

## Chapter 5

### SUBSIDY STANDARDS

[24 CFR 982.54(d)(9)]

#### **INTRODUCTION**

HUD guidelines require that PHA's establish subsidy standards for the determination of family unit size, and that such standards provide for a minimum commitment of subsidy while avoiding overcrowding. The standards used for the unit size selected by the family must be within the minimum unit size requirements of HUD's Housing Quality Standards. This Chapter explains the subsidy standards, which will be used to determine the voucher size (family unit size) for various sized families when they are selected from the waiting list, as well as the PHA's procedures when a family's size changes or a family selects a unit size that is different from the Voucher.

#### **A. DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT (VOUCHER) SIZE** [24 CFR 982.402]

The PHA does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room, but there must be at least one person per bedroom on the Voucher. The PHA's subsidy standards for determining voucher size shall be applied in a manner consistent with Fair Housing guidelines.

All standards in this section relate to the number of bedrooms on the Voucher, not the family's actual living arrangements.

The unit size on the Voucher remains the same as long as the family composition remains the same, regardless of the actual unit size rented.

One bedroom will be generally be assigned for each two family members. The PHA will consider factors such as family characteristics including sex, age, or relationship. Consideration will also be given for medical reasons and the presence of a live-in aide.

Generally, the PHA assigns one bedroom to two people within the following guidelines:

Persons of the opposite sex (other than spouses), and unrelated adults should be allocated a separate bedroom.

Separate bedrooms should be allocated for persons of the opposite sex (other than adults who have a spousal relationship).

Foster children will be included in determining unit size only if they will be in the unit for more than 12 months.

Live-in attendants will generally be provided a separate bedroom.

Space will not be provided for a family member, other than a spouse, who will be absent most of the time, such as a member who is away in the military.

A single pregnant woman with no other family members must be treated as a two-person family.

Single person families shall be allocated one bedroom.

A two-bedroom unit may be used by a two-member family, which consists of a single parent and a child.

The bedroom size assigned will not require a parent and a child to occupy the same bedroom or living/sleeping room.

A two-bedroom unit may be used by a couple who, due to medical reasons, must have separate bedrooms or living/sleeping rooms, as approved by the PHA.

Two children of the same sex who are at least five years or more age difference qualify for separate bedrooms.

#### GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING VOUCHER SIZE

Voucher Size	Persons in Household	
	Minimum Number	Maximum Number
1 Bedroom	1	4
2 Bedrooms	2	6
3 Bedrooms	3	8
4 Bedrooms	4	10
5 Bedrooms	5	12
6 Bedrooms	6	14

**B. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS** [24 CFR 982.403(a) & (b)]

The PHA shall grant exceptions from the subsidy standards if the family requests and the PHA determines the exceptions are justified by the relationship, age, sex, health or disability of family members, or other individual circumstances.

The PHA will grant an exception upon request as an accommodation for persons with disabilities. Circumstances may dictate a larger size than the subsidy standards permit when persons cannot share a bedroom because of a need, such as a:

Verified medical or health reason. Documentation verifying the need or justification will be required as appropriate.

Elderly persons or persons with disabilities who may require a live-in attendant.

**Request for Exceptions to Subsidy Standards**

The family may request a larger sized voucher than indicated by the PHA's subsidy standards. Such request must be made in writing. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger bedroom. Documentation verifying the need or justification will be required as appropriate.

Requests based on health related reasons must be verified.

**PHA Error**

If the PHA errs in the bedroom size designation, the family will be issued a Voucher of the appropriate size.

**Changes for Applicants**

The voucher size is determined prior to the briefing by comparing the family composition to the PHA subsidy standards. If an applicant requires a change in the voucher size, based on the requirements of the PHA subsidy standards, the above referenced guidelines will apply.

**Changes for Participants**

The members of the family residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must obtain approval of any additional family member before the new member occupies the unit except for additions by birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, in which case the family must inform the PHA within 14 calendar days. The above referenced guidelines will apply.

**Underhoused Families**

If a unit does not meet HQS space standards due to an increase in family size, (unit too small), the PHA will issue a new voucher of the appropriate size and assist the family in locating a suitable unit.

### Pre-merger Certificate Families Only:

If a premerger certificate family is occupying a unit, which has more bedrooms than allocated under the PHA's subsidy standards, and the gross rent exceeds the FMR/Exception Rent for the family size under the PHA's subsidy standards, the PHA will issue the family a new voucher, of the appropriate size, and assist the family in finding a suitable unit.

Premerger certificate families who are under-occupying a unit as defined above will be issued a voucher and given a minimum of sixty days to locate a new unit before assistance is terminated.

In such cases the PHA's voucher term extension policy will be applicable.

The PHA will also notify the family of the circumstances under which an exception will be granted.

If a family with a disability is underhoused in an accessible unit.

If a family requires the additional bedroom because of a health problem, which has, been verified by the PHA.

### **Transfer Waiting List**

When a change in family composition requires a larger Voucher size and no funds are available, the family will be placed on a Transfer List.

Families will be selected from the Transfer List before families are selected from the applicant waiting list. This assures that families who are already on the program are in the appropriate sized units.

Families will be selected from this list when there is available funding, in the following sequence:

A participant family (whose family composition has been approved by the PHA) who requires a change in Voucher size because they are living in a unit which is overcrowded according to Housing Quality Standards.

A participant family (whose family composition has been approved by the PHA) who requires a change in Voucher size under the Subsidy Standards, but not under Housing Quality Standards.

All others who require a transfer as determined by the PHA.

**C. UNIT SIZE SELECTED** [24 CFR 982.402(c)]

The family may select a different size dwelling unit than that listed on the Voucher. There are three criteria to consider:

Subsidy Limitation: The family unit size as determined for a family under the PHA subsidy standard for a family assisted in the voucher program is based on the PHA's adopted payment standards. The payment standard for a family shall be the *lower of*:

The payment standard amount for the family unit size; or

The payment standard amount for the unit size rented by the family.

Utility Allowance: The utility allowance used to calculate the gross rent is based on the actual size of the unit the family selects, regardless of the size authorized on the family's Voucher.

Housing Quality Standards: The standards allow two persons per living/sleeping room and permit maximum occupancy levels (assuming a living room is used as a living/sleeping area) as shown in the table below. The levels may be exceeded if a room in addition to bedrooms and living room is used for sleeping.

**HQS GUIDELINES FOR UNIT SIZE SELECTED**

Unit Size	Maximum Number in Household
0 Bedroom	2
1 Bedroom	4
2 Bedrooms	6
3 Bedrooms	8
4 Bedrooms	10
5 Bedrooms	12
6 Bedrooms	14