.553(a), 982.553(b)]

The PHA must deny assistance to applicants, and terminate assistance for participants if the family is under contract and 180 days (or 12 months, depending on the HAP contract used) have elapsed since the PHA's last housing assistance payment was made. (See "Contract Terminations" chapter).

The PHA must permanently deny assistance to applicants, and terminate the assistance of persons convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for applicants, and terminate assistance for program participants, if the PHA determines that any household member is currently engaging in illegal use of a drug. See section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for applicants, and terminate assistance for program participants, if the PHA determines it has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's illegal drug use or a pattern or illegal drug use may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. See Section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards.

The PHA must deny admission to an applicant if the PHA determines that any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program. See section B of this chapter for the PHA's established standards regarding criminal background investigation and determining whether a member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program.

The PHA must terminate program assistance for a family evicted from housing assisted under the program for serious violation of the lease.

The PHA must deny admission to the program for an applicant or terminate program assistance for a participant if any member of the family fails to sign and submit HUD or PHA required consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with Part 5, subparts B and F.

The PHA must deny admission or terminate assistance when required under the regulations to establish citizenship or eligible immigration status.

Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 982.552(c)]

The PHA will deny program assistance for an applicant, or terminate program assistance for a participant, for any of the following reasons:

If any family member violates any family obligation under the program as listed in 24 CFR 982.551.

If any family member has violated the family obligation under 24 CFR 982.551 not to engage in any drug-related criminal activity as defined in the Ohio Revised Code.

If any family member has violated the family obligation under 24 CFR 982.551 not to engage in any violent criminal activity as defined in the Ohio Revised Code.

Any member of the family has ever been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the past five years.

If any member of the family commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

The family currently owes rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

The family has not reimbursed any PHA for amounts paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease.

The family breaches an agreement with a PHA to pay amounts owed to a PHA, or amounts paid to an owner by a PHA. The PHA at its discretion may offer the family the opportunity to enter into a repayment agreement. The PHA will prescribe the terms of the agreement. (See "Repayment Agreements" chapter.)

The family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel.

"Abusive or violent behavior towards PHA personnel" includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of expletives that are generally considered insulting, racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to insult or intimidate, may be cause for termination or denial.

"Threatening" refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate an intent to abuse or commit violence.

Actual physical abuse or violence will always be cause for termination.

If any member of the family engages in, or has engaged in drug or alcohol abuse that interferes with the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of other residents. See section B of this chapter.

If any member of the family commits drug-related criminal activity, or violent criminal activity within the last three (3) years as defined in the Ohio Revised Code. (See Section B of this chapter and 982.553 of the regulations).

Refer to "Eligibility for Admission" chapter, "Other Criteria for Admission" section for further information.

B. SCREENING AND TERMINATION FOR DRUG ABUSE AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Purpose

All federally assisted housing is intended to provide a place to live and raise families, not a place to commit crime, to use or sell drugs or terrorize neighbors. It is the intention of the PHA to fully endorse and implement a policy designed to:

Help create and maintain a safe and drug-free community

Keep our program participants free from threats to their personal and family safety

Help maintain an environment where children can live safely, learn and grow up to be productive citizens

Administration

All screening and termination of assistance procedures shall be administered fairly and in such a way as not to violate rights to privacy or discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, familial or marital status, disability, sex or sexual orientation.

Screening of Applicants

In an effort to prevent future drug related and other criminal activity, as well as other patterns of behavior that pose a threat to the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents, and as required by 24 CFR 982, subpart L and CFR Part 5, Subpart J, the PHA will endeavor to screen applicants as thoroughly and fairly as possible **for drug-related and violent criminal behavior.**

Such screening will apply to any member of the household who is 18 years of age or older.

HUD Definitions

Covered person, for purposes of 24 CFR Part 982 and this chapter, means a tenant, any member of the tenant's household, a guest or another person under the tenant's control.

Drug means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 USC 802).

Drug-related criminal activity means 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.

Guest, for purposes of this chapter and 24 CFR part 5, subpart A and 24 CFR Part 982, means a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant. The requirements of part 982 apply to a guest as so defined.

Household, for the purposes of 24 CFR Part 982 and this chapter, means the family and PHA-approved live-in aide.

Other person under the tenant's control, for the purposes of the definition of *covered person* and for 24 CFR Parts 5 and 982 and for this chapter, means that the person, although not staying as a guest (as defined in this chapter) in the unit, or was at the time of the activity in question, on the premises because of an invitation from the tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant. Absent evidence to the contrary, a person temporarily and infrequently on the premises solely for legitimate commercial purposes *is not under the tenant's control*.

