

SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER

ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

MCCOOK HOUSING AGENCY

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SECTION 8 ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

1.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

1.1 FAIR HOUSING

It is the policy of the McCook Housing Agency to comply fully with all Federal, State, and local nondiscrimination laws; the Americans with Disabilities Act; and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations governing Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, familial status, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under the McCook Housing Agency housing programs.

To further its commitment to full compliance with applicable Civil Rights laws, the McCook Housing Agency will provide Federal/State/local information to applicants for and participants in the Section 8 Housing Program regarding discrimination and any recourse available to them if they believe they may be victims of discrimination. Such information will be made available with the application, and all applicable Fair Housing Information and Discrimination Complaint Forms will be made available at the McCook Housing Agency office. In addition, all written information and advertisements will contain the appropriate Equal Opportunity language and logo.

The McCook Housing Agency will assist any family that believes they have suffered illegal discrimination by providing the family with copies of the housing discrimination form. The McCook Housing Agency will also assist them in completing the form, if requested, and will provide them with the address of the nearest HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

1.2 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Sometimes people with disabilities may need a reasonable accommodation in order to take full advantage of the McCook Housing Agency housing programs and related services. When such accommodations are granted they do not confer special treatment or advantage for the person with a disability; rather, they make the program fully accessible to them in a way that would otherwise not be possible due to their disability. This policy clarifies how people can request accommodations and the guidelines the McCook Housing Agency will follow in determining whether it is reasonable to provide a requested accommodation. Because disabilities are not always apparent, the McCook Housing Agency will ensure that all applicants/participants are aware of the opportunity to request reasonable accommodations.

1.3 COMMUNICATION

Forms for requesting a reasonable accommodation are available at the McCook Housing Agency office during regular business hours. All decisions granting or denying requests will be in writing.

1.4 QUESTIONS TO ASK IN GRANTING THE ACCOMMODATION

- A. Is the requestor a person with disabilities? For this purpose the definition of disabilities is different than the definition used for admission. The Fair Housing definition used for this purpose is:

A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. (The disability may not be apparent to others, i.e., a heart condition).

If the disability is apparent or already documented, the answer to this question is yes. It is possible that the disability for which the accommodation is being requested is a disability other than the apparent disability. If the disability is not apparent or documented, the McCook Housing Agency will obtain verification that the person is a person with a disability.

- B. Is the requested accommodation related to the disability? If it is apparent that the request is related to the apparent or documented disability, the answer to this question is yes. If it is not apparent, the McCook Housing Agency will obtain documentation that the requested accommodation is needed due to the disability. The McCook Housing Agency will not inquire as to the nature of the disability.
- C. Is the requested accommodation reasonable? In order to be determined reasonable, the accommodation must meet two criteria:
1. Would the accommodation constitute a fundamental alteration? The McCook Housing Agency's business is housing. If the request would alter the fundamental business that the McCook Housing Agency conducts, that would not be reasonable. For instance, the McCook Housing Agency would deny a request to have the McCook Housing Agency do grocery shopping for the person with disabilities.
 2. Would the requested accommodation create an undue financial hardship or administrative burden? Frequently the requested accommodation costs little or nothing. If the cost would be an undue burden, the McCook Housing Agency may request a meeting with the individual to investigate and consider equally effective alternatives.

Generally the individual knows best what they need; however, the McCook Housing Agency retains the right to be shown how the requested accommodation enables the individual to access or use the McCook Housing Agency's programs or services.

If more than one accommodation is equally effective in providing access to the McCook Housing Agency's programs and services, the McCook Housing Agency retains the right to select the most efficient or economic choice.

The cost necessary to carry out approved requests will be borne by the McCook Housing Agency if there is no one else willing to pay for the modifications. If another party pays for the modification, the McCook Housing Agency will seek to have the same entity pay for any restoration.

If the participant requests, as a reasonable accommodation, that he or she be permitted to make physical modifications to their dwelling unit, at their own expense, the request should be made to the property owner/manager. The Housing Agency does not have responsibility for the owner's unit and does not have responsibility to make the unit accessible.

Any request for an accommodation that would enable a participant to materially violate family obligations will not be approved.

1.5 FAMILY/OWNER OUTREACH

The McCook Housing Agency will publicize the availability and nature of the Section 8 Program for extremely low-income, very low and low-income families in a newspaper of general circulation, minority media, and by other suitable means.

To reach persons, who cannot or do not read newspapers, the McCook Housing Agency will distribute fact sheets to the broadcasting media and initiate personal contacts with members of the news media and community service personnel. The McCook Housing Agency will also try to utilize public service announcements.

The McCook Housing Agency will communicate the status of program availability to other service providers in the community and advise them of housing eligibility factors and guidelines so that they can make proper referral of their clients to the program.

The McCook Housing Agency will hold briefings for owners who participate in or who are seeking information about the Section 8 Program. The briefing is intended to:

- A. Explain how the program works;
- B. Explain how the program benefits owners;
- C. Explain owners' responsibilities under the program. Emphasis is placed on quality screening and ways the McCook Housing Agency helps owners do better screening; and
- D. Provide an opportunity for owners to ask questions, obtain written materials, and meet McCook Housing Agency staff.

1.6 RIGHT TO PRIVACY

All adult members of both applicant and participant households are required to sign HUD Form 9886, *Authorization for Release of Information and Privacy Act Notice*. The *Authorization for Release of Information and Privacy Act Notice* states how family information will be released and includes the *Federal Privacy Act Statement*.

Any request for applicant or participant information will not be released unless there is a signed release of information request from the applicant or participant.

1.7 REQUIRED POSTINGS

The McCook Housing Agency will post in each of its offices in a conspicuous place and at a height easily read by all persons including persons with mobility disabilities, the following information:

- A. The Section 8 Administrative Plan
- B. Notice of the status of the waiting list (opened or closed)
- C. Address of all McCook Housing Agency offices, office hours, telephone numbers, TDD numbers, and hours of operation
- D. Income Limits for Admission
- E. Informal Review and Informal Hearing Procedures
- F. Fair Housing Poster
- G. Equal Opportunity in Employment Poster

2.0 MCCOOK HOUSING AGENCY/OWNER RESPONSIBILITY/ OBLIGATION OF THE FAMILY

This Section outlines the responsibilities and obligations of the McCook Housing Agency, the Section 8 Owners/Landlords, and the participating families.

2.1 MCCOOK HOUSING AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The McCook Housing Agency will comply with the consolidated ACC, the application, HUD regulations and other requirements, and the McCook Housing Agency Section 8 Administrative Plan.
- B. In administering the program, the McCook Housing Agency must:
 - 1. Publish and disseminate information about the availability and nature of housing assistance under the program;
 - 2. Explain the program to owners and families;
 - 3. Seek expanded opportunities for assisted families to locate housing outside areas of poverty or racial concentration;
 - 4. Encourage owners to make units available for leasing in the program, including owners of suitable units located outside areas of poverty or racial concentration;
 - 5. Affirmatively further fair housing goals and comply with equal opportunity requirements;
 - 6. Make efforts to help disabled persons find satisfactory housing;

7. Receive applications from families, determine eligibility, maintain the waiting list, select applicants, issue a voucher to each selected family, and provide housing information to families selected;
8. Determine who can live in the assisted unit at admission and during the family's participation in the program;
9. Obtain and verify evidence of citizenship and eligible immigration status in accordance with 24 CFR part 5;
10. Review the family's request for approval of the tenancy and the owner/landlord lease, including the HUD prescribed tenancy addendum;
11. Inspect the unit before the assisted occupancy begins and at least annually during the assisted tenancy;
12. Determine the amount of the housing assistance payment for a family;
13. Determine the maximum rent to the owner and whether the rent is reasonable;
14. Make timely housing assistance payments to an owner in accordance with the HAP contract;
15. Examine family income, size and composition at admission and during the family's participation in the program. The examination includes verification of income and other family information;
16. Establish and adjust McCook Housing Agency utility allowance annually;
17. Administer and enforce the housing assistance payments contract with an owner, including taking appropriate action as determined by the McCook Housing Agency, if the owner defaults (e.g., HQS violation);
18. Determine whether to terminate assistance to a participant family for violation of family obligations;
19. Conduct informal reviews of certain McCook Housing Agency decisions concerning applicants for participation in the program;
20. Conduct informal hearings on certain McCook Housing Agency decisions concerning participant families;
21. Provide sound financial management of the program, including engaging an independent public accountant to conduct audits; and

2.2 OWNER RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The owner is responsible for performing all of the owner's obligations under the HAP contract and the lease.

- B. The owner is responsible for:
1. Performing all management and rental functions for the assisted unit, including selecting a voucher holder to lease the unit, and deciding if the family is suitable for tenancy of the unit.
 2. Maintaining the unit in accordance with HQS, including performance of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance.
 3. Complying with equal opportunity requirements.
 4. Preparing and furnishing to the McCook Housing Agency information required under the HAP contract.
 5. Collecting from the family:
 - a. Any security deposit required under the lease.
 - b. The tenant contribution (the part of rent to owner not covered by the housing assistance payment).
 - c. Any charges for unit damage by the family.
 6. Enforcing tenant obligations under the lease.
 7. Paying for utilities and services (unless paid by the family under the lease.)
- C. For provisions on modifications to a dwelling unit occupied or to be occupied by a person with disabilities see 24 CFR 100.203.

2.3 OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANT

This Section states the obligations of a participant family under the program.

- A. Supplying required information.
1. The family must supply any information that the McCook Housing Agency or HUD determines is necessary in the administration of the program, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status. Information includes any requested certification, release or other documentation.
 2. The family must supply any information requested by the McCook Housing Agency or HUD for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition in accordance with HUD requirements.
 3. The family must disclose and verify Social Security Numbers and must sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
 4. Any information supplied by the family must be true and complete.

B. HQS breach caused by the Family

The family is responsible for any HQS breach caused by the family or its guests.

C. Allowing McCook Housing Agency Inspection

The family must allow the McCook Housing Agency to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after at least 2 days notice.

D. Violation of Lease

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

E. Family Notice of Move or Lease Termination

The family must notify the McCook Housing Agency and the owner 30 days from the beginning of the month before the family moves out of the unit or terminates the lease by a notice to the owner.

F. Owner Eviction Notice

The family must promptly give the McCook Housing Agency a copy of any owner eviction notice it receives.

G. Use and Occupancy of the Unit

1. The family must use the assisted unit for a residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.
2. The McCook Housing Agency must approve the composition of the assisted family residing in the unit. The family must promptly inform the McCook Housing Agency of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request approval from the McCook Housing Agency to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit. No other person (i.e., no one but members of the assisted family) may reside in the unit (except for a foster child/foster adult or live-in aide as provided in paragraph (4) of this Section).
3. The family must promptly notify the McCook Housing Agency if any family member no longer resides in the unit.
4. If the McCook Housing Agency has given approval, a foster child/foster adult or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. The McCook Housing Agency has the discretion to adopt reasonable policies concerning residence by a foster child/foster adult or a live-in aide and defining when the McCook Housing Agency consent may be given or denied.
5. 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 for residence by members of the family. Any business uses of the unit must comply with zoning requirements and the affected household member must obtain all appropriate licenses.
6. The family must not sublease or let the unit.

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

H. Absence from the Unit

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

Absence means that no member of the family is residing in the unit. The family may be absent from the unit for up to 30 days. The family must request permission from the McCook Housing Agency for absences exceeding 30 days. The McCook Housing Agency will make a determination within 5 business days of the request. An authorized absence may not exceed 180 days. Any family absent for more than 30 days without authorization will be terminated from the program.

Authorized absences may include, but are not limited to:

1. Prolonged hospitalization
2. Absences beyond the control of the family (i.e., death in the family, other family member illness)
3. Other absences that are deemed necessary by the McCook Housing Agency

I. Interest in the Unit

The family may not own or have any interest in the unit (except for owners of manufactured housing renting the manufactured home space).

J. Fraud and Other Program Violation

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

K. Crime by Family Members

The members of the family may not engage in drug-related criminal activity or other violent criminal activity.

L. Other Housing Assistance

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.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There are five eligibility requirements for admission to Section 8 -- qualifies as a family, has an income within the income limits, meets citizenship/eligible immigrant criteria, provides documentation of Social Security Numbers, and signs consent authorization documents. In addition to the eligibility criteria, families must also meet the McCook Housing Agency screening criteria in order to be admitted to the Section 8 Program.

3.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A. Family status.

1. **A family with or without children.** Such a family is defined as a group of people related by blood, marriage, adoption or affinity that lives together in a stable family relationship.
 - a. Children temporarily absent from the home due to placement in foster care are considered family members.
 - b. Unborn children and children in the process of being adopted are considered family members for purposes of determining bedroom size, but are not considered family members for determining income limit.
2. **An elderly family**, which is:
 - a. A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age;
 - b. Two or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living together; or
 - c. One or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living with one or more live-in aides
3. **A near-elderly family**, which is:
 - a. A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62;
 - b. Two or more persons who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62 living together; or
 - c. One or more persons who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62 living with one or more live-in aides.
4. **A disabled family**, which is:
 - a. A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities;

- b. Two or more persons with disabilities living together; or
 - c. One or more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides.
 - 5. A **displaced family** is a family in which each member, or whose sole member, has been displaced by governmental action, or whose dwelling has been extensively damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster declared or otherwise formally recognized pursuant to Federal disaster relief laws.
 - 6. A **remaining member of a tenant family**.
 - 7. A **single person** who is not an elderly or displaced person, or a person with disabilities, or the remaining member of a tenant family.
- B. Income eligibility
- 1. To be eligible to receive assistance a family shall, at the time the family initially receives assistance under the Section 8 program shall be a low-income family that is:
 - a. A very low-income family;
 - b. A low-income family continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act;
 - c. A low-income family that meets additional eligibility criteria specified by the Housing Agency;
 - 2. Income limits apply only at admission and are not applicable for continued occupancy; however, as income rises the assistance will decrease.
 - 3. The applicable income limit for issuance of a voucher is the highest income limit for the family size for areas within the housing Agency's jurisdiction. The applicable income limit for admission to the program is the income limit for the area in which the family is initially assisted in the program. The family may only use the voucher to rent a unit in an area where the family is income eligible at admission to the program.
 - 4. Families who are moving into the McCook Housing Agency's jurisdiction under portability and have the status of applicant rather than of participant at their initial housing agency, must meet the income limit for the area where they were initially assisted under the program.
 - 5. Families who are moving into the McCook Housing Agency's jurisdiction under portability and are already program participants at their initial housing Agency do not have to meet the income eligibility requirement for the McCook Housing Agency program.
 - 6. Income limit restrictions do not apply to families transferring units within the McCook Housing Agency Section 8 Program.

C. Citizenship/Eligible Immigrant status

To be eligible each member of the family must be a citizen, national, or a non-citizen who has eligible immigration status under one of the categories set forth in Section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980 (see 42 U.S.C. 1436a(a)).

Family eligibility for assistance.

1. A family shall not be eligible for assistance unless every member of the family residing in the unit is determined to have eligible status, with the exception noted below.
2. Despite the ineligibility of one or more family members, a mixed family may be eligible for one of three types of assistance. (See Section 11.5(K) for calculating rents under the non-citizen rule).
3. A family without any eligible members and receiving assistance on June 19, 1995 may be eligible for temporary deferral of termination of assistance.

D. Social Security Number Documentation

When an applicant has a SSN but does not have the required documentation, the applicant may submit the SSN and certify that the number is accurate but that acceptable documentation could not be provided. The McCook Housing Agency will accept the certification and continue to process the individual's application.

However, an applicant may not become a participant in the program unless the applicant submits the required SSN documentation to the McCook Housing Agency. The applicant must provide SSN documentation within 60 days from the date on which the applicant certified that the documentation was not available.

If the McCook Housing Agency has determined that the applicant is otherwise eligible for admission into the property, and the only outstanding verification is that of the SSN, the applicant may retain his or her place on the waiting list for the 60-day period during which the applicant is trying to obtain documentation.

After 60 days, if the applicant has been unable to supply the required SSN documentation, the applicant should be determined ineligible and removed from the waiting list.

The McCook Housing Agency will extend the time period for an additional 60 days if the applicant is at least 62 years old and unable to submit the required documentation within the first 60-day period.

E. Signing Consent Forms

1. In order to be eligible each member of the family who is at least 18 years of age, and each family head and spouse regardless of age, shall sign one or more consent forms.

