

May 2, 2016

## Chapter 4 of the ACOP

### **BHA Preferences:**

Preferences do not guarantee admission; rather, they establish the order of placement on the waiting list. BHA will use both Ranking Preferences and Local Preferences to determine the placement on the waiting list.

The list will be aggregated, meaning that the applicant with multiple preferences will be placed higher than one with fewer preferences taking into consideration the applicant's circumstances at the time of pre-application. Preferences will be granted to the applicant who is otherwise qualified and who, at the time of unit offer, meets the definitions of the preferences for both Ranking Preferences and Local Preferences.

Ranking Preferences will be numerically ranked, with the highest preference being given a weight of

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Weight 4 | <b><u>Displaced:</u></b> Applicants that can document that they have been displaced by a natural disaster that has been declared by the President of the United States. Also, individuals who are displaced through no fault of their own because of a government action may be considered to be displaced. |
| Weight 3 | <b><u>Disabled/ Elderly:</u></b> A person who is 62 years of age, or a head of house, spouse, co-head <i>or child</i> of the household will qualify if documentation is received that proves that they are disabled, through social security or a medical professional.                                     |
| Weight 3 | <b><u>Working:</u></b> Families who earn income from wages (adult family member) with at least 20 hours of work each week.  |
| Weight 2 | <b><u>Families/ Near Elderly:</u></b> that do not have earned income and/or near elderly, who are between the ages of 50 to 61.   |
| Weight 1 | <b><u>Single People:</u></b> all single persons, who are not elderly, disabled, or handicapped, regardless of residency status.   |

## **Local Preferences:**

**Resident preference** will be given to those applicants that can verify at the time of eligibility appointment that they have a valid Bethlehem Address.

Weight 4

**Veteran's preference** will be given to those that are veterans, serviceman, and servicewomen and their immediate family (spouse, dependent children) currently in active service or honorably discharged.

Weight 3

All preference claims must be verified in writing before the preference will be given to the applicant. Applications received without the proof of preferences will not be added to the list.

Applicants are only allowed to check one waiting list to be applied to, either the public housing or the high rise waiting list. Applicants can only apply to a waiting list if it is currently opened at the time in which application is received.

Applicants on the waiting list who did not qualify for any preference when they applied may experience a change in circumstances, and that may qualify the applicant for a preference. The reverse may also occur. In such instances the family should contact BHA so that their status may be recertified or reverified. If the preference status changes, the applicant(s) will retain the original date and time of the application.

If the applicant now qualifies for a preference, they will be moved up or down the waiting list according to the preferences claimed, and still retain the original date and time of the application, and the applicant will be informed in writing of how the change in status has affected their position on the waiting list.

If the applicant claims but does not qualify for a preference, the applicant will be given an opportunity to prove that they do qualify for the available preference. (See grievance hearing section of the ACOP).

## **Withdrawing an application from the Waiting List**

BHA will only remove applicants from the waiting list if they have been housed, if the applicant requests for their names to be removed, if the application was withdrawn or rejected, or if the applicant has refused an offer of a housing unit without good cause.

Applications may be withdrawn or removed either at the applicant's request or because BHA is unable to contact them to follow up on their application. No informal hearing is required when BHA withdraws an application. However, consideration is given to all that contest the reason why the application was withdrawn from the waiting list, such as health concerns and/or disabilities (Reasonable Accommodation).

### **Reasons for Withdrawal of Application**

- The applicant provides a written request to remove their name from the waiting list.
- The applicant has failed to advise BHA of his/her continued interest in the public housing program during waiting list updates. (Update Packets)
- BHA will make reasonable efforts to contact the applicant by mail to update the waiting list, if not successful the application will be removed from the list.
- BHA will make reasonable efforts to contact the applicant to schedule interview(s) as necessary to complete the application process, or to obtain information regarding processing of the application. When an applicant fails to provide information requested to determine eligibility, BHA will notify the family that they have 10 working days to provide all necessary information or to schedule an interview. If the applicant fails to respond within the 10 day period, the application will be withdrawn from the waiting list unless health concerns and/or disabilities prevented the applicant from responding by the due date.
  
- If the applicant has an outstanding balance owed to BHA.
- If the applicant has failed to meet the home-visit requirement.
- If the applicant fails BHA's screening because of a documented tenant history of
  - ✓ Poor past performance in meeting financial obligations, especially rent and utilities.
  - ✓ A record of disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits at prior residence(s) that may adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of other residents, or cause damage to the unit or development.
  - ✓ Involvement in criminal activity on the part of any family member listed on the application that would adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of other tenants.
  - ✓ A record of eviction from any subsidized housing such as public housing, or termination from Section 8 program.
  - ✓ A record of prior evictions from previous tenancy.
  - ✓ Inability or unwillingness to comply with the terms of the BHA lease.
  - ✓ Misrepresentation of information related to the eligibility, award of preference for admission, allowances, family composition or rent.

## **Removing or dropping an applicant to the bottom of the list**

In keeping with BHA policy, if an applicant receives 2 offers of a unit and rejects both offers without good cause, BHA will either drop the applicant to the bottom of the waiting list with a new date and time of the application, or remove the applicant from the waiting list if requested by the applicant.