Violent criminal activity means 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.

Standard for Violation

The PHA will deny participation in the program to applicants and terminate assistance to participants in cases where the PHA determines there is reasonable cause to believe that a household member is illegally using a drug or if the person abuses alcohol in a way that may interfere with the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents, including cases where the PHA determines that there is a pattern of illegal use of a drug or pattern of alcohol abuse.

“Engaged in or engaging in” violent criminal activity means any act within the past one year by applicants, participants, or household members, which involved 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, which resulted in the arrest and/or conviction of the applicant, participant or household member.

In evaluating evidence of negative past behavior, the PHA will give fair consideration to the seriousness of the activity with respect to how it would affect other residents, and/or likelihood of favorable conduct in the future which could be supported by evidence of rehabilitation.

Drug Related and Violent Criminal Activity

Ineligibility for admission if Evicted for Drug-Related Activity: Persons evicted from federally-assisted housing because of drug-related criminal activity are ineligible for admission to the Section 8 program for a five-year period beginning on the date of such eviction.

However, the household may be admitted if, after considering the individual circumstances of the household, the PHA determines that:

The evicted household member who engaged in drug-related criminal activity has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the PHA.

The circumstances leading to eviction no longer exist because:

The criminal household member has died.

The criminal household member is imprisoned.

Applicants will be denied assistance if they have been:

Convicted for drug-related or violent criminal activity within the last three years prior to the date of the certification interview.

Denial of Assistance for Sex Offenders

The PHA will deny admission if any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program. In screening applicants, the PHA will perform criminal history background checks to determine whether any household member is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement.

Termination of Assistance for Participants

Termination of Assistance for Drug-related Criminal Activity or Violent Criminal Activity

Under the family obligations listed at 24 CFR 982.551, the members of the household must not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. HUD regulations at 24 CFR 982.553(b) require the PHA to establish standards for termination of assistance when this family obligation is violated. The PHA has established the following standards for termination of assistance for the family when a household member has violated the family obligation to refrain from participating in drug-related or violent criminal activity.

Assistance will be terminated for participants who have been:

Convicted for drug-related or violent criminal activity during participating in the program, and within the last three years prior to the date of the notice to terminate assistance.

In appropriate cases, the PHA may permit the family to continue receiving assistance provided that family members determined to have engaged in the proscribed activities will not reside in the unit. If the violating member is a minor, the PHA may consider individual circumstances with the advice of Juvenile Court officials.

The PHA will waive the requirement regarding drug-related criminal activity if:

The person demonstrates successful completion of a credible rehabilitation program approved by the PHA, or

The circumstances leading to the violation no longer exist because the person who engaged in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity is no longer in the household due to death or incarceration.

Terminating Assistance for Alcohol Abuse by Household Members

Under the family obligations listed at 24 CFR 982.551, the members of the household must not abuse alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. Assistance will be terminated due to violation of a family obligation if the PHA determines that a member of the household has demonstrated a pattern of alcohol abuse that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

Notice of Termination of Assistance

In any case where the PHA decides to terminate assistance to the family, the PHA must give the family written notice which states:

The reason(s) for the proposed termination,

The effective date of the proposed termination,

The family's right, if they disagree, to request an Informal Hearing to be held before termination of assistance.

The date by which a request for an informal hearing must be received by the PHA.

If the PHA proposes to terminate assistance for criminal activity as shown by a criminal record, the PHA will provide the subject of the record and the tenant with a copy of the criminal record.

The PHA will simultaneously provide written notice of the contract termination to the owner so that it will coincide with the Termination of Assistance. The Notice to the owner will not include any details regarding the reason for termination of assistance.

Required Evidence

Preponderance of 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. The intent is not to prove criminal liability, but to establish that the act(s) occurred. Preponderance of evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

Credible evidence may be obtained from police and/or court records. Testimony from neighbors, when combined with other factual evidence can be considered credible evidence. Other credible evidence includes documentation of drug raids or arrest warrants.

The PHA will pursue fact-finding efforts as needed to obtain credible evidence.

Confidentiality of Criminal Records

The PHA will ensure that any criminal record received is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed once the purpose for which it was requested is accomplished.

Misuse of the above information by any employee will be grounds for reprimand and possible termination of employment. Legal penalties for misuses are contained in the Ohio Revised Code.

The PHA will document in the family's file the circumstances of the criminal report and the date the report was destroyed.