2. The consent form must contain, at a minimum, the following:
 - a. A provision authorizing HUD and the McCook Housing Agency to obtain from State Wage Information Collection Agencies (SWICAs) and the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) any information or materials necessary to complete or verify the application for participation or for eligibility for continued occupancy;
 - b. A provision authorizing HUD or the McCook Housing Agency to verify with previous or current employers income information pertinent to the family's eligibility for or level of assistance;
 - c. A provision authorizing HUD to request income information from the IRS and the SSA for the sole purpose of verifying income information pertinent to the family's eligibility or level of benefits; and
 - d. A statement that the authorization to release the information requested by the consent form expires 15 months after the date the consent form is signed.
- F. Additional screening is the responsibility of the owner. Upon the written request of a prospective owner, the McCook Housing Agency will provide any factual information. The McCook Housing Agency determines eligibility for participation and can also conduct criminal background checks on all adult household members, including live-in aides. The McCook Housing Agency will deny assistance to a family because of drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity by family members. This check will be made through state or local law enforcement or court records in those cases where the household member has lived in the local jurisdiction for the last three years. If the individual has lived outside the local area, the McCook Housing Agency may contact law enforcement agencies where the individual had lived or request a check through the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

The McCook Housing Agency will check with all State sex offender registration programs and will ban any individual who is currently registered as a sex offender.

Additional screening is the responsibility of the owner. Upon the written request of a prospective owner, the McCook Housing Agency will provide any factual information or third party written information they have relevant to a voucher holder's history of, or ability to, comply with material standard lease terms or any history of drug trafficking.

4.0 MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

4.1 OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST

Applications for Housing Choice Voucher assistance will be accepted onto the waiting list unless MHA has determined that it has a sufficient number of applicants on the waiting list to utilize the amount of available funding.

MHA will close the waiting list if staff makes a determination that new applicants would be unable to receive assistance within a reasonable period of time (usually 12 months).

Closing of the waiting list will be announced via public notice. The public notice will state the date the waiting list will be closed. The public notice will be published in a local newspaper of general circulation, and also by any available minority media throughout MHA's jurisdiction.

Opening of the waiting list will be announced via public notice that applications for Section 8 will again be accepted. The public notice will state where, when, and how to apply. The notice will be published in a local newspaper of general circulation, and also by any available minority media. The public notice will state any limitations to who may apply.

The notice will state that applicants already on waiting lists for other housing programs must apply separately for this program, and that such applicants will not lose their place on other waiting lists when they apply for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. The notice will include the Fair Housing logo and slogan and otherwise be in compliance with Fair Housing requirements.

If examination of voucher utilization, availability of existing funds, and anticipated future funding warrants re-opening of a closed waiting list, MHA will advertise the re-opening for any specific time period that is required to utilize the existing and anticipated future supply of vouchers.

4.2 TAKING APPLICATIONS

Families wishing to apply for the Section 8 Program will be required to complete an application for housing assistance. Applications will be accepted during regular business hours at:

502 Missouri Avenue Circle, McCook, NE 69001

Applications are taken to compile a waiting list. Due to the demand for Section 8 assistance in the McCook Housing Agency jurisdiction, the McCook Housing Agency may take applications on an open enrollment basis, depending on the length of the waiting list.

When the waiting list is open, completed applications will be accepted from all applicants. The McCook Housing Agency will later verify the information in the applications relevant to the applicant's eligibility, admission, and level of benefit.

Applications will be made in person at the McCook Housing Agency, 502 Missouri Avenue Circle, McCook; NE. Applications will be mailed to interested families upon request.

The completed application will be dated and time stamped upon its return to the McCook Housing Agency.

Persons with disabilities who require a reasonable accommodation in completing an application may call the McCook Housing Agency to make special arrangements to

complete their application. A Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) is available for the deaf. The TDD telephone number is **(308) 345-3243**.

The application process will involve two phases. The first phase is the initial application for housing assistance or the pre-application. The pre-application requires the family to provide limited basic information including name, address, phone number, family composition and family unit size, racial or ethnic designation of the head of household, income category. If the McCook Housing Agency only has a few applicants on the waiting list and openings on the Section 8 Voucher program, the application process will be done all in one application.

Upon receipt of the families pre-application, the McCook Housing Agency will make a preliminary determination of eligibility. If the McCook Housing Agency determines the family to be ineligible, the notice will state the reasons therefore and offer the family the opportunity of an informal review of this determination.

An applicant may at any time report changes in their applicant status including changes in family composition, income. The McCook Housing Agency will annotate the applicant's file and will update their place on the waiting list.

The second phase is the final determination of eligibility, referred to as the full application. The full application takes place when the family nears the top of the waiting list. The McCook Housing Agency will ensure that verification of eligibility, suitability selection factors are current in order to determine the family's final eligibility for admission into the Section 8 Program.

4.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST

The waiting list will be maintained in accordance with the following guidelines:

- A. The application will be a permanent file;
- B. All applications will be maintained in order of date and time of application;
- C. Any contact between the McCook Housing Agency and the applicant will be documented in the applicant file.

Note: The waiting list cannot be maintained by bedroom size under current HUD regulations.

4.4 FAMILIES NEARING THE TOP OF THE WAITING LIST

When a family appears to be within 2 months of being offered assistance, the family will be invited to an interview and the verification process will begin. It is at this point in time that the family's waiting list eligibility verified. If the family no longer qualifies to be near the top of the list, the family's name will be returned to the appropriate spot on the waiting list. The McCook Housing Agency must notify the family in writing of this determination, and give the family the opportunity for an informal review.

Once the preference has been verified the family will complete a full application, present Social Security Number information, citizenship/eligible immigrant information, and sign the Consent for Release of Information forms.

4.5 MISSED APPOINTMENTS

All applicants who fail to keep a scheduled appointment in accordance with the paragraph below will be sent a notice of denial.

The McCook Housing Agency will allow the family to reschedule missed appointments and the McCook Housing Agency will work closely with the family to find a more suitable time to receive the application. Applicants will be offered the right to an informal hearing before being removed from the waiting list.

4.6 PURGING THE WAITING LIST

The McCook Housing Agency will update and purge its waiting list at least annually to ensure that the pool of applicants reasonably represents interested families. Purging also enables the Housing Agency to update the information regarding address, family composition, income category and preferences.

4.7 REMOVAL OF APPLICANTS FROM THE WAITING LIST

The McCook Housing Agency will not remove an applicant's name from the waiting list unless:

- A. The applicant requests that the name be removed;
- B. The applicant fails to respond to a written request for information or a request to declare their continued interest in the program or misses scheduled appointments; or
- C. The applicant does not meet either the eligibility or screening criteria for the program.

4.8 GROUNDS FOR DENIAL

The McCook Housing Agency will deny assistance to applicants who:

- A. Do not meet any one or more of the eligibility criteria;
- B. Do not supply information or documentation required by the application process;
- C. Fail to respond to a written request for information or a request to declare their continued interest in the program;
- D. Fail to complete any aspect of the application or lease-up process;
- E. Have a history of criminal activity by any household member involving crimes of physical violence against persons or property, and any other criminal activity including drug-related criminal activity that would adversely affect the health, safety, or well being of other tenants or staff, or cause damage to the property. If no additional crimes related to violence or drugs are evidenced for a 3 year time period prior to the application, applicants will not be denied housing due to criminal activity. The McCook Housing Agency may deny assistance to any household whose member exhibits continuous criminal activity.

- F. Currently owes rent or other amounts to any housing agency in connection with the Public Housing or Section 8 Programs. Assistance will not be denied to applicants who sign a repayment agreement with the agency in question, make all payments in good faith, and the contract is agreed upon by all parties.
- G. Have committed fraud, bribery, or any other corruption in connection with any federal housing assistance program, including the intentional misrepresentation of information related to their housing application or benefits derived there from;
- H. Have a family member who was evicted from public housing within the last three years;
- I. Have a family member who was evicted from assisted housing within five years of the projected date of admission because of drug-related criminal activity involving the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or possession with the intent to manufacture, sell, distribute a controlled substance as defined in Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. 802;
- J. Have a family member who is illegally using a controlled substance or abuses alcohol in a way that may interfere with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. The McCook Housing Agency may waive this requirement if:
 - 1. The person demonstrates to the McCook Housing Agency's satisfaction that the person is no longer engaging in drug-related criminal activity or abuse of alcohol;
 - 2. The person has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program;
 - 3. The person has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully; or
 - 4. The person is participating in a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.
- K. Have engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior towards any McCook Housing staff or residents;
- L. Have a family household member who has been terminated under the Certificate or Voucher Program during the last three years;
- M. Have a family member who has been convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine in a subsidized unit (denied for life);
- N. Have a family member with a current registration under a State sex offender registration program (denied for the duration of the registration).

4.9 NOTIFICATION OF NEGATIVE ACTIONS

Any applicant whose name is being removed from the waiting list will be notified by the McCook Housing Agency, in writing, that they have ten (10) business days, from the date of the written correspondence, to present mitigating circumstances or request an

informal review. The letter will also indicate that their name will be removed from the waiting list if they fail to respond within the timeframe specified. The McCook Housing Agency's system of removing applicants' names from the waiting list will not violate the rights of persons with disabilities. If an applicant's failure to respond to a request for information or updates was caused by the applicant's disability, the McCook Housing Agency will provide a reasonable accommodation. If the applicant indicates that they did not respond due to a disability, the McCook Housing Agency will verify that there is in fact a disability and that the accommodation they are requesting is necessary based on the disability. An example of a reasonable accommodation would be to reinstate the applicant on the waiting list based on the date and time of the original application.

4.10 INFORMAL REVIEW

If the McCook Housing Agency determines that an applicant does not meet the criteria for receiving Section 8 assistance, the McCook Housing Agency will promptly provide the applicant with written notice of the determination. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reason(s) for the decision, and state that the applicant may request an informal review of the decision within 10 business days of the denial. The McCook Housing Agency will describe how to obtain the informal review. The informal review process is described in Section 16.2 of this Plan.

5.0 SELECTING FAMILIES FROM THE WAITING LIST

5.1 WAITING LIST ADMISSIONS AND SPECIAL ADMISSIONS

The Housing Agency may admit an applicant for participation in the program either as a special admission or as a waiting list admission.

If HUD awards funding that is targeted for families with specific characteristics or families living in specific units, the McCook Housing Agency will use the assistance for those families.

5.2 PREFERENCES

The McCook Housing Agency has no preferences except to application receipt by date and time.

5.3 SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST

If necessary to meet the statutory requirement that 75% of newly admitted families in any fiscal year be families who are extremely low-income, the McCook Housing Agency retains the right to skip higher income families on the waiting to reach extremely low-income families. This measure will only be taken if it appears the goal will not otherwise be met. To ensure this goal is met, the Housing Agency will monitor incomes of newly admitted families and the income of the families on the waiting list.

If there are not enough extremely low-income families on the waiting list we will conduct outreach on a non-discriminatory basis to attract extremely low-income families to reach the statutory requirement.

5.4 QUALITY CONTROL

A quality control review will be conducted on waiting list selections and waiting list admissions by a supervisor or other qualified person other than the person originally responsible for the work.

The supervisor shall review a sample of the waiting list selections and admissions based on the applicant names who reached the top of the waiting list during the audit period. The methodology for the selection of the applicant names shall be based on the total number served during the prior fiscal year. A minimum of 5 applicants shall be reviewed for the first 50 applications received with an additional one being reviewed for each fifty applications received after that.

The criteria to be audited shall include; date and time of application, preferences (if any), income levels, whether or not the family was admitted to the program, whether or not the family met the admission criteria, whether or not the application captured all necessary information, and whether or not the family was selected in accordance with McCook Housing Agency policy.

A quality control log shall be maintained by the auditor of all audited files and this log shall be submitted, as requested, to Housing and Urban Development officials.

6.0 ASSIGNMENT OF BEDROOM SIZES (SUBSIDY STANDARDS)

The McCook Housing Agency will issue a voucher for a particular bedroom size - the bedroom size is a factor in determining the family's level of assistance. The following guidelines will determine each family's unit size without overcrowding or over-housing:

Number of Bedrooms	Number of Persons	
	Minimum	Maximum
0	1	1
1	1	2
2	2	4
3	3	6
4	4	8

These standards are based on the assumption that each bedroom will accommodate no more than two (2) persons. Two adults will share a bedroom unless related by blood.

In determining bedroom size, the McCook Housing Agency will include the presence of children to be born to a pregnant woman, children who are in the process of being adopted, children whose custody is being obtained, children who are temporarily away at school or temporarily in foster-care.

Bedroom size will also be determined using the following guidelines:

- A. Children of the same sex will share a bedroom.
- B. Children of the opposite sex, both under the age of 6 will share a bedroom.
- C. Adults and children will not be required to share a bedroom.
- D. Foster-adults and children will not be required to share a bedroom with family members.
- E. Live-in aides will get a separate bedroom.

The McCook Housing Agency will grant exceptions to normal occupancy standards when a family requests a larger size than the guidelines allow and documents a medical reason why the larger size is necessary.

The family unit size will be determined by the McCook Housing Agency in accordance with the above guidelines and will determine the maximum rent subsidy for the family; however, the family may select a unit that may be larger or smaller than the family unit size. If the family selects a smaller unit, the payment standard for the smaller size will be used to calculate the subsidy. If the family selects a larger size, the payment standard for the family unit size will determine the maximum subsidy.

6.1 BRIEFING

When the McCook Housing Agency selects a family from the waiting list, the family will be invited to attend a briefing explaining how the program works. In order to receive a voucher all adult household members are required to attend the briefing. If they cannot attend the originally scheduled briefing, they may attend a later session. If the family fails to attend three briefings without good cause, they will be denied admission.

If an applicant with a disability requires auxiliary aids to gain full benefit from the briefing, the Housing Agency will furnish such aids where doing so would not result in a fundamental alteration of the nature of the program or in an undue financial or administrative burden. In determining the most suitable auxiliary aid, the Housing Agency will give primary consideration to the requests of the applicant. Families unable to attend a briefing due to a disability may request a reasonable accommodation such as having the briefing presented at an alternate location.

The briefing will cover at least the following subjects:

- A. A description of how the program works;
- B. Family and owner responsibilities;
- C. Where the family may rent a unit, including inside and outside the Housing Agency's jurisdiction;
- D. Types of eligible housing;

- E. For families qualified to lease a unit outside the Housing Agency's jurisdiction under portability, an explanation of how portability works;
- F. An explanation of the advantages of living in an area that does not have a high concentration of poor families; and
- G. An explanation that the family share of rent may not exceed 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income.

6.2 PACKET

During the briefing, the Housing Agency will give the family a packet covering at least the following subjects:

- A. The term of the voucher and the Housing Agency's policy on extensions and suspensions of the term. The packet will include information on how to request an extension and forms for requesting extensions;
- B. How the Housing Agency determines the housing assistance payment and total tenant payment for the family;
- C. Information on the payment standard, exception payment standard rent areas, and the utility allowance schedule;
- D. How the Housing Agency determines the maximum rent for an assisted unit;
- E. Where the family may lease a unit. For families qualified to lease outside the Housing Agency's jurisdiction, the packet includes an explanation of how portability works;
- F. The HUD-required tenancy addendum that provides the language that must be included in any assisted lease, and a sample contract;
- G. The request for approval of the tenancy form and an explanation of how to request Housing Agency approval of a unit;
- H. A statement of the Housing Agency's policy on providing information to prospective owners. This policy requires applicants to sign disclosure statements allowing the Housing Agency to provide prospective owners with the family's current and prior addresses and the names and addresses of the landlords for those addresses. Upon request, the Housing Agency will also supply any factual information or third party verification relating to the applicant's history as a tenant or their ability to comply with material standard lease terms or any history of drug trafficking, drug-related criminal activity or any violent criminal activity;
- I. The Housing Agency's subsidy standards, including when the Housing Agency will consider granting exceptions to the standards;
- J. The HUD brochure on how to select a unit ("A Good Place to Live");
- K. The HUD-required lead-based paint brochure;

- L. Information on Federal, State, and local equal opportunity laws; the brochure "Fair Housing: Equal Opportunity for All;" and a copy of the housing discrimination complaint form;
- M. A list of landlords or other parties known to the McCook Housing Agency who may be willing to lease a unit to the family or help the family find a unit;
- N. Notice that if the family includes a person with disabilities, the family may request a current list of accessible units known to the McCook Housing Agency that may be available;
- O. The family's obligations under the program;
- P. The grounds upon which the Housing Agency may terminate assistance because of the family's action or inaction;
- Q. McCook Housing Agency informal hearing procedures, including when the Housing Agency is required to provide the opportunity for an informal hearing, and information on how to request a hearing; and
- R. The McCook Housing Agency owner information brochure. This brochure can be given by the applicant to a prospective owner to help explain the program.

6.3 ISSUANCE OF VOUCHER; REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF TENANCY

Once all family information has been verified, their eligibility determined, their subsidy calculated, and they have attended the family briefing, the McCook Housing Agency will issue the voucher. At this point the family begins their search for a unit.

When the family finds a unit that the owner is willing to lease under the program, the family and the owner will complete and sign a proposed lease, the HUD required tenancy addendum and the request for approval of the tenancy form. The family will submit the proposed lease and the request form to the Housing Agency during the term of the voucher. The Housing Agency will review the request, the lease, and the HUD required tenancy addendum and make an initial determination of approval of tenancy. The Housing Agency may assist the family in negotiating changes that may be required for the tenancy to be approvable. Once it appears the tenancy may be approvable, the Housing Agency will schedule an appointment to inspect the unit within 15 days after the receipt of inspection request from the family and owner. The 15 day period is suspended during any period the unit is unavailable for inspection. The Housing Agency will promptly notify the owner and the family whether the unit and tenancy are approvable.

During the initial stage of qualifying the unit, the Housing Agency will provide the prospective owner with information regarding the program. Information will include Housing Agency and owner responsibilities for screening and other essential program elements. The Housing Agency will provide the owner at their request with the family's current and prior address as shown in the Housing Agency records along with the name and address (if known) of the landlords for those addresses.

Additional screening is the responsibility of the owner. Upon request by a prospective owner, the Housing Agency will provide any factual information or third party written information they have relevant to a voucher holder's history of, or ability to, comply with

standard material lease terms.

6.4 TERM OF THE VOUCHER

The initial term of the voucher will be 60 days and will be stated on the Housing Choice Voucher.

The Housing Agency may grant one or more extensions of the term, but the initial term plus any extensions will never exceed 120 calendar days from the initial date of issuance. To obtain an extension, the family must make a request in writing prior to the expiration date. A statement of the efforts the family has made to find a unit must accompany the request. A sample extension request form and a form for recording their search efforts will be included in the family's briefing packet. If the family documents their efforts and additional time can reasonably be expected to result in success, the Housing Agency will grant the length of request sought by the family or 60 days, whichever is less.

If the family includes a person with disabilities and the family requires an extension due to the disability, the Housing Agency will grant an extension allowing the family the full 120 days search time. If the Housing Agency determines that additional search time would be a reasonable accommodation, the Housing Agency will request HUD to approve an additional extension. The Housing Agency may deny extensions beyond the initial 60 days if there are others on the waiting list ready for a voucher.

Upon submittal of a completed request for approval of tenancy form, the McCook Housing Agency will suspend the term of the voucher. The term will be in suspension until the date the Housing Agency provides notice that the request has been approved or denied. This policy allows families the full term (60 days, or more with extensions) to find a unit, not penalizing them for the period during which the Housing Agency is taking action on their request. A family may submit a second request for approval of tenancy before the Housing Agency finalizes action on the first request. In this case the suspension will last from the date of the first submittal through the Housing Agency's action on the second submittal. No more than two requests will be concurrently considered.

6.5 APPROVAL TO LEASE A UNIT

The McCook Housing Agency will approve a lease if all of the following conditions are met:

- A. The unit is eligible;
- B. The unit is inspected by the Housing Agency and passes HQS;
- C. The lease is approvable and includes the language of the tenancy addendum;
- D. The rent to owner is reasonable; as compared to an unassisted unit of the same quality, size and age.
- E. The initial rent to owner may not exceed the amount approved by MHA.
- F. The family's share of rent does not exceed 40% of their monthly adjusted income;

- G. The owner has not been found to be debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation by HUD or the Housing Agency; and
- H. The family continues to meet all eligibility and screening criteria.
- I. The composition of the household must be approved by the PHA. The family must inform the PHA of the birth, adoption or court awarded custody of a child. Other persons may not be added without prior written approval of the owner and the PHA. The residence may only be used by PHA-approved household members, and it must be the family's only residence.
- J. The tenant may not sublease or sublet the unit. Also, the tenant may not assign the lease or transfer the unit.

If tenancy approval is denied, the Housing Agency will advise the owner and the family in writing and advise them also of any actions they could take that would enable the Housing Agency to approve the tenancy.

The lease term may begin only after all of the following conditions are met:

- A. The unit passes the Housing Agency HQS inspection;
- B. The family's share of rent does not exceed 40% of their monthly adjusted income;
- C. The landlord and tenant shall sign the initial lease for the period of at least one year and include the HUD required Tenancy Addendum; the PHA will not allow for a shorter initial lease period.
- D. The owner must give the PHA a copy of the lease, including any revisions agreed upon by the family and owner.
- E. The owner certifies that the lease terms are in accordance with all provisions of the HAP contract, and that the lease includes the tenancy addendum.
- F. During the initial term of the lease, the owner may not raise the rent.
- G. If the owner decides to change the rent or other lease terms after the initial lease year has ended. The owner must give notice in writing to the tenant and Housing Agency 60 days prior the lease change.
- H. To comply with housing requirements we must have a new lease start on the housing assistance payment (HAP) contract date.
- I. The lease term runs concurrently with the HAP contract term. Thus the term of the HAP contract begins on the first day of the lease term and ends on the last day of the lease term. The HAP contract terminates if any of the following occur:
 - The lease is terminated by the owner or tenant;
 - The PHA terminates the HAP contract; or
 - The PHA terminates assistance for the family.
- J. The Housing Agency approves the leasing of the unit.

The Housing Agency will prepare the contract when the unit is approved for tenancy. Generally, the landlord, simultaneously with the signing of the lease and the HUD required tenancy addendum, will execute the contract. Upon receipt of the executed lease and the signed contract by the landlord, the Housing Agency will execute the contract. The Housing Agency will not pay any housing assistance to the owner until the contract is executed.

In no case will the contract be executed later than 60 days after the beginning of the lease term.

Any contract executed after the 60-day period will be void and the Housing Agency will not pay housing assistance to the owner.

6.6 DISAPPROVAL OF OWNER, RELATIVES OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

HUD authorizes PHA'S to deny approval to lease a unit from an owner for any of the following reasons:

- A. The owner has violated his or her obligations under a Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contract;
- B. The owner has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act involving any Federal housing program;
- C. The owner has engaged in any drug-related or violent criminal activity within the last 3 years;
- D. The owner has a history or practice of noncompliance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS) for tenant-based programs or with applicable standards for other Federal Housing Programs.
- E. The owner has a history or practice of failing to terminate the tenancy of tenants of units assisted under Section 8 or any other federally assisted housing program for activity engaged in by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or other person under the control of any member of the household that:
 - Threatens the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents;
 - Threatens the health or safety of other residents, employees of the PHA or the owner, or other persons engaged in management of the housing;
 - Threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residents, by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises; or
 - Is drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity.
- F. The owner has not paid State or local real estate taxes, fines, or assessments.
- G. The owner has a history or practice of renting units that fail state or local housing codes.
- H. Other conflicts of interest under Federal, State, or local law.
- I. If the owner is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family, unless the McCook Housing Agency determines that

approving the unit would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities.

- J. If any of the following individuals have an interest in the unit, the PHA must not approve the tenancy contracts:
- A present or former member of the PHA, except a participant commissioner;
 - An employee of the PHA or any contractor, subcontractor or agent of the PHA who formulates policy or influences program decisions;
 - A public official, member of a governing body, or state or local legislator who exercises functions or responsibilities related to the (housing) programs; or
 - Any member of the US Congress.

If good cause can be demonstrated, a HUD Field Office may waive the conflict of interest restriction, except for the one regarding the members of congress.

6.7 INELIGIBLE/ELIGIBLE HOUSING

The following types of housing cannot be assisted under the Section 8 Tenant-Based Program:

- A. A Public Housing or Indian housing unit;
- B. A unit receiving project-based assistance under a Section 8 Program;
- C. Nursing homes, board and care homes, or facilities providing continual psychiatric, medical or nursing services;
- D. College or other school dormitories;
- E. Units on the grounds of penal, reformatory, medical, mental, and similar public or private institutions;
- F. A unit occupied by its owner. This restriction does not apply to cooperatives or to assistance on behalf of a manufactured home owner leasing a manufactured home space; and
- G. A unit receiving any duplicative Federal, State, or local housing subsidy. This does not prohibit renting a unit that has a reduced rent because of a tax credit.

The McCook Housing Agency will not approve a lease for any of the following special housing types, except as a reasonable accommodation for a family with disabilities:

- A. Congregate housing
- B. Group homes
- C. Shared housing
- D. Cooperative housing
- E. Single room occupancy housing

The McCook Housing Agency will approve leases for the following housing types:

- A. Single family dwellings
- B. Apartments
- C. Manufactured housing
- D. Manufactured home space rentals
- E. House boats

6.8 SECURITY DEPOSIT

The owner may collect a security deposit from the tenant in an amount not in excess of amounts charged in private market practice and not in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

When the tenant moves out of the dwelling unit, the owner, subject to State or local law, may use the security deposit, including any interest on the deposit, in accordance with the lease, as reimbursement for any unpaid rent payable by the tenant, damages to the unit or for other amounts the tenant owes under the lease.

The owner must give the tenant a written list of all items charged against the security deposit and the amount of each item. After deducting the amount, if any, used to reimburse the owner, the owner must refund promptly the full amount of the unused balance to the tenant.

If the security deposit is not sufficient to cover amounts the tenant owes under the lease, the owner may seek to collect the balance from the tenant.

6.9 CONFLICT WITH PROVISIONS OF THE LEASE

The terms of the tenancy addendum are proscribed by HUD as a condition of Federal Assistance to the tenant and the tenant's family under the Section 8 Voucher Program. In cases of conflict between the provisions of the tenancy addendum and any provisions of the lease, the tenancy addendum shall control.

6.10 CHANGES IN THE LEASE AND RENT

If the tenant and owner agree to changes in the lease, the changes must be in writing, and the owner must immediately give the PHA a copy of the changes. The lease must still be in accordance with HUD requirements.

The owner must notify the PHA of rent changes at least 60 days before the changes are effective. Rent changes are subject to rent reasonableness requirements.

The PHA must approve a new lease and execute a new HAP contract in the following cases:

- There are changes in tenant or owner-supplied utilities or appliances;
- There are changes governing the term of the lease; or
- The family moves to a new unit (even if the unit is in the same building or complex).

7.0 MOVES WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE

Participating families are allowed to move to another unit after the initial 12 months has expired, if the landlord and the participant have mutually agreed to terminate the lease, or if the Housing Agency has terminated the HAP contract. The McCook Housing Agency will issue the family a new voucher if the family does not owe the McCook Housing Agency or any other Housing Agency money, has not violated a Family Obligation, has not moved or been issued a voucher within the last 12 months, and if the McCook Housing Agency has sufficient funding for continued assistance. If the move is necessitated for a reason other than family choice, the 12-month requirement will be waived.

7.1 WHEN A FAMILY MAY MOVE

For families already participating in the Voucher Program, the McCook Housing Agency will allow the family to move to a new unit if:

- A. The assisted lease for the old unit has terminated;
- B. The owner has given the tenant a notice to vacate, has commenced an action to evict the tenant, or has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant; or
- C. The tenant has given notice of lease termination (if the tenant has a right to terminate the lease on notice to the owner).

A household may be denied permission to move to a unit of higher cost during times of reduced funding.

7.2 PROCEDURES REGARDING FAMILY MOVES

Families considering transferring to a new unit will be scheduled to attend a mover's briefing. All families who are moving, including any families moving into or out of the McCook Housing Agency's jurisdiction, will be required to attend a mover's briefing prior to the McCook Housing Agency entering a new HAP contract on their behalf.

This briefing is intended to provide the following:

- A. A refresher on program requirements and the family's responsibilities. Emphasis will be on giving proper notice and meeting all lease requirements such as leaving the unit in good condition;
- B. Information about finding suitable housing and the advantages of moving to an area that does not have a high concentration of poor families;
- C. Payment standards, exception payment standard rent areas, and the utility allowance schedule;
- D. An explanation that the family share of rent may not exceed 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income;
- E. Portability requirements and opportunities;
- F. The need to have a reexamination conducted within 120 days prior to the move;

- G. An explanation and copies of the forms required to initiate and complete the move; and
- H. All forms and brochures provided to applicants at the initial briefing.

Families are required to give proper written notice of their intent to terminate the lease. In accordance with HUD regulations, no notice requirement may exceed 60 days. During the initial term, families may not end the lease unless they and the owner mutually agree to end the lease. If the family moves from the unit before the initial term of the lease ends without the owner's and the McCook Housing Agency's approval, it will be considered a serious lease violation and subject the family to termination from the program.

The family is required to give the McCook Housing Agency a copy of the notice to terminate the lease at the same time as it gives the notice to the landlord. A family's failure to provide a copy of the lease termination notice to the McCook Housing Agency will be considered a violation of Family Obligations and may cause the family to be terminated from the program.

A family who gives notice to terminate the lease must mail the notice by certified mail or have the landlord or his agent sign a statement stating the date and time received. The family will be required to provide the certified mail receipt and a copy of the lease termination notice to the McCook Housing Agency, or a copy of the lease termination notice and the signed statement stating the date and time the notice was received. If the landlord or his/her agent does not accept the certified mail receipt, the family will be required to provide the receipt and envelope showing that the attempt was made.

Failure to follow the above procedures may subject the family to termination from the program.

8.0 PORTABILITY

8.1 *GENERAL POLICIES OF THE MCCOOK HOUSING AGENCY*

If the head or spouse of the assisted family does not have a legal residence or work in the jurisdiction of the McCook Housing Agency at the time of its application, the family will not have any right to lease a unit outside of the McCook Housing Agency jurisdiction for a 12-month period beginning when the family is first admitted to the program. During this period, the family may only lease a unit located in the jurisdiction of the McCook Housing Agency.

Families participating in the Voucher Program will not be allowed to move more than once in any 12-month period and under no circumstances will the McCook Housing Agency allow a participant to improperly break a lease. Under extraordinary circumstances the McCook Housing Agency may consider allowing more than one move in a 12-month period.

Families may only move to a jurisdiction where a Section 8 Program is being administered.

If a family has moved out of their assisted unit in violation of the lease, the McCook Housing Agency will not issue a voucher, and will terminate assistance in compliance with Section 17.0, Grounds for Termination of the Lease and Contract.

The McCook Housing Agency may deny the household's request for portability to another jurisdiction based on funding availability. Portability may be limited to MHA payment standards if the receiving agency cannot absorb the household into their own program at the time of the move.

8.2 INCOME ELIGIBILITY

A. Admission

A family must be income-eligible in the area where the family first leases a unit with assistance in the Voucher Program.

B. If a portable family is already a participant in the Initial Housing Agency's Voucher Program, income eligibility is not re-determined.

8.3 PORTABILITY: ADMINISTRATION BY RECEIVING HOUSING AGENCY

A. When a family utilizes portability to move to an area outside the Initial Housing Agency jurisdiction, another Housing Agency (the Receiving Housing Agency) must administer assistance for the family if that Housing Agency has a tenant-based program covering the area where the unit is located.

B. A Housing Agency with jurisdiction in the area where the family wants to lease a unit must issue the family a voucher. If there is more than one such housing Agency, the Initial Housing Agency may choose which Housing Agency shall become the Receiving Housing Agency.

8.4 PORTABILITY PROCEDURES

A. When the McCook Housing Agency is the Initial Housing Agency:

1. The McCook Housing Agency will brief the family on the process that must take place to exercise portability. The family will be required to attend an applicant or mover's briefing.
2. The McCook Housing Agency will determine whether the family is income-eligible in the area where the family wants to lease a unit (if applicable).
3. The McCook Housing Agency will advise the family how to contact and request assistance from the Receiving Housing Agency.
4. The McCook Housing Agency will, within ten (10) calendar days, notify the Receiving Housing Agency to expect the family.