C. FAMILY OBLIGATIONS [24 CFR 982.551]

The family must supply any information that the PHA or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status (as provided by 24 CFR 982.551). "Information" includes any requested certification, release or other documentation.

The family must supply any information requested by the PHA or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition in accordance with HUD requirements.

The family must disclose and verify Social Security Numbers (as provided by 24 CFR 5.216) and must sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information in accordance with 24 CFR 5.230.

All information supplied by the family must be true and complete.

The family is responsible for an HQS breach caused by the family as described in 982.404(b).

The family must allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.

The family may not commit any serious or repeated violations of the lease.

The family must notify the owner and, at the same time, notify the PHA before the family moves out of the unit or terminates the lease upon notice to the owner.

The family must promptly give the PHA a copy of any owner eviction notice.

The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.

The composition of the assisted family residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must promptly inform the PHA of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request PHA approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

The family must promptly notify the PHA if any family member no longer resides in the unit.

If the PHA has given approval, a foster child or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. If the family does not request approval or PHA approval is denied, the family may not allow a foster child or live-in aide to reside with the assisted family.

Members of the household may engage in legal profit-making activities in the unit, but only if such activities are incidental to primary use of the unit as a residence by members of the family.

The family must not sublease or let the unit.

The family must not assign the lease or transfer the unit.

The family must supply any information or certification requested by the PHA to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any PHA-requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with the PHA for this purpose. The family must promptly notify the PHA of absence from the unit.

The family must not own or have any interest in the unit.

The members of the family must not commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any Federal housing program.

The household members may not engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. The members of the household must not abuse alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. An assisted family, or members of the family, may not receive Section 8 tenant-based assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or for a different unit, under any duplicative (as determined by HUD or in accordance with HUD requirements) federal, State or local housing assistance program.

The family must notify the PHA of any increase in total Family income/assets if the family has reported zero income. The family must report the increase in income or assets within 14 calendar days of the change.

Housing Authority Discretion [24 CFR 982.552(c)]

In deciding whether to deny or terminate assistance because of action or failure to act by members of the family, the PHA has discretion to consider all of the circumstances in each case, including the seriousness of the case. The PHA will use its discretion in reviewing the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members and the length of time since the violation occurred. The PHA may also review the family's more recent history and record of compliance, and the effects that denial or termination of assistance may have on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure to act.

The PHA may impose, as a condition of continued assistance for other family members, a requirement that family members who participated in, or were culpable for the action or failure to act, will not reside in the unit. The PHA may permit the other members of a family to continue in the program.

Enforcing Family Obligations

Explanations and Terms

The term "Promptly" when used with the Family Obligations always means "within 14 calendar days." Denial or termination of assistance is always optional except where this Plan or the regulations state otherwise.

HQS Breach

The inspector will determine if an HQS breach as identified in 24 CFR 982.404 (b) is the responsibility of the family.

Lease Violations

The following criteria will be used to decide if a serious or repeated violation of the lease will result in termination of assistance:

If the owner terminates tenancy through court action for serious or repeated violation of the lease.

If the owner notifies the family of termination of tenancy assistance for serious or repeated lease violations, and the family moves from the unit prior to the completion of court action, and the PHA determines that the cause is a serious or repeated violation of the lease based on available evidence.

Nonpayment of rent is considered a serious violation of the lease.

Proposed Additions to the Family

The PHA will deny a family's request to add additional family members who are:

Persons who have been evicted from public housing.

Persons who have previously violated a family obligation listed in 24CFR 982.551 of the HUD regulations.

Persons who commit drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity.

Persons who commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.

Persons who currently owe rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

Persons who have engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel.

Family Member Moves Out

Families are required to notify the PHA if any family member leaves the assisted household. When the family notifies the PHA, they must furnish the following information:

The date the family member moved out.

The new address, if known, of the family member.

A statement as to whether the family member is temporarily or permanently absent.

Limitation on Profit-making Activity in Unit

If the business activity area results in the inability of the family to use any of the critical living areas, such as a bedroom utilized for a business, which is not available for sleeping, it will be considered a violation.

If the PHA determines that the use of the unit as a business is not incidental to its use as a dwelling unit, it will be considered a program violation.

If the PHA determines the business is not legal, it will be considered a program violation.

Interest in Unit

The owner may not reside in the assisted unit regardless of whether (s) he is a member of the assisted family, unless the family owns the mobile home and rents the pad.

Fraud

In each case, the PHA will consider which family members were involved, the circumstances, and any hardship that might be caused to innocent members.