5. The McCook Housing Agency will immediately mail to the Receiving Housing Agency the most recent HUD Form 50058 (Family Report) for the family, and related verification information.
- B. When the McCook Housing Agency is the Receiving Housing Agency:
1. When the portable family requests assistance from the McCook Housing Agency, the McCook Housing Agency will within ten (10) calendar days inform the Initial Housing Agency whether it will bill the Initial Housing Agency for assistance on behalf of the portable family, or absorb the family into its own program. When the McCook Housing Agency receives a portable family, the family will be absorbed if funds are available and a voucher will be issued.
 2. The McCook Housing Agency will issue a voucher to the family. The term of the McCook Housing Agency's voucher will not expire before the expiration date of any Initial Housing Agency's voucher. The McCook Housing Agency will determine whether to extend the voucher term. The family must submit a request for tenancy approval to the McCook Housing Agency during the term of the McCook Housing Agency's voucher.
 3. The McCook Housing Agency will determine the family unit size for the portable family. The family unit size is determined in accordance with the McCook Housing Agency's subsidy standards.
 4. The McCook Housing Agency will within ten (10) calendar days notify the Initial Housing Agency if the family has leased an eligible unit under the program, or if the family fails to submit a request for tenancy approval for an eligible unit within the term of the voucher.
 5. If the McCook Housing Agency opts to conduct a new reexamination, the McCook Housing Agency will not delay issuing the family a voucher or otherwise delay approval of a unit unless the re-certification is necessary to determine income eligibility.
 6. In order to provide tenant-based assistance for portable families, the McCook Housing Agency will perform all Housing Agency program functions, such as reexaminations of family income and composition. At any time, either the Initial Housing Agency or the McCook Housing Agency may make a determination to deny or terminate assistance to the family in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552.
- C. Absorption by the McCook Housing Agency
1. If funding is available under the consolidated ACC for the McCook Housing Agency's Voucher Program when the portable family is received, the McCook Housing Agency will absorb the family into its Voucher Program. After absorption, the family is assisted with funds available under the consolidated ACC for the McCook Housing Agency's Tenant-Based Program.
- D. Portability Billing

1. To cover assistance for a portable family, the Receiving Housing Agency may bill the Initial Housing Agency for housing assistance payments and administrative fees. The billing procedure will be as follows:
 - a. As the Initial Housing Agency, the McCook Housing Agency will promptly reimburse the Receiving Housing Agency for the full amount of the housing assistance payments made by the Receiving Housing Agency for the portable family. The amount of the housing assistance payment for a portable family in the Receiving Housing Agency's program is determined in the same manner as for other families in the Receiving Housing Agency's program.
 - b. The Initial Housing Agency will promptly reimburse the Receiving Housing Agency for 80% of the Initial Housing Agency's on-going administrative fee for each unit month that the family receives assistance under the tenant-based programs and is assisted by the Receiving Housing Agency. If both Housing Authorities agree, we may negotiate a different amount of reimbursement.

E. When a Portable Family Moves

When a portable family moves out of the tenant-based program of a Receiving Housing Agency that has not absorbed the family, the Housing Agency in the new jurisdiction to which the family moves becomes the Receiving Housing Agency, and the first Receiving Housing Agency is no longer required to provide assistance for the family.

9.0 DETERMINATION OF FAMILY INCOME

9.1 *INCOME, EXCLUSIONS FROM INCOME, DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME*

To determine annual income, the McCook Housing Agency counts the income of all family members, excluding the types and sources of income that are specifically excluded. Once the annual income is determined, the McCook Housing Agency subtracts out all allowable deductions (allowances) as the next step in determining the Total Tenant Payment.

9.2 *INCOME*

- A. Annual income means all amounts, monetary or not, that:
 1. Are received by the family head or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other family member, or
 2. Are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date; and
 3. Are not specifically excluded from annual income.
- B. Annual income includes, but is not limited to:

1. The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services.
2. The net income from the operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness are not used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight-line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession is included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family.
3. Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property. Expenditures for amortization of capital indebtedness are not used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight-line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from an investment is included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested by the family. Where the family has net family assets in excess of \$5,000, annual income includes the greater of the actual income derived from all net family assets or a percentage of the value of such assets based on the current passbook savings rate, as determined by HUD.
4. The full amount of periodic amounts received from Social Security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, disability or death benefits, and other similar types of periodic receipts, including a lump-sum amount or prospective monthly amounts for the delayed start of a periodic amount. (However, deferred periodic amounts from supplemental security income and Social Security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts are excluded.)
5. Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment and disability compensation, worker's compensation and severance pay. (However, lump sum additions such as insurance payments from worker's compensation are excluded.)
6. Welfare assistance.
 - a. If the welfare assistance payment includes an amount specifically designated for shelter and utilities that is subject to adjustment by the welfare assistance agency in accordance with the actual cost of shelter and utilities, the amount of welfare assistance income to be included as income consists of:
 - i. The amount of the allowance or grant exclusive of the amount specifically designated for shelter or utilities; plus

- ii. The maximum amount that the welfare assistance agency could in fact allow the family for shelter and utilities. If the family's welfare assistance is ratably reduced from the standard of need by applying a percentage, the amount calculated under this requirement is the amount resulting from one application of the percentage.
 - b. If the amount of welfare is reduced due to an act of fraud by a family member or because of any family member's failure to comply with requirements to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program or work activity, the amount of rent required to be paid by the family will not be decreased. In such cases, the amount of income attributable to the family will include what the family would have received had they complied with the welfare requirements and/or had not committed an act of fraud.
 - c. If the amount of welfare assistance is reduced as a result of a lifetime time limit, the reduced amount is the amount that shall be counted.
- 7. Periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from organizations or from persons not residing in the dwelling.
 - 8. All regular pay, special pay, and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces. (Special pay to a member exposed to hostile fire is excluded.)

9.3 EXCLUSIONS FROM INCOME

Annual income does not include the following:

- A. Income from employment of children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years;
- B. Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone);
- C. Lump-sum additions to family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance and worker's compensation), capital gains and settlement for personal or property losses;
- D. Amounts received by the family that is specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of medical expenses for any family member;
- E. Income of a live-in aide;
- F. The full amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution;
- G. The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire;
- H. The amounts received from the following programs:

1. Amounts received under training programs funded by HUD;
2. Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS);
3. Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs that are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred (special equipment, clothing, transportation, child care, etc.) and that are made solely to allow participation in a specific program;
4. Amounts received under a resident service stipend. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed \$200 per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the Housing Agency or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, and resident initiative coordination. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time;
5. Incremental earnings and benefits resulting to any family member from participation in qualifying State or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the employment training program;
6. Temporary, nonrecurring, or sporadic income (including gifts);
7. Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era;
8. Earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (excluding the head of household and spouse);
9. Adoption assistance payments in excess of \$480 per adopted child;
10. Deferred periodic amounts from Supplemental Security Income and Social Security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts;
11. Amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under State or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling unit;
12. Amounts paid by a State agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home; or
13. Amounts specifically excluded by any other Federal statute from

consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits.

These exclusions include:

- a. The value of the allotment of food stamps
- b. Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973
- c. Payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
- d. Income from submarginal land of the U.S. that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes
- e. Payments made under the Federal Low-Income Energy Assistance Program
- f. Payments received under the Job Training Partnership Act
- g. Income from the disposition of funds of the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians
- h. The first \$2000 per capita received from judgment funds awarded for certain Indian claims
- i. Amount of scholarships awarded under Title IV including Work-Study
- j. Payments received under the Older Americans Act of 1965
- k. Payments from Agent Orange Settlement
- l. Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Act
- m. The value of child care under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990
- n. Earned income tax credit refund payments
- o. Payments for living expenses under the AmeriCorps Program

9.4 DEDUCTIONS FROM ANNUAL INCOME

The following deductions will be made from annual income:

- A. \$480 for each dependent
- B. \$400 for any elderly family or disabled family
- C. For any family that is not an elderly or disabled family but has a member (other than the head or spouse) who is a person with a disability, disability assistance expenses in excess of 3% of annual income. This allowance may not exceed the

employment income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older as a result of the assistance to the person with disabilities.

D. For any elderly or disabled family:

1. That has no disability assistance expenses, an allowance for medical expenses equal to the amount by which the medical expenses exceed 3% of annual income;
2. That has disability expenses greater than or equal to 3% of annual income, an allowance for disability assistance expenses computed in accordance with paragraph C, plus an allowance for medical expenses that equal the family's medical expenses;
3. That has disability assistance expenses that are less than 3% of annual income, an allowance for combined disability assistance expenses and medical expenses that is equal to the total of these expenses less 3% of annual income.

E. Child care expenses.

9.5 QUALITY CONTROL

A quality control review shall be conducted on amounts of adjusted income used. The quality control review shall be conducted by a supervisor or other qualified person other than the person originally responsible for the work.

The policy of the McCook Housing Agency is to have each household's file, when determined eligible for assistance, reviewed by a co-worker or the Executive Director. For the files randomly chosen specifically for Quality Control the HUD recommended checklist shall be used in determining correctness of the file.

The Quality Control auditor shall review a sample of household files for correct income and deductions used during the audit period. The methodology for the selection of the files shall be based on the total number of families found to be eligible during the prior fiscal year. A minimum of 5 files shall be reviewed for the first 50 eligible families with an additional file being reviewed for each fifty files found eligible after that.

The criteria to be audited shall include the type of review, new admission, interim examination, or annual examination, effective date of the change, type of documentation received, information used, and correct utility allowance used.

A quality control log shall be kept by the auditor of all of the audited files and submitted as requested by Housing and Urban Development officials.

10.0 VERIFICATION

The McCook Housing Agency will verify information related to waiting list preferences, eligibility, admission and level of benefits prior to admission. Periodically during occupancy, items related to eligibility and rent determination shall also be reviewed and verified. Income, assets, and expenses will be verified, as well as disability status, need for a live-in aide and other reasonable accommodations, full time student status of family members 18 years of age and older, Social Security Numbers, citizenship/eligible

noncitizen status. Age and relationship will only be verified in those instances where needed to make a determination of level of assistance.

10.1 ACCEPTABLE METHODS OF VERIFICATION

Age, relationship, U.S. citizenship, and Social Security Numbers will generally be verified with documentation provided by the family. Verification of these items will include photocopies of the Social Security cards and other documents presented by the family, the INS SAVE approval code, and forms signed by the family.

Other information will be verified by third party verification. This type of verification includes written documentation (with forms sent directly to and received directly from a source, not passed through the hands of the family). This verification may also be direct contact with the source, in person or by telephone. It may also be a report generated by a request from the McCook Housing Agency or automatically by another government agency, i.e. the Social Security Administration. Verification forms and reports received will be contained in the applicant/tenant file. Oral third party documentation will include the same information as if the documentation had been written, i.e. name date of contact, amount received, etc.

When third party verification cannot be obtained, the McCook Housing Agency will accept documentation received from the applicant/participant. Hand-carried documentation will be accepted if the McCook Housing Agency has been unable to obtain third party verification in a four week period of time. Photocopies of the documents provided by the family will be maintained in the file.

When neither third party verification nor hand-carried verification can be obtained, the McCook Housing Agency will accept a notarized statement signed by the head, spouse or co-head. Such documents will be maintained in the file.

10.2 TYPES OF VERIFICATION

The chart below outlines the factors that may be verified and gives common examples of the verification that will be sought. To obtain written third party verification, the McCook Housing Agency will send a request form to the source along with a release form signed by the applicant/participant via first class mail.

Verification Requirements for Individual Items		
Item to Be Verified	3 rd party verification	Hand-carried verification
General Eligibility Items		
Social Security Number	Letter from Social Security, electronic reports	Social Security card
Citizenship	Social Security, Health & Human Services, etc.	Voter's registration card, birth certificate, etc.
Eligible immigration status	INS SAVE confirmation #	INS card
Disability	Letter from medical professional,	Proof of SSI or Social Security

Verification Requirements for Individual Items		
Item to Be Verified	3 rd party verification	Hand-carried verification
	SSI, etc	disability payments
Full time student status (if >18)	Letter from school	For high school students, any document evidencing enrollment
Need for a live-in aide	Letter from doctor or other professional knowledgeable of condition	N/A
Child care costs	Letter from care provider	Bills and receipts
Disability assistance expenses	Letters from suppliers, care givers, etc.	Bills and records of payment
Medical expenses	Letters from providers, prescription record from pharmacy, medical professional's letter stating assistance or a companion animal is needed	Bills, receipts, records of payment, dates of trips, mileage log, receipts for fares and tolls
Value of and Income from Assets		
Savings, checking accounts	Letter from institution	Passbook, most current statements
CDs, bonds, etc	Letter from institution	Tax return, information brochure from institution, the CD, the bond
Stocks	Letter from broker or holding company	Stock or most current statement, price in newspaper or through Internet
Real property	Letter from tax office, assessment, etc.	Property tax statement (for current value), assessment, records or income and expenses, tax return
Personal property	Assessment, bluebook, etc	Receipt for purchase, other evidence of worth
Cash value of life insurance policies	Letter from insurance company	Current statement
Assets disposed of for less than fair market value	N/A	Original receipt and receipt at disposition, other evidence of worth
Income		

Verification Requirements for Individual Items		
Item to Be Verified	3 rd party verification	Hand-carried verification
Earned income	Letter from employer	Multiple pay stubs
Self-employment	N/A	Tax return from prior year, books of accounts
Regular gifts and contributions	Letter from source, letter from organization receiving gift (i.e., if grandmother pays day care provider, the day care provider could so state)	Bank deposits, other similar evidence
Alimony/child support	Court order, letter from source, letter from Human Services	Record of deposits, divorce decree
Periodic payments (i.e., social security, welfare, pensions, workers' comp, unemployment)	Letter or electronic reports from the source	Award letter, letter announcing change in amount of future payments
Training program participation	Letter from program provider indicating - whether enrolled - whether training is HUD-funded - whether State or local program - whether it is employment training - whether payments are for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in order to participate in a program	N/A

10.3 VERIFICATION OF CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE NONCITIZEN STATUS

The citizenship/ eligible noncitizen status of each family member regardless of age must be determined.

Prior to being admitted, or at the first reexamination, all citizens and nationals will be required to sign a declaration under penalty of perjury. (They will be required to show proof of their status by such means as birth certificate, military ID or military DD 214 Form.)

Prior to being admitted or at the first reexamination, all eligible noncitizens who are 62 years of age or older will be required to sign a declaration under penalty of perjury. They will also be required to show proof of age.

Prior to being admitted or at the first reexamination, all citizens and nationals will be required to sign a declaration under penalty of perjury. (They will be required to show proof of their status by such means as birth certificate, military ID, or military DD214

Form.) The McCook Housing Agency will make a copy of the individual's INS documentation and place the copy in the file. The McCook Housing Agency also will verify their status through the INS SAVE system. If the INS SAVE system cannot confirm eligibility, the McCook Housing Agency will mail information to the INS so a manual check can be made of INS records.

Family members who do not claim to be citizens, nationals or eligible non-citizens, or whose status cannot be confirmed, must be listed on a statement of non-eligible members and the list must be signed by the head of the household.

Non-citizen students on student visas, though in the country legally, are not eligible to be admitted to the Section 8 Program.

Any family member who does not choose to declare their status must be listed on the statement of non-eligible members.

If no family member is determined to be eligible under this Section, the family's admission will be denied.

The family's assistance will not be denied, delayed, reduced or terminated because of a delay in the process of determining eligible status under this Section, except to the extent that the delay is caused by the family.

If the McCook Housing Agency determines that a family member has knowingly permitted an ineligible noncitizen (other than any ineligible noncitizens listed on the lease) to permanently reside in their Section 8 unit, the family's assistance will be terminated. Such family will not be eligible to be readmitted to Section 8 for a period of 24 months from the date of termination.

10.4 VERIFICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

Prior to admission, each family member who has a Social Security Number and who is at least six years of age must provide verification of his or her Social Security Number. New family members at least six years of age must provide this verification prior to being added to the lease. Children in assisted households must provide this verification at the first regular reexamination after turning six.

The best verification of the Social Security Number is the original Social Security card. If the card is not available, the McCook Housing Agency will accept letters from Social Security that establish and state the number. Documentation from other governmental agencies will also be accepted that establish and state the number. Driver's license, military ID, passports, or other official documents that establish and state the number are also acceptable.

If an individual states that they do not have a Social Security Number they will be required to sign a statement to this effect. The McCook Housing Agency will not require any individual who does not have a Social Security number to obtain a Social Security number.

If a member of an applicant family indicates they have a Social Security number, but cannot readily verify it, the family cannot be assisted until verification is provided.

If a member of a tenant family indicates they have a Social Security number, but cannot readily verify it, they shall be asked to certify to this fact and shall up to 60 days to

provide the verification. If the individual is at least 62 years of age, they will be given 120 days to provide the verification. If the individual fails to provide the verification within the time allowed, the family will be denied assistance or will have their assistance terminated.

10.5 TIMING OF VERIFICATION

Verification must be dated within 120 days of certification or reexamination. If the verification is older than this, the source will be contacted and asked to provide information regarding any changes.

When an interim reexamination is conducted, the Housing Agency will verify and update only those elements reported to have changed.

10.6 FREQUENCY OF OBTAINING VERIFICATION

For each family member, citizenship/eligible noncitizen status will be verified only once. This verification will be obtained prior to admission. If the status of any family member was not determined prior to admission, verification of their status will be obtained at the next regular reexamination. Prior to a new member joining the family, their status will be verified.

For each family member age 6 and above, verification of Social Security number will be obtained only once. This verification will be accomplished prior to admission. When a family member who did not have a Social Security number at admission receives a Social Security number, that number will be verified at the next regular reexamination. Likewise, when a child turns six, their verification will be obtained at the next regular reexamination.

11.0 RENT AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

11.1 GENERAL

After October 1, 1999, the McCook Housing Agency will issue only vouchers to applicants, movers, and families entering the jurisdiction through portability. Certificates currently held will continue to be honored until the transition of the merger of the Section 8 Certificate and Voucher programs as outlined in 24 CFR 982.502 is complete (see Section 21.0 for additional guidance).

11.2 RENT REASONABLENESS

The Housing Agency will not approve an initial rent or a rent increase in any of the tenant-based programs without determining that the rent amount is reasonable. Reasonableness is determined prior to the initial lease and at the following times:

- A. Before any increase in rent to owner is approved;
- B. If 60 days before the contract anniversary date there is a 5% decrease in the published FMR as compared to the previous FMR; and

C. If the Housing Agency or HUD directs that reasonableness be re-determined.

11.3 COMPARABILITY

In making a rent reasonableness determination, the Housing Agency will compare the rent for the unit to the rent of comparable units in the same or comparable neighborhoods. The Housing Agency will consider the location, quality, size, number of bedrooms, age, amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities of the unit and the comparable units.

The Housing Agency will maintain current survey information on rental units in the jurisdiction. The Housing Agency will also obtain from landlord associations and management firms the value of the array of amenities.

The Housing Agency will establish minimum base rent amounts for each unit type and bedroom size. To the base the Housing Agency will be able to add or subtract the dollar value for each characteristic and amenity of a proposed unit.

Owners are invited to submit information to the survey at any time. Owners may review the determination made on their unit and may submit additional information or make improvements to the unit that will enable the Housing Agency to establish a higher value.

The owner must certify the rents charged for other units. By accepting the housing assistance payment each month the owner is certifying that the rent to owner is not more than the rent charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units in the premises.

11.4 QUALITY CONTROL

A quality control review shall be conducted for reasonable rent by a supervisor or other qualified person other than the person originally responsible for the work.

The auditor shall review a sample of units to be subsidized for rent reasonableness during the audit period. The methodology for the selection of the tenants shall be based on the total number leased during the prior fiscal year. A minimum of 5 applicants shall be reviewed for the first 50 leased units with an additional unit being reviewed for each fifty units leased after that.

The criteria to be audited shall include the type of review, the effective date, whether or not the McCook Housing Agency methodology was followed, if the unit met the nine elements of compliance, comparability to assisted units, if the information is current and documented.

The nine elements of compliance include location, size, type, and quality, age of unit, amenities, services, maintenance, and utilities.

A quality control log shall be kept by the supervisor of all files audited and this log shall be submitted as requested by Housing and Urban Development officials.

11.5 MAXIMUM SUBSIDY

The Fair Market Rent (FMR) published by HUD or the exception payment standard rent (requested by the McCook Housing Agency and approved by HUD) determines the maximum subsidy for a family.

The McCook Housing Agency may establish a higher payment standard (although still within 110% of the published fair market rent) as reasonable accommodation for a family that includes people with disabilities.

For a regular tenancy under the Certificate Program, the FMR/exception rent limit is the maximum initial gross rent under the assisted lease. This only applies until the transition of the merger of the Section 8 Certificate and Voucher programs as outlined in 24 CFR 982.502 is complete.

For the Voucher Program, the maximum payment standard will be 110% of the FMR without prior approval from HUD, or the exception payment standard approved by HUD.

For a voucher tenancy in an insured or noninsured 236 project, a 515 project of the Rural Development Administration, or a Section 221(d)(3) below market interest rate project the payment standard may not exceed the basic rent charged including the cost of tenant-paid utilities.

For manufactured home space rental, the maximum subsidy under any form of assistance is the Fair Market Rent for the space as outlined in 24 CFR 982.888.

11.5.1 Setting the Payment Standard

HUD requires that the payment standard be set by the Housing Agency at between 90 and 110% of the FMR. The McCook Housing Agency will review its determination of the payment standard annually after publication of the FMRs. The McCook Housing Agency will consider vacancy rates and rents in the market area, size and quality of units leased under the program, rents for units leased under the program, success rates of voucher holders in finding units, and the percentage of annual income families are paying for rent under the Voucher Program. If it is determined that success rates will suffer or that families are having to rent low quality units or pay over 40% of income for rent, the payment standard may be raised to the level judged necessary to alleviate these hardships.

The McCook Housing Agency may establish a higher payment standard (although still within 110% of the published fair market rent) as a reasonable accommodation for a family that includes people with disabilities.

Payment standards will not be raised solely to allow the renting of luxury quality units.

If success levels are projected to be extremely high and rents are projected to be at or below 30% of income, the Housing Agency will reduce the payment standard. Payment standards for each bedroom size are evaluated separately so that the payment standard for one bedroom size may increase or decrease while another remains unchanged. The McCook Housing Agency may consider adjusting payment standards at times other than the annual review when circumstances warrant.

Before increasing any payment standard, the Housing Agency will conduct a financial feasibility test to ensure that in using the higher standard, adequate funds will continue to be available to assist families in the program.

11.5.2 Selecting the Correct Payment Standard for a Family

- A. For the voucher tenancy, the payment standard for a family is the lower of:
 - 1. The payment standard for the family unit size; or
 - 2. The payment standard for the unit size rented by the family.
- B. If the unit rented by a family is located in an exception rent area, the Housing Agency will use the appropriate payment standard for the exception rent area.
- C. During the HAP contract term for a unit, the amount of the payment standard for a family is the higher of:
 - 1. The initial payment standard (at the beginning of the lease term) minus any amount by which the initial rent to owner exceeds the current rent to owner; or
 - 2. The payment standard as determined at the most recent regular reexamination of family income and composition effective after the beginning of the HAP contract term.
- D. At the next annual reexamination following a change in family size or composition during the HAP contract term and for any reexamination thereafter, paragraph C above does not apply.
- E. If there is a change in family unit size resulting from a change in family size or composition, the new family unit size will be considered when determining the payment standard at the next annual reexamination.

11.5.3 Area Exception Rents

In order to help families find housing outside areas of high poverty or when voucher holders are having trouble finding housing for lease under the program, the Housing Agency may request that HUD approve an exception payment standard rent for certain areas within its jurisdiction. The areas may be of any size, though generally not smaller than a census tract. The Housing Agency may request one such exception payment standard area or many. Exception payment standard rent Agency may be requested for all or some unit sizes, or for all or some unit types.

When an exception payment standard rent has been approved and the FMR increases, the exception rent remains unchanged until such time as the Housing Agency requests and HUD approves a higher exception payment standard rent. If the FMR decreases, the exception payment standard rent Agency automatically expires.

11.6 ASSISTANCE AND RENT FORMULAS

A. Total Tenant Payment

The total tenant payment is equal to the highest of:

1. 10% of monthly income
2. 30% of adjusted monthly income
3. Minimum rent
4. The welfare rent

Plus any rent above the payment standard.

B. Minimum Rent.

The McCook Housing Agency has set the minimum rent as \$50.00. However, if the family requests a hardship exemption, the McCook Housing Agency will suspend the minimum rent for the family beginning the month following the family's hardship request. The suspension will continue until the Housing Agency can determine whether a hardship exists and whether the hardship is of a temporary or long-term nature. During suspension, the family will not be required to pay a minimum rent and the Housing Assistance Payment will be increased accordingly. Households may be denied hardship exemptions due to funding availability.

1. A hardship exists in the following circumstances:
 - a. When the family has lost eligibility for or is awaiting an eligibility determination for a Federal, State or local assistance program;
 - b. When the family would be evicted as a result of the imposition of the minimum rent requirement;
 - c. When the income of the family has decreased because of changed circumstances, including loss of employment;
 - d. When the family has an increase in expenses because of changed circumstances, for medical costs, childcare, transportation, education, or similar items;
 - e. When a death has occurred in the family.
2. No hardship. If the Housing Agency determines there is no qualifying hardship, the minimum rent will be reinstated, including requiring back payment of minimum rent to the Housing Agency for the time of suspension.
3. Temporary hardship. If the Housing Agency determines that there is a qualifying hardship but that it is of a temporary nature, the minimum rent will not be imposed for a period of 90 days from the date of the family's request. At the end of the 90-day period, the minimum rent will be imposed retroactively to the time of suspension. The Housing Agency will offer a reasonable repayment agreement for any minimum rent back

payment paid by the Housing Agency on the family's behalf during the period of suspension.

4. Long-term hardship. If the Housing Agency determines there is a long-term hardship, the family will be exempt from the minimum rent requirement until the hardship no longer exists.
5. Appeals. The family may use the informal hearing procedure to appeal the Housing Agency's determination regarding the hardship. No escrow deposit will be required in order to access the informal hearing procedures.

C. Section 8 Merged Vouchers

1. The payment standard is set by the Housing Agency between 90% and 110% of the FMR or higher or lower with HUD approval.
2. The participant pays the greater of the Total Tenant Payment or the minimum rent, plus the amount by which the gross rent exceeds the payment standard.
3. No participant when initially receiving tenant-based assistance on a unit shall pay more than 40% of their monthly-adjusted income.

D. Section 8 Preservation Vouchers

1. Payment Standard
 - a. The payment standard is the lower of:
 - i. The payment standard amount for the appropriate family unit size; or
 - ii. The payment standard amount for the size of the dwelling unit actually rented by the family.
 - b. If the dwelling unit is located in an exception area, the McCook Housing Agency will use the appropriate payment standard for the exception area.
 - c. During the HAP contract term, the payment standard for the family is the higher of :
 - i. The initial payment standard (at the beginning of the HAP contract term), as determined in accordance with paragraph (1)(a) or (1)(b) of this section, minus any amount by which the initial rent to the owner exceeds the current rent to the owner; or
 - ii. The payment standard as determined in accordance with paragraph (1)(a) or (1)(b) of this section, as determined at the most recent regular reexamination of family income and composition effective after the beginning of the HAP contract term.
 - d. At the next regular reexamination following a change in family composition that causes a change in family unit size during the

HAP contract term, and for any examination thereafter during the term:

- i. Paragraph (c)(i) of this section does not apply; and
- ii. The new family unit size must be used to determine the payment standard.

2. The McCook Housing Agency will pay a monthly housing assistance payment on behalf of the family that equals the lesser of:

- a. The payment standard minus the total tenant payment; or
- b. The gross rent minus the total tenant payment.

E. Manufactured Home Space Rental: Section 8 Vouchers

1. The payment standard for a participant renting a manufactured home space is the published FMR for rental of a manufactured home space.

2. The space rent is the sum of the following as determined by the Housing Agency:

- a. Rent to the owner for the manufactured home space;
- b. Owner maintenance and management charges for the space; and
- c. Utility allowance for tenant paid utilities.

3. The participant pays the rent to owner less the HAP.

4. HAP equals the lesser of:

- a. The payment standard minus the total tenant payment; or
- b. The rent paid for rental of the real property on which the manufactured home owned by the family is located.

F. Rent for Families under the Noncitizen Rule

A mixed family will receive full continuation of assistance if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The family was receiving assistance on June 19, 1995;
2. The family was granted continuation of assistance before November 29, 1996;
3. The family's head or spouse has eligible immigration status; and
4. The family does not include any person who does not have eligible status other than the head of household, the spouse of the head of household, any parent of the head or spouse, or any child (under the age of 18) of the head or spouse.

If a mixed family qualifies for prorated assistance but decides not to accept it, or if the family has no eligible members, the family may be eligible for temporary deferral of termination of assistance to permit the family additional time for the orderly transition of some or all of its members to locate other affordable housing. Under this provision the family receives full assistance. If assistance is granted under this provision prior to November 29, 1996, it may last no longer than three years. If granted after that date, the maximum period of time for assistance under the provision is 18 months. The McCook Housing Agency will grant each family a period of 6 months to find suitable affordable housing. If the family cannot find suitable affordable housing, the McCook Housing Agency will provide additional search periods up to the maximum time allowable.

Suitable housing means housing that is not substandard and is of appropriate size for the family. Affordable housing means that it can be rented for an amount not exceeding the amount the family pays for rent, plus utilities, plus 25%.

The family's assistance is prorated in the following manner:

1. Find the prorated housing assistance payment (HAP) by dividing the HAP by the total number of family members, and then multiplying the result by the number of eligible family members.
2. Obtain the prorated family share by subtracting the prorated HAP from the gross rent (contract rent plus utility allowance).
3. The prorated tenant rent equals the prorated family share minus the full utility allowance.

11.7 QUALITY CONTROL

The policy of the McCook Housing Agency is to have each household's file, when determined eligible for assistance, reviewed by a co-worker or the Executive Director. A quality control review will be conducted on payment standards by a supervisor or other qualified person other than the person originally responsible for the work.

The Quality Control auditor shall review a sample of household files for correct payment standard used during the audit period. The methodology for the selection of the files shall be based on the total number of families found to be eligible during the prior fiscal year. A minimum of 5 files shall be reviewed for the first 50 eligible families with an additional file being reviewed for each fifty files found eligible after that.

The auditor shall review all payment standards for all counties and all bedroom sizes in which the housing agency provides vouchers. The McCook Housing Agency will adopt payment standards between 90-110 percent of the HUD-published Fair Market Rent for the areas in question.

The criteria to be audited shall include the payment standard used for the size of the family admitted to the program. The size of the unit shall be based on the number of family members, age and sex of family members, and any extenuating circumstances allowing for a larger unit with documentation from a physician.

A quality control log shall be kept by the auditor of all of the audited files and submitted as requested by Housing and Urban Development officials.

11.8 UTILITY ALLOWANCE

The Housing Agency maintains a utility allowance schedule for all tenant-paid utilities (except telephone), for cost of tenant-supplied refrigerators and ranges, and for other tenant-paid housing services (e.g., trash collection (disposal of waste and refuse)).

The utility allowance schedule is determined based on the typical cost of utilities and services paid by energy-conservative households that occupy housing of similar size and type in the same locality. In developing the schedule, the Housing Agency uses normal patterns of consumption for the community, as a whole, and current utility rates.

The Housing Agency reviews the utility allowance schedule annually and revises any allowance for a utility category if there has been a change of 10% or more in the utility rate since the last time the utility allowance schedule was revised. The Housing Agency maintains information supporting the annual review of utility allowances and any revisions made in its utility allowance schedule. Participants may review this information at any time by making an appointment with McCook Housing Agency Staff.

The Housing Agency uses the appropriate utility allowance for the size of dwelling unit actually leased by the family (rather than the family unit size as determined under the Housing Agency subsidy standards).

At each reexamination, the Housing Agency applies the utility allowance from the most current utility allowance schedule.

The Housing Agency will approve a request for a utility allowance that is higher than the applicable amount on the utility allowance schedule if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family member with a disability.

The utility allowance will be subtracted from the family's share to determine the amount of the Tenant Rent. The Tenant Rent is the amount the family owes each month to the owner. The amount of the utility allowance is then still available to the family to pay the cost of their utilities. Any utility cost above the allowance is the responsibility of the tenant. Any savings resulting from utility costs below the amount of the allowance belong to the tenant.

11.9 QUALITY CONTROL

A quality control review shall be conducted by a supervisor or other qualified person other than the person originally responsible for the work.