In the event of false citizenship claims: (See section below)

D. PROCEDURES FOR NON-CITIZENS [24 CFR 5.514, 5.516, 5.518]

Denial or Termination due to Ineligible Immigrant Status

Applicant or participant families in which all members are neither U.S. citizens nor eligible immigrants are not eligible for assistance and must have their assistance terminated. The PHA must offer the family an opportunity for a hearing. (See "Eligibility for Admission" chapter, section on Citizenship/Eligible Immigration Status.)

Assistance may not be terminated while verification of the participant family's eligible immigration status is pending.

False or Incomplete Information

When the PHA has clear, concrete, or substantial documentation (such as a permanent resident card or information from another agency) that contradicts the declaration of citizenship made by an applicant or participant, an investigation will be conducted and the individual will be given an opportunity to present relevant information.

The PHA will deny or terminate assistance based on the submission of false information or misrepresentation.

Procedure for Denial or Termination

If the family (or any member) claimed eligible immigrant status and the INS primary and secondary verifications failed to document the status, the family may make an appeal to the INS and request a hearing with the PHA either after the INS appeal or in lieu of the INS appeal.

After the PHA has made a determination of ineligibility, the family will be notified of the determination and the reasons and informed of the option for prorated assistance (if applicable).

E. ZERO (\$0) ASSISTANCE TENANCIES

HAP Contracts Prior to 10/2/95

For contracts, which were effective prior to 10/2/95, the PHA is liable for unpaid rent and damages if the family vacates during the allowable 12 months after the last HAP payment. The PHA must perform all of the functions normally required, such as reexaminations and inspections.

The participant will be notified of the right to remain on the program at \$0 assistance for 12 months. If the family is still in the unit after 12 months, the assistance will be terminated.

In order for a family to move to another unit during the 12 month period, the rent for the new unit would have to be high enough to necessitate a housing assistance payment.

HAP Contracts On or After 10/2/95 [24 CFR 982.455 (a)]

For contracts effective on or after 10/2/95, the PHA has no liability for unpaid rent or damages, and the family may remain in the unit at \$0 assistance for up to 180 days after the last HAP payment. If the family is still in the unit after 180 days, the assistance will be terminated. If, within the 180-day timeframe, an owner rent increase or a decrease in the Total Tenant Payment causes the family to be eligible for a housing assistance payment, the PHA will resume assistance payments for the family.

In order for a family to move to another unit during the 180 days, the rent for the new unit would have to be high enough to necessitate a housing assistance payment.

F. OPTION NOT TO TERMINATE FOR MISREPRESENTATION [24 CFR 982.551, 982.552(c)]

If the family has misrepresented any facts that caused the PHA to overpay assistance, the PHA may choose not to terminate and may offer to continue assistance provided that the family executes a Repayment Agreement and makes payments in accordance with the agreement or reimburses the PHA in full.

G. MISREPRESENTATION IN COLLUSION WITH OWNER [24 CFR 982.551, 982.552 (c)]

If the family intentionally, willingly, and knowingly commits fraud or is involved in any other illegal scheme with the owner, the PHA will deny or terminate assistance.

In making this determination, the PHA will carefully consider the possibility of overt or implied intimidation of the family by the owner and the family's understanding of the events.

H. MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND DEADLINES [24 CFR 982.551, 982.552 (c)]

It is a Family Obligation to supply information, documentation, and certification as needed for the PHA to fulfill its responsibilities. The PHA schedules appointments and sets deadlines in order to obtain the required information. The Obligations also require that the family allow the PHA to inspect the unit, and appointments are made for this purpose.

An applicant or participant who fails to keep an appointment, or to supply information required by a deadline without notifying the PHA, may be sent a Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance for failure to provide required information, or for failure to allow the PHA to inspect the unit.

The family will be given information about the requirement to keep appointments.

Appointments will be scheduled and time requirements will be imposed for the following events and circumstances:

Eligibility for Admissions

Verification Procedures

Voucher Issuance and Briefings

Housing Quality Standards and Inspections

Recertifications (annual/interim)

Hearings and Appeals

The Housing Authority will terminate housing assistance if a participant misses two (2) scheduled in office appointments or two (2) scheduled inspections for the purpose of an interim change, annual recertification or Quality Control inspection.

Exceptions will be taken into consideration at the discretion of the PHA for these reasons:

- 1) Extenuating circumstances such as hospitalization, medical emergency or a family emergency. Verification required.
- 2) Extenuating circumstances pertaining to a family member's disability. Verification required.
- 3) Situations that would jeopardize the job security of the participant. Verification required.

Reserved