The auditor shall review a random sample of the utility allowance schedule for each community participating in the Housing Choice Voucher program during the audit period. The methodology for the selection of the community to be audited shall be based on the total number served during the prior fiscal year. A minimum of 5 communities shall be reviewed for the first 50 communities served with an additional one being reviewed for each fifty communities served after that.

The criteria to be audited shall include utility type, fuel type, last rate, current rate, and percent of change.

A quality control log shall be maintained by the supervisor of all utility allowances audited and this log shall be submitted as requested by Housing and Urban Development officials.

11.10 DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

The Housing Agency pays the owner the lesser of the housing assistance payment or the rent to owner. If payments are not made when due, the owner may charge the McCook Housing Agency a late payment, agreed to in the Contract and in accordance with generally accepted practices in the McCook jurisdiction.

11.11 FAMILY PAYMENT TO OWNER

The family must pay any portion of rent to the owner not covered by the HAP.

The PHA will pay HAP on behalf of the family in accordance with HAP contract and HUD requirements each month. The HAP is credited against monthly rent to the owner for the unit.

The tenant is not responsible for the portion of rent to owner covered by the HAP. PHA failure to pay HAP is not a violation of the lease. Thus, the owner may not terminate tenancy for PHA failure to pay HAP.

The owner may not charge or accept any payment in addition to rent to owner from the family or any other source. Rent to owner includes all the housing services, maintenance, utilities and appliances to be provided and paid by the owner as stated in the lease.

The owner must immediately return any excess rent payment to the tenant.

11.12 CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

The McCook Housing Agency requires a written request by the owner who executed the HAP contract in order to make changes regarding who is to receive the McCook Housing Agency's rent payment or the address as to where the rent payment should be sent.

In addition, the McCook Housing Agency requires a written request from the new owner to process a change of ownership. The following documents must accompany the written request:

- A. Deed of Trust showing the transfer of title; and
- B. Tax Identification Number or Social Security Number.

New owners will be required to execute IRS form W-9. The McCook Housing Agency may withhold the rent payment until the taxpayer identification number is received.

12.0 INSPECTION POLICIES, HQS, AND DAMAGE CLAIMS

The McCook Housing Agency will inspect all units to ensure that they meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS). No unit will be initially placed on the Section 8 Existing Program unless the HQS is met. Units will be inspected at least annually, and at other times as needed, to determine if the units meet HQS.

The McCook Housing Agency must be allowed to inspect the dwelling unit at reasonable times with reasonable notice. The family and owner will be notified of the inspection appointment by first class mail. If the family can not be at home for the scheduled inspection appointment, the family must call and reschedule the inspection or make arrangements to enable the Housing Agency to enter the unit and complete the inspection.

If the family misses the scheduled inspection and fails to reschedule the inspection, the McCook Housing Agency will only schedule one more inspection. If the family misses two inspections, the McCook Housing Agency will consider the family to have violated the Family Obligation, and their assistance will be terminated.

12.1 TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

There are seven types of inspections the McCook Housing Agency will perform:

- A. Initial Inspection - An inspection that must take place to insure that the unit passes HQS before assistance can begin.
- B. Annual Inspection - An inspection to determine that the unit continues to meet HQS.
- C. Complaint Inspection - An inspection caused by the Agency receiving a complaint on the unit by anyone.
- D. Special Inspection - An inspection caused by a third party, i.e. HUD, needing to view the unit.
- E. Emergency - An inspection that takes place in the event of a perceived emergency. These will take precedence over all other inspections.
- F. Move Out Inspection (if applicable) - An inspection required for units in service before October 2, 1995, and optional after that date. These inspections document the condition of the unit at the time of the move-out.
- G. Quality Control Inspection - Supervisory inspections on at least 5% of the total number of units that were under lease during the Housing Agency's previous fiscal year.

12.2 OWNER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Owner Responsibility for HQS
 - 1. The owner must maintain the unit and premises in accordance with HQS. (Maintenance and replacement must be in accordance with standard practice for the building as established by the owner.)

2. If the owner fails to maintain the dwelling unit in accordance with HQS, the McCook Housing Agency will take prompt and vigorous action to enforce the owner obligations. The McCook Housing Agency's remedies for such breach of the HQS include termination, suspension or reduction of housing assistance payments and termination of the HAP contract.
3. The McCook Housing Agency will not make any housing assistance payments for a dwelling unit that fails to meet the HQS, unless the owner corrects the defect within the period specified by the McCook Housing Agency and the McCook Housing Agency verifies the correction. If a defect is life threatening, the owner must correct the defect within no more than 24 hours. For other defects the owner must correct the defect within no more than 30 calendar days (or any McCook Housing Agency approved extension).
4. The owner is not responsible for a breach of the HQS that is not caused by tenant failure to pay for the utilities to be paid by the tenant. The owner is also not responsible if the breach of HQS is caused by the tenant failing to provide appliances that are to be provided by the tenant.
5. The owner is not responsible for a breach of the HQS because of damages beyond normal wear and tear caused by any member of the household or guest.
6. The owner must provide all utilities needed to comply with HQS. (The lease determines who will be responsible to pay for utilities.)

B. Family Responsibility for HQS

1. The family is responsible for a breach of the HQS that is caused by any of the following:
 - a. The family fails to pay for any utilities that the owner is not required to pay for, but which are to be paid by the tenant;
 - b. The family fails to provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide, but which are to be provided by the tenant; or
 - c. Any member of the household or a guest damages the dwelling unit or premises (damage beyond ordinary wear and tear).
2. If an HQS breach caused by the family is life threatening, the family must correct the defect within no more than 24 hours. For other family-caused defects, the family must correct the defect within no more than 30 calendar days (or any McCook Housing Agency approved extension).
3. If the family has caused a breach of the HQS, the McCook Housing Agency will take prompt and vigorous action to enforce the family obligations. The McCook Housing Agency may terminate assistance for the family in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552.

12.3 HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS) 24 CFR 982.401

This Section states performance and acceptability criteria for these key aspects of the following housing quality standards:

A. Sanitary Facilities

1. Performance Requirements

The dwelling unit must include sanitary facilities located in the unit. The sanitary facilities must be in proper operating condition and adequate for personal cleanliness and the disposal of human waste. The sanitary facilities must be usable in privacy.

2. Acceptability Criteria

- a. The bathroom must be located in a separate private room and have a flush toilet in proper operating condition.
- b. The dwelling unit must have a fixed basin in proper operating condition, with a sink trap and hot and cold running water.
- c. The dwelling unit must have a shower or a tub in proper operating condition with hot and cold running water.
- d. The facilities must utilize an approvable public or private disposal system (including a locally approvable septic system).

B. Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal

1. Performance Requirements

- a. The dwelling unit must have suitable space and equipment to store, prepare, and serve foods in a sanitary manner.
- b. There must be adequate facilities and services for the sanitary disposal of food wastes and refuse, including facilities for temporary storage where necessary (e.g., garbage cans).

2. Acceptability Criteria

- a. The dwelling unit must have an oven, a stove or range, and a refrigerator of appropriate size for the family. All of the equipment must be in proper operating condition. Either the owner or the family may supply the equipment. A microwave oven may be substituted for a tenant-supplied oven and stove or range. A microwave oven may be substituted for an owner-supplied oven and stove or range if the tenant agrees and microwave ovens are furnished instead of an oven and stove or range to both subsidized and unsubsidized tenants in the building or premises.

- b. The dwelling unit must have a kitchen sink in proper operating condition, with a sink trap and hot and cold running water. The sink must drain into an approvable public or private system.
- c. The dwelling unit must have space for the storage, preparation, and serving of food.
- d. There must be facilities and services for the sanitary disposal of food waste and refuse, including temporary storage facilities where necessary (e.g., garbage cans).

C. Space and Security

1. Performance Requirement

The dwelling unit must provide adequate space and security for the family.

2. Acceptability Criteria

- a. At a minimum, the dwelling unit must have a living room, a kitchen area, and a bathroom.
- b. The dwelling unit must have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons. Children of opposite sex, other than very young children, may not be required to occupy the same bedroom or living/sleeping room.
- c. Dwelling unit windows that are accessible from the outside, such as basement, first floor, and fire escape windows, must be lockable (such as window units with sash pins or sash locks, and combination windows with latches). Windows that are nailed shut are acceptable only if these windows are not needed for ventilation or as an alternate exit in case of fire.
- d. The exterior doors of the dwelling unit must be lockable. Exterior doors are doors by which someone can enter or exit the dwelling unit.

D. Thermal Environment

1. Performance Requirement

The dwelling unit must have and be capable of maintaining a thermal environment healthy for the human body.

2. Acceptability Criteria

- a. There must be a safe system for heating the dwelling unit (and a safe cooling system, where present). The system must be in proper operating condition. The system must be able to provide adequate heat (and cooling, if applicable), either directly or

indirectly, to each room, in order to assure a healthy living environment appropriate to the climate.

- b. The dwelling unit must not contain unvented room heaters that burn gas, oil, or kerosene. Electric heaters are acceptable.

E. Illumination and Electricity

1. Performance Requirement

Each room must have adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and to support the health and safety of occupants. The dwelling unit must have sufficient electrical sources so occupants can use essential electrical appliances. The electrical fixtures and wiring must ensure safety from fire.

2. Acceptability Criteria

- a. There must be at least one window in the living room and in each sleeping room.
- b. The kitchen area and the bathroom must have a permanent ceiling or wall light fixture in proper operating condition. The kitchen area must also have at least one electrical outlet in proper operating condition.
- c. The living room and each bedroom must have at least two electrical outlets in proper operating condition. Permanent overhead or wall-mounted light fixtures may count as one of the required electrical outlets.

F. Structure and Materials

1. Performance Requirement

The dwelling unit must be structurally sound. The structure must not present any threat to the health and safety of the occupants and must protect the occupants from the environment.

2. Acceptability Criteria

- a. Ceilings, walls, and floors must not have any serious defects such as severe bulging or leaning, large holes, loose surface materials, severe buckling, missing parts, or other serious damage.
- b. The roof must be structurally sound and weather tight.
- c. The exterior wall structure and surface must not have any serious defects such as serious leaning, buckling, sagging, large holes, or defects that may result in air infiltration or vermin infestation.
- d. The condition and equipment of interior and exterior stairs, halls, porches, walkways, etc., must not present a danger of tripping

and falling. For example, broken or missing steps or loose boards are unacceptable.

- e. Elevators must be working and safe.

G. Interior Air Quality

1. Performance Requirement

The dwelling unit must be free of pollutants in the air at levels that threaten the health of the occupants.

2. Acceptability Criteria

- a. The dwelling unit must be free from dangerous levels of air pollution from carbon monoxide, sewer gas, fuel gas, dust, and other harmful pollutants.
- b. There must be adequate air circulation in the dwelling unit.
- c. Bathroom areas must have one window that can be opened or other adequate exhaust ventilation.
- d. Any room used for sleeping must have at least one window. If the window is designed to be opened, the window must work.

H. Water Supply

1. Performance Requirements

The water supply must be free from contamination.

2. Acceptability Criteria

The dwelling unit must be served by an approvable public or private water supply that is sanitary and free from contamination.

I. Lead-based Paint

1. Definitions

- a. Chewable surface: Protruding painted surfaces up to five feet from the floor or ground that are readily accessible to children under six years of age; for example, protruding corners, window sills and frames, doors and frames, and other protruding woodwork.
- b. Component: An element of a residential structure identified by type and location, such as a bedroom wall, an exterior window sill, a baseboard in a living room, a kitchen floor, an interior window sill in a bathroom, a porch floor, stair treads in a common stairwell, or an exterior wall.
- c. Defective paint surface: A surface on which the paint is cracking, scaling, chipping, peeling, or loose.

- d. Elevated blood level (EBL): Excessive absorption of lead. Excessive absorption is a confirmed concentration of lead in whole blood of 20 ug/dl (micrograms of lead per deciliter) for a single test or of 15-19 ug/dl in two consecutive tests 3-4 months apart.
- e. HEPA: A high efficiency particle accumulator as used in lead abatement vacuum cleaners.
- f. Lead-based paint: A paint surface, whether or not defective, identified as having a lead content greater than or equal to 1 milligram per centimeter squared (mg/cm²), or 0.5 % by weight or 5000 parts per million (PPM).

2. Performance Requirements

- a. The purpose of this paragraph of this Section is to implement Section 302 of the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act, 42 U.S.C. 4822, by establishing procedures to eliminate as far as practicable the hazards of lead-based paint poisoning for units assisted under this part. This paragraph is issued under 24 CFR 35.24(b)(4) and supersedes, for all housing to which it applies, the requirements of subpart C of 24 CFR part 35.
- b. The requirements of this paragraph of this Section do not apply to 0-bedroom units, units that are certified by a qualified inspector to be free of lead-based paint, or units designated exclusively for the elderly. The requirements of subpart A of 24 CFR part 35 apply to all units constructed prior to 1978 covered by a HAP contract under part 982.
- c. If a dwelling unit constructed before 1978 is occupied by a family that includes a child under the age of six years, the initial and each periodic inspection (as required under this part), must include a visual inspection for defective paint surfaces. If defective paint surfaces are found, such surfaces must be treated in accordance with paragraph k of this Section.
- d. The Housing Agency may exempt from such treatment defective paint surfaces that are found in a report by a qualified lead-based paint inspector not to be lead-based paint, as defined in paragraph 1(f) of this Section. For purposes of this Section, a qualified lead-based paint inspector is a State or local health or housing agency, a lead-based paint inspector certified or regulated by a State or local health or housing agency, or an organization recognized by HUD.
- e. Treatment of defective paint surfaces required under this Section must be completed within 30 calendar days of Housing Agency notification to the owner. When weather conditions prevent treatment of the defective paint conditions on exterior surfaces within the 30-day period, treatment as required by paragraph k of this Section may be delayed for a reasonable time.

- f. The requirements in this paragraph apply to:
 - i. All painted interior surfaces within the unit (including ceilings but excluding furniture);
 - ii. The entrance and hallway providing access to a unit in a multi-unit building; and
 - iii. Exterior surfaces up to five feet from the floor or ground that are readily accessible to children under six years of age (including walls, stairs, decks, porches, railings, windows and doors, but excluding outbuildings such as garages and sheds).
- g. In addition to the requirements of paragraph c of this Section, for a dwelling unit constructed before 1978 that is occupied by a family with a child under the age of six years with an identified EBL condition, the initial and each periodic inspection (as required under this part) must include a test for lead-based paint on chewable surfaces. Testing is not required if previous testing of chewable surfaces is negative for lead-based paint or if the chewable surfaces have already been treated.
- h. Testing must be conducted by a State or local health or housing agency, an inspector certified or regulated by a State or local health or housing agency, or an organization recognized by HUD. Lead content must be tested by using an X-ray fluorescence analyzer (XRF) or by laboratory analysis of paint samples. Where lead-based paint on chewable surfaces is identified, treatment of the paint surface in accordance with paragraph k of this Section is required, and treatment shall be completed within the time limits in paragraph c of this Section.
- i. The requirements in paragraph g of this Section apply to all protruding painted surfaces up to five feet from the floor or ground that are readily accessible to children under six years of age:
 - i. Within the unit;
 - ii. The entrance and hallway providing access to a unit in a multi-unit building; and
 - iii. Exterior surfaces (including walls, stairs, decks, porches, railings, windows and doors, but excluding outbuildings such as garages and sheds).
- j. In lieu of the procedures set forth in paragraph g of this Section, the housing Agency may, at its discretion, waive the testing requirement and require the owner to treat all interior and exterior chewable surfaces in accordance with the methods set out in paragraph k of this Section.

- k. Treatment of defective paint surfaces and chewable surfaces must consist of covering or removal of the paint in accordance with the following requirements:
 - i. A defective paint surface shall be treated if the total area of defective paint on a component is:
 - (1) More than 10 square feet on an exterior wall;
 - (2) More than 2 square feet on an interior or exterior component with a large surface area, excluding exterior walls and including, but not limited to, ceilings, floors, doors, and interior walls;
 - (3) More than 10% of the total surface area on an interior or exterior component with a small surface area, including, but not limited to, windowsills, baseboards and trim.
 - ii. Acceptable methods of treatment are the following: removal by wet scraping, wet sanding, chemical stripping on or off site, replacing painted components, scraping with infra-red or coil type heat gun with temperatures below 1100 degrees, HEPA vacuum sanding, HEPA vacuum needle gun, contained hydroblasting or high pressure wash with HEPA vacuum, and abrasive sandblasting with HEPA vacuum. Surfaces must be covered with durable materials with joint edges sealed and caulked as needed to prevent the escape of lead contaminated dust.
 - iii. Prohibited methods of removal are the following: open flame burning or torching, machine sanding or grinding without a HEPA exhaust, uncontained hydroblasting or high pressure wash, and dry scraping except around electrical outlets or except when treating defective paint spots no more than two square feet in any one interior room or space (hallway, pantry, etc.) or totaling no more than twenty square feet on exterior surfaces.
 - iv. During exterior treatment soil and playground equipment must be protected from contamination.
 - v. All treatment procedures must be concluded with a thorough cleaning of all surfaces in the room or area of treatment to remove fine dust particles. Cleanup must be accomplished by wet washing surfaces with a lead solubilizing detergent such as trisodium phosphate or an equivalent solution.
 - vi. Waste and debris must be disposed of in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws.
- l. The owner must take appropriate action to protect residents and their belongings from hazards associated with treatment

procedures. Residents must not enter spaces undergoing treatment until cleanup is completed. Personal belongings that are in work areas must be relocated or otherwise protected from contamination.

- m. Prior to execution of the HAP contract, the owner must inform the Housing Agency and the family of any knowledge of the presence of lead-based paint on the surfaces of the residential unit.
- n. The Housing Agency must attempt to obtain annually from local health agencies the names and addresses of children with identified EBLs and must annually match this information with the names and addresses of participants under this part. If a match occurs, the Housing Agency must determine whether local health officials have tested the unit for lead-based paint. If the unit has lead-based paint, the Housing Agency must require the owner to treat the lead-based paint. If the owner does not complete the corrective actions required by this Section, the family must be issued a certificate or voucher to move.
- o. The Housing Agency must keep a copy of each inspection report for at least three years. If a dwelling unit requires testing, or if the dwelling unit requires treatment of chewable surfaces based on the testing, the Housing Agency must keep the test results indefinitely and, if applicable, the owner certification and treatment. The records must indicate which chewable surfaces in the dwelling units have been tested and which chewable surfaces were tested or tested and treated in accordance with the standards prescribed in this Section, such chewable surfaces do not have to be tested or treated at any subsequent time.
- p. The dwelling unit must be able to be used and maintained without unauthorized use of other private properties. The building must provide an alternate means of exit in case of fire (such as fire stairs or egress through windows).

J. Access

1. Performance Requirements

The dwelling unit must be able to be used and maintained without unauthorized use of other private properties. The building must provide an alternate means of exit in case of fire (such as fire stairs or egress through windows).

K. Site and Neighborhood

1. Performance Requirements

The site and neighborhood must be reasonably free from disturbing noises and reverberations and other dangers to the health, safety, and general welfare of the occupants.

2. Acceptability Criteria

The site and neighborhood may not be subject to serious adverse environmental conditions, natural or manmade, such as dangerous walks or steps; instability; flooding, poor drainage, septic tank back-ups or sewage hazards; mudslides; abnormal air pollution, smoke or dust; excessive noise, vibration or vehicular traffic; excessive accumulations of trash; vermin or rodent infestation; or fire hazards.

L. Sanitary Condition

1. Performance Requirements

The dwelling unit and its equipment must be in sanitary condition.

2. Acceptability Criteria

The dwelling unit and its equipment must be free of vermin and rodent infestation.

M. Smoke Detectors

1. Performance Requirements

a. Except as provided in paragraph b below of this Section, each dwelling unit must have at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper operating condition, on each level of the dwelling unit, including basements but excepting crawl spaces and unfinished attics. Smoke detectors must be installed in accordance with and meet the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 74 (or its successor standards). If the dwelling unit is occupied by any hearing-impaired person, smoke detectors must have an alarm system, designed for hearing-impaired persons as specified in NFPA 74 (or successor standards).

b. For units assisted prior to April 24, 1993, owners who installed battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detectors prior to April 24, 1993, in compliance with HUD's smoke detector requirements, including the regulations published on July 30, 1992, (57 FR 33846), will not be required subsequently to comply with any additional requirements mandated by NFPA 74 (i.e., the owner would not be required to install a smoke detector in a basement not used for living purposes, nor would the owner be required to change the location of the smoke detectors that have already been installed on the other floors of the unit).

12.4 EXCEPTIONS TO THE HQS ACCEPTABILITY CRITERIA

The McCook Housing Agency will utilize the acceptability criteria as outlined above with applicable State and local codes. Additionally, the McCook Housing Agency has received HUD approval to require the following additional criteria:

- A. In each room, there will be at least one exterior window that if meant to be opened, can be opened.
- B. Owners will be required to scrape peeling paint and repaint all surfaces cited for peeling paint with 2 coats of non-lead paint. An extension may be granted as a severe weather related item as defined below.
- C. Adequate heat shall be considered to be 68 degrees.
- D. In units where the tenant must pay for utilities, each unit must have separate metering device(s) for measuring utility consumption.
- E. A ¾" overflow pipe must be present on the hot water heater safety valves and installed down to within 6 inches of the floor.

12.5 QUALITY CONTROL

A quality control review shall be conducted for inspections by a supervisor or other qualified person other than the person originally responsible for the work

The supervisor shall review a sample of the HQS inspections based on the number of inspections performed during the audit period.

The criteria to be audited shall include the bedroom size, structure type, original pass/fail designation, whether the quality control inspection was within three months of the original inspection date, and items missed and discussed with the original inspector. The methodology for the selection of the inspected units shall be based on the total number inspected units during the prior fiscal year. A minimum of 5 units shall be reviewed for the first 50 inspected units with an additional one being reviewed for each fifty inspected units after that.

A quality control log shall be kept by the auditor of all audited inspections and this log shall be submitted as requested by Housing and Urban Development officials.

12.6 TIME FRAMES AND CORRECTIONS OF HQS FAIL ITEMS

A. Correcting Initial HQS Fail Items

The McCook Housing Agency will schedule a timely inspection of the unit on the date the owner indicates that the unit will be ready for inspection, or as soon as possible thereafter (within 5 working days) upon receipt of a Request for Tenancy Approval. The owner and participant will be notified in writing of the results of the inspection. If the unit fails HQS again, the owner and the participant will be advised to notify the McCook Housing Agency to reschedule a re-inspection when the repairs have been properly completed.

On an initial inspection, the owner will be given up to 30 days to correct the items noted as failed, depending on the extent of the repairs that are required to be made. No unit will be placed in the program until the unit meets the HQS requirements.

B. HQS Fail Items for Units under Contract

The owner or participant will be given time to correct the failed items cited on the inspection report for a unit already under contract. If the failed items endanger the family's health or safety (using the emergency item list below), the owner or participant will be given 24 hours to correct the violations. For less serious failures, the owner or participant will be given up to 30 days to correct the failed item(s).

If the owner fails to correct the HQS failed items after proper notification has been given, the McCook Housing Agency will abate payment and terminate the contract in accordance with Sections 12.7 and 17.0(B)(3).

If the participant fails to correct the HQS failed items that are family-caused after proper notification has been given, the McCook Housing Agency will terminate assistance for the family in accordance with Sections 12.2(B) and 17.0(B)(3).

C. Time Frames for Corrections

1. Emergency repair items must be abated within 24 hours.
2. Repair of refrigerators, range and oven, or a major plumbing fixture supplied by the owner must be abated within 72 hours.
3. Non-emergency items must be completed within 10 days of the initial inspection.
4. For major repairs, the owner will have up to 30 days to complete.

D. Extensions

At the sole discretion of the McCook Housing Agency, extensions of up to 30 days may be granted to permit an owner to complete repairs if the owner has made a good faith effort to initiate repairs. If repairs are not completed within 60 days after the initial inspection date, the McCook Housing Agency will abate the rent and cancel the HAP contract for owner noncompliance. Appropriate extensions will be granted if a severe weather condition exists for such items as exterior painting and outside concrete work for porches, steps, and sidewalks.

12.7 EMERGENCY FAIL ITEMS

The following items are to be considered examples of emergency items that need to be abated within 24 hours:

- A. No hot or cold water
- B. No electricity
- C. Inability to maintain adequate heat
- D. Major plumbing leak
- E. Natural gas leak

- F. Broken lock(s) on first floor doors or windows
- G. Broken windows that unduly allow weather elements into the unit
- H. Electrical outlet smoking or sparking
- I. Exposed electrical wires which could result in shock or fire
- J. Unusable toilet when only one toilet is present in the unit
- K. Security risks such as broken doors or windows that would allow intrusion
- L. Other conditions which pose an immediate threat to health or safety

12.8 ABATEMENT

When a unit fails to meet HQS and the owner has been given an opportunity to correct the deficiencies, but has failed to do so within the required timeframe, the rent for the dwelling unit will be abated.

The initial abatement period will not exceed 7 days. If the corrections of deficiencies are not made within the 7-day timeframe, the abatement will continue until the HAP contract is terminated. When the deficiencies are corrected, the McCook Housing Agency will end the abatement the day the unit passes inspection. Rent will resume the following day and be paid the first day of the next month.

For tenant caused HQS deficiencies, the owner will not be held accountable and the rent will not be abated. The tenant is held to the same standard and timeframes for correction of deficiencies as owners. If repairs are not completed by the deadline, the McCook Housing Agency will send a notice of termination to both the tenant and the owner. The tenant will be given the opportunity to request an informal hearing.

12.9 QUALITY CONTROL

A quality control review shall be conducted of the HQS enforcement by a supervisor or other qualified person other than the person originally responsible for the work. The auditor shall review a sample of those units that did not pass at the original inspection during the audit period.

The criteria to be audited shall include the original inspection fail date, deadline for the correction, the reinspection date, whether or not the deficiencies were corrected, the date the Housing Assistance Payment was abated or terminated if not corrected, date of the owner notification, verification of the Housing Assistance Payment register, and if family obligations were enforced. The methodology for the selection of the applicant units shall be based on the total number served during the prior fiscal year. A minimum of 5 units shall be reviewed for the first 50 failed units with an additional one being reviewed for each fifty failed units after that.

A quality control log shall be maintained by the auditor for all audited files and submitted as requested by Housing and Urban Development officials.

13.0 RECERTIFICATION

13.1 TRADITIONAL ANNUAL REEXAMINATION

At least annually the McCook Housing Agency will conduct a reexamination of family income and circumstances. The results of the reexamination determine (1) the rent the family will pay, and (2) whether the family subsidy is correct based on the family unit size.

The McCook Housing Agency will send a notification letter to the family letting them know that it is time for their annual reexamination and scheduling an appointment. The letter includes forms for the family to complete in preparation for the interview. The letter includes instructions permitting the family to reschedule the interview if necessary. The letter tells families who may need to make alternate arrangements due to a disability that they may contact staff to request an accommodation of their needs.

During the interview, the family will provide all information regarding income, assets, expenses, and other information necessary to determine the family's share of rent. The family will sign the HUD consent form and other consent forms that later will be mailed to the sources that will verify the family circumstances.

Upon receipt of verification, the McCook Housing Agency will determine the family's annual income and will calculate their family share.

13.2 STREAMLINED TRIENNIAL REEXAMINATION

Residents have a choice regarding annual re-examinations. The resident can choose whether to continue with traditional recertification or streamlined income determination recertification. If the resident chooses streamlined income determination recertification they may choose to also have a traditional interim recertification at any time.

1. Streamlined Recertification

McCook Housing Agency will conduct streamlined income redeterminations for fixed-income households (once every three years).

The term "fixed-income" includes income from:

- Social Security payments, to include Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Supplemental Security Disability Insurance (SSDI);
- Federal, state, local, and private pension plans; and
- Other periodic payments received from annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, disability or death benefits, and other similar types of periodic payments.

A streamlined income determination will be made by applying a verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or current rate of interest to the previously verified or adjusted income amount. The COLA or current interest rate applicable to each source of fixed income must be obtained either from a public source or from tenant-provided, third-party generated documentation. In the absence of such verification for any source of fixed income, third-party verification of income amounts must be obtained.

This provision is available for program participants only and may be implemented at the family's next annual reexamination. The provision is not available for program applicants; in the initial year in which a streamlined income determination is made, the COLA must be applied to a source of income that has been verified previously.

In the initial year McCook Housing Agency will determine whether a source of income is fixed. McCook Housing Agency may do this by comparing the amount of income from the source to the amount generated during the prior year. If the amount is the same or if it has changed only as a result of a COLA or due to interest generated on a principal amount that remained otherwise constant, then the source is fixed.

McCook Housing Agency may also make such a determination by requiring a family to identify as to which source(s) of income are fixed. McCook Housing Agency will document in the tenant file how it made the determination that a source of income is fixed.

For the second income determination involving a family member whose income was adjusted previously using a streamlined income determination, the adjustment will be made to the previously determined income amount (i.e., in year two, the COLA is applied to the year one 1 income amount, as previously adjusted by a COLA).

For any family member whose income is determined pursuant to a streamlined income determination, *third-party verification of all income amounts for all family members must be performed at least every three years*. This means that, for the third income determination involving a family member whose income had been adjusted twice using a streamlined income determination, the PHA would need to obtain third-party verification of *all* income amounts.

This also means that if a family member with a fixed-income source is added to the family during year two, for example, then the McCook Housing Agency must obtain third-party verification of all income amounts for that family member at the next reexamination.

Third-party verifications are required for medical expenses and other deductions to income.

Family Declaration of assets under \$5000.

The McCook Housing Agency obtain third-party verification of all family assets upon admitting a family to the public housing program and then again at least every 3 years thereafter.

During the intervening annual reexaminations will accept a family's declaration that it has total net assets equal to or less than \$5,000, without taking additional steps to verify the accuracy of the declaration. If a family submits such a declaration, then the PHA does not need to request supporting documentation (e.g., bank statements) to verify the assets or the amount of income expected to be received from those assets.

The family's declaration of total assets must show each asset and the amount of income expected from that asset. The total amount of income expected from all assets must be less than or equal to \$5,000.

13.3 Effective Date of Rent Changes for Annual Reexaminations

The new family share will generally be effective upon the anniversary date with 30 days notice of any rent increase to the family.

If the rent determination is delayed due to a reason beyond the control of the family, then any rent increase will be effective the first of the month after the month in which the family receives a 30 day notice of the amount. If the new rent is a reduction and the delay is beyond the control of the family, the reduction will be effective as scheduled on the anniversary date.

If the family caused the delay, then any increase will be effective on the anniversary date. Any reduction will be effective the first of the month after the rent amount is determined.

13.4 Missed Appointments

If the family fails to respond to the letter and fails to attend the interview, a second letter will be mailed. The second letter will advise of a new time and date for the interview, allowing for the same considerations for rescheduling and accommodation as above. The letter will also advise that failure by the family to attend the second scheduled interview will result in the McCook Housing Agency taking action to terminate the family's assistance.

13.5 INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS

During an interim reexamination only the information affected by the changes being reported will be reviewed and verified.

Families are required to report the following changes to the McCook Housing Agency between regular reexaminations. These changes will trigger an interim reexamination.

- A. A member has been added to the family through birth or adoption or court-awarded custody.
- B. A household member is leaving or has left the family unit.
- C. Family break-up
- D. A significant change increasing household income of 25% or more per month

In circumstances of a family break-up, the McCook Housing Agency will make a determination of which family member will retain the certificate or voucher, taking into consideration the following factors:

- 1. To whom the certificate or voucher was issued.
- 2. The interest of minor children or of ill, elderly, or disabled family members.

3. Whether the assistance should remain with the family members remaining in the unit.
4. Whether family members were forced to leave the unit as a result of actual or threatened physical violence by a spouse or other member(s) of the household.

If a court determines the disposition of property between members of the assisted family in a divorce or separation under a settlement of judicial decree, the McCook Housing Agency will be bound by the court's determination of which family members continue to receive assistance in the program.

Because of the number of possible different circumstances in which a determination will have to be made, the McCook Housing Agency will make determinations on a case by case basis.

The McCook Housing Agency will issue a determination within 10 business days of the request for a determination. The family member requesting the determination may request an informal hearing in compliance with the informal hearings in Section 15.3.

In order to add a household member other than through birth or adoption (including a live-in aide) the family must request that the new member be added to the lease. Before adding the new member to the lease, the individual must complete an application form stating their income, assets, and all other information required of an applicant. The individual must provide their Social Security Number if they have one, and must verify their citizenship/eligible immigrant status (Their housing will not be delayed due to delays in verifying eligible immigrant status other than delays caused by the family). The new family member will go through the screening process similar to the process for applicants. The McCook Housing Agency will determine the eligibility of the individual before allowing them to be added to the lease. If the individual is found to be ineligible or does not pass the screening criteria, they will be advised in writing and given the opportunity for an informal review. If they are found to be eligible and do pass the screening criteria, the McCook Housing Agency will grant approval to add their name to the lease. At the same time, the family's annual income will be recalculated taking into account the income and circumstances of the new family member. The effective date of the new rent will be in accordance with paragraph below 14.2.2.

Families are not required to, but may at any time, request an interim reexamination based on a decrease in income, an increase in allowable expenses, or other changes in family circumstances. Upon such request, the McCook Housing Agency will take timely action to process the interim reexamination and recalculate the family share.

13.6 Special Reexaminations

If a family's income is too unstable to project for 12 months, including families that temporarily have no income or have a temporary decrease in income, the McCook Housing Agency may schedule special reexaminations every 60 days until the income stabilizes and an annual income can be determined.

13.7 Effective Date of Rent Changes Due to Interim or Special Reexaminations

Unless there is a delay in reexamination processing caused by the family, any rent increase will be effective the first of the second month after the month in which the family receives notice of the new rent amount. If the family causes the delay, the rent increase will be effective on the date it would have been effective had the process not been delayed (even if this means a retroactive increase).

If the new rent is a reduction and any delay is beyond the control of the family, the reduction will be effective the first of the month after the interim reexamination should have been completed.

If the new rent is a reduction and the family caused the delay or did not report the change in a timely manner, the change will be effective the first of the month after the rent amount is determined.

13.8 QUALITY CONTROL

A quality control review shall be conducted of the reexaminations completed by a supervisor or other qualified person other than the person originally responsible for the work. The auditor shall review a sample of those files worked for an annual reexam and interim reexam.

The criteria to be audited for annual reexaminations shall include all the aspects of eligibility that the original application required. For interim reexaminations the criteria to be audited shall be only the change(s) reported. The methodology for the selection of the tenants for reexamination shall be based on the total number of new applications and reexaminations during the prior fiscal year. A minimum of 5 families shall be reviewed for the first 50 examinations with an additional one being reviewed for each fifty examinations after that.

A quality control log shall be maintained by the auditor for all audited files and submitted as requested by Housing and Urban Development officials.

14.0 TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE TO THE FAMILY BY THE MCCOOK HOUSING AGENCY

The Housing Agency may at any time terminate program assistance for a participant, because of any of the actions or inaction by the household:

- A. If the family violates any family obligations under the program.
- B. If a family member fails to sign and submit consent forms.
- C. If a family fails to establish citizenship or eligible immigrant status and is not eligible for or does not elect continuation of assistance, pro-ration of assistance, or temporary deferral of assistance. If the McCook Housing Agency determines that a family member has knowingly permitted an ineligible noncitizen (other than any ineligible noncitizens listed on the lease) to permanently reside in their Section 8 unit, the family's assistance will be terminated. Such family will not be eligible to be readmitted to Section 8 for a period of 24 months from the date of termination.

- D. If any member of the family has ever been evicted from public housing.
- E. If the Housing Agency has ever terminated assistance under the Certificate or Voucher Program for any member of the family.
- F. If any member of the family commits drug-related criminal activity, or violent criminal activity.
- G. If any member of the family commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any Federal housing program.
- H. If the family currently owes rent or other amounts to the Housing Agency or to another Housing Agency in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.
- I. If the family has not reimbursed any Housing Agency 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.
- J. If the family breaches an agreement with the Housing Agency to pay amounts owed to a Housing Agency, or amounts paid to an owner by a Housing Agency. (The Housing Agency, at its discretion, may offer a family the opportunity to enter an agreement to pay amounts owed to a Housing Agency or amounts paid to an owner by a Housing Agency. The Housing Agency may prescribe the terms of the agreement.)
- K. If a family participating in the FSS program fails to comply, without good cause, with the family's FSS contract of participation.
- L. If the family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward Housing Agency personnel.
- M. If any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program.
- N. If a household member's illegal use (or pattern of illegal use) of a controlled substance, or whose abuse (or pattern of abuse) of alcohol, is determined by the McCook Housing Agency to interfere with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

15.0 COMPLAINTS AND INFORMAL REVIEWS FOR APPLICANTS, INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS

15.1 COMPLAINTS

The McCook Housing Agency will investigate and respond to complaints by participant families, owners, and the general public. The McCook Housing Agency may require that complaints other than HQS violations be put in writing. Anonymous complaints are investigated whenever possible.

15.2 INFORMAL REVIEW FOR THE APPLICANT

A. Informal Review for the Applicant

The McCook Housing Agency will give an applicant for participation in the Section 8 Existing Program prompt notice of a decision denying assistance to the applicant. The notice will contain a brief statement of the reasons for the McCook Housing Agency decision. The notice will state that the applicant may request an informal review within 10 business days of the denial and will describe how to obtain the informal review.

B. When an Informal Review is not required

The McCook Housing Agency will not provide the applicant an opportunity for an informal review for any of the following reasons:

1. A determination of the family unit size under the McCook Housing Agency subsidy standards.
2. A McCook Housing Agency determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term.
3. A McCook Housing Agency determination not to grant approval to lease a unit under the program or to approve a proposed lease.
4. A McCook Housing Agency determination that a unit selected by the applicant is not in compliance with HQS.
5. A McCook Housing Agency determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of family size or composition.
6. General policy issues or class grievances.
7. Discretionary administrative determinations by the McCook Housing Agency.

C. Informal Review Process

The McCook Housing Agency will give an applicant an opportunity for an informal review of the McCook Housing Agency decision denying assistance to the applicant. The procedure is as follows:

1. The review will be conducted by any person or persons designated by the McCook Housing Agency other than the person who made or approved the decision under review or a subordinate of this person.
2. The applicant will be given an opportunity to present written or oral objections to the McCook Housing Agency decision.
3. The McCook Housing Agency will notify the applicant of the McCook Housing Agency decision after the informal review within 14 calendar days. The notification will include a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

D. Considering Circumstances

In deciding whether to terminate assistance because of action or inaction by members of the family, the Housing Agency may consider all of the circumstances in each case, including the seriousness of the case, the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, and the effects of denial or termination of assistance on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure.

The Housing Agency 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 will not reside in the unit. The Housing Agency may permit the other members of a participant family to continue receiving assistance.

If the Housing Agency seeks to terminate assistance because of illegal use, or possession for personal use, of a controlled substance, or pattern of abuse of alcohol, such use or possession or pattern of abuse must have occurred within one year before the date that the Housing Agency provides notice to the family of the Housing Agency determination to deny or terminate assistance. In determining whether to terminate assistance for these reasons the McCook Housing Agency will consider evidence of whether the household member:

1. Has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program (as applicable) and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol;
2. Has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol; or
3. Is participating in a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol.

E. Informal Review Procedures for Denial of Assistance on the Basis of Ineligible Immigration Status

The applicant family may request that the McCook Housing Agency provide for an informal review after the family has notification of the INS decision on appeal, or in lieu of request of appeal to the INS. The applicant family must make this request within 30 days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or within 30 days of receipt of the INS appeal decision.

For applicant families, the Informal Review Process above will be utilized with the exception that the applicant family will have up to 30 days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or of the INS appeal decision to request the review.

15.3 INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS

A. When a Hearing is required

1. The McCook Housing Agency will give a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing to consider whether the following McCook Housing Agency decisions relating to the individual circumstances of a participant family are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations, and McCook Housing Agency policies:
 - a. A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment.
 - b. A determination of the appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from the McCook Housing Agency utility allowance schedule.
 - c. A determination of the family unit size under the McCook Housing Agency subsidy standards.
 - d. A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's action or failure to act.
 - e. A determination to terminate assistance because the participant family has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under the McCook Housing Agency policy and HUD rules.
 2. In cases described in paragraphs 15.3(A)(1)(d), and (e), of this Section, the McCook Housing Agency will give the opportunity for an informal hearing before the McCook Housing Agency terminates housing assistance payments for the family under an outstanding HAP contract.
- B. When a Hearing is not required
- The McCook Housing Agency will not provide a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing for any of the following reasons:
1. Discretionary administrative determinations by the McCook Housing Agency.
 2. General policy issues or class grievances.
 3. Establishment of the McCook Housing Agency schedule of utility allowances for families in the program.
 4. A McCook Housing Agency determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a certificate or voucher term.
 5. A McCook Housing Agency determination not to approve a unit or lease.
 6. A McCook Housing Agency determination that an assisted unit is not in compliance with HQS. (However, the McCook Housing Agency will provide the opportunity for an informal hearing for a decision to terminate assistance for a breach of the HQS caused by the family.)
 7. A McCook Housing Agency determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of the family size.

8. A determination by the McCook Housing Agency to exercise or not exercise any right or remedy against the owner under a HAP contract.

C. Notice to the Family

1. In the cases described in paragraphs 15.3(A) (1) (a), (b), and (c), of this Section, the McCook Housing Agency will notify the family that the family may ask for an explanation of the basis of the McCook Housing Agency's determination, and that if the family does not agree with the determination, the family may request an informal hearing on the decision.
2. In the cases described in paragraphs 15.3(A)(1),(e) and (f), of this Section, the McCook Housing Agency will give the family prompt written notice that the family may request a hearing within 10 business days of the notification. The notice will:
 - a. Contain a brief statement of the reasons for the decision; and
 - b. State this if the family does not agree with the decision, the family may request an informal hearing on the decision within 10 business days of the notification.

D. Hearing Procedures

The McCook Housing Agency and participants will adhere to the following procedures:

1. Discovery
 - a. The family will be given the opportunity to examine before the hearing any McCook Housing Agency documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The family will be allowed to copy any such document at the family's expense. If the McCook Housing Agency does not make the document(s) available for examination on request of the family, the McCook Housing Agency may not rely on the document at the hearing.
 - b. The McCook Housing Agency will be given the opportunity to examine, at the McCook Housing Agency's offices before the hearing, any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The McCook Housing Agency will be allowed to copy any such document at the McCook Housing Agency's expense. If the family does not make the document(s) available for examination on request of the McCook Housing Agency, the family may not rely on the document at the hearing.

Note: The term **document** includes records and regulations.

2. Representation of the Family

At its own expense, a lawyer or other representative may represent the family.

3. Hearing Officer

- a. The hearing will be conducted by any person or persons designated by the McCook Housing Agency, other than a person who made or approved the decision under review or a subordinate of this person.
- b. The person who conducts the hearing will regulate the conduct of the hearing in accordance with the McCook Housing Agency hearing procedures.

4. Evidence

The McCook Housing Agency and the family must have the opportunity to present evidence and may question any witnesses. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

5. Issuance of Decision

The person who conducts the hearing must issue a written decision within 14 calendar days from the date of the hearing, stating briefly the reasons for the decision. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family shall be based on a preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing.

6. Effect of the Decision

The McCook Housing Agency is not bound by a hearing decision:

- a. Concerning a matter for which the McCook Housing Agency is not required to provide an opportunity for an informal hearing under this Section, or that otherwise exceeds the Agency of the person conducting the hearing under the McCook Housing Agency hearing procedures.
- b. Contrary to HUD regulations or requirements, or otherwise contrary to Federal, State, or local law.
- c. If the McCook Housing Agency determines that it is not bound by a hearing decision, the McCook Housing Agency will notify the family within 14 calendar days of the determination, and of the reasons for the determination.

E. Considering Circumstances

In deciding whether to terminate assistance because of action or inaction by members of the family, the Housing Agency may consider all of the circumstances in each case, including the seriousness of the case, the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, and the effects of denial or termination of assistance on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure.

The Housing Agency 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 will not reside in the unit. The Housing Agency may permit the other members of a participant family to continue receiving assistance.

If the Housing Agency seeks to terminate assistance because of illegal use, or possession for personal use, of a controlled substance, or pattern of abuse of alcohol, such use or possession or pattern of abuse must have occurred within one year before the date that the Housing Agency provides notice to the family of the Housing Agency determination to deny or terminate assistance. In determining whether to terminate assistance for these reasons the McCook Housing Agency will consider evidence of whether the household member:

1. Has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program (as applicable) and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol;
2. Has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol; or
3. Is participating in a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol.

F. Informal Hearing Procedures for Denial of Assistance on the Basis of Ineligible Immigration Status

The participant family may request that the McCook Housing Agency provide for an informal hearing after the family has notification of the INS decision on appeal, or in lieu of request of appeal to the INS. This request must be made by the participant family within 30 days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or within 30 days of receipt of the INS appeal decision.

For the participant families, the Informal Hearing Process above will be utilized with the exception that the participant family will have up to 30 days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or of the INS appeal decision.

16.0 TERMINATION OF THE LEASE AND CONTRACT

The term of the lease and the term of the HAP contract are the same. They begin on the same date and they end on the same date. The lease may be terminated by the owner, by the tenant, or by the mutual agreement of both. The owner may only terminate the contract by terminating the lease. The HAP contract may be terminated by the McCook Housing Agency. Under some circumstances the contract automatically terminates.

A. Termination of the lease

1. By the family

The family may terminate the lease without cause upon proper notice to the owner and to the McCook Housing Agency after the first year of the lease. The length of the notice that is required is stated in the lease (generally 30 days).

2. By the owner.

- a. The owner may terminate the lease during its term on the following grounds:
 - i. Serious or repeated violations of the terms or conditions of the lease;
 - ii. Violation of Federal, State, or local law that impose obligations on the tenant in connection with the occupancy or use of the unit and its premises;
 - iii. Criminal activity by the household, a guest, or another person under the control of the household that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises;
 - iv. Any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises;
 - v. Other good cause. Other good cause may include, but is not limited to:
 - (1) Failure by the family to accept the offer of a new lease;
 - (2) Family history of disturbances of neighbors or destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits resulting in damage to the property or unit;
 - (3) The owner's desire to utilize the unit for personal or family use or for a purpose other than use as a residential rental unit;
 - (4) A business or economic reason such as sale of the property, renovation of the unit, desire to rent at a higher rental amount.
- b. During the first year the owner may not terminate tenancy for other good cause unless the reason is because of something the household did or failed to do.
- c. The owner may only evict the tenant by instituting court action. The owner must give the McCook Housing Agency a copy of any owner eviction notice to the tenant at the same time that the owner gives the notice to the tenant.
- d. The owner may terminate the contract at the end of the initial lease term or any extension of the lease term without cause by

providing notice to the family that the lease term will not be renewed.

3. Termination of the Lease by mutual agreement

The family and the owner may terminate the lease in the initial lease year only in the case of an emergency, and with approval with McCook Housing Agency.

B. Termination of the Contract

1. Automatic termination of the Contract

- a. If the McCook Housing Agency terminates assistance to the family, the contract terminates automatically.
- b. If the family moves out of the unit, the contract terminates automatically.
- c. The contract terminates automatically 180 calendar days after the last housing assistance payment to the owner.

2. Termination of the contract by the owner

The owner may only terminate tenancy in accordance with lease and State and local law.

3. Termination of the HAP contract by the McCook Housing Agency

The Housing Agency may terminate the HAP contract because:

- a. The Housing Agency has terminated assistance to the family.
- b. The unit does not meet HQS space standards because of an increase in family size or change in family composition.
- c. The unit is larger than appropriate for the family size or composition under the regular Certificate Program.
- d. When the family breaks up and the McCook Housing Agency determines that the family members who move from the unit will continue to receive the assistance.
- e. The McCook Housing Agency determines that there is insufficient funding in their contract with HUD to support continued assistance for families in the program.
- f. The owner has breached the contract in any of the following ways:
 - i. If the owner has violated any obligation under the HAP contract for the dwelling unit, including the owner's obligation to maintain the unit in accordance with the HQS.

- ii. If the owner has violated any obligation under any other housing assistance payments contract under Section 8 of the 1937.
 - iii. If the owner has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any Federal housing program.
 - iv. For projects with mortgages insured by HUD or loans made by HUD, if the owner has failed to comply with the regulations for the applicable mortgage insurance or loan program, with the mortgage or mortgage note, or with the regulatory agreement;
 - v. If the owner has engaged in drug trafficking.
4. Final HAP payment to owner

The HAP payment stops when the lease terminates. The owner may keep the payment for the month in which the family moves out. If the owner has begun eviction proceedings and the family continues to occupy the unit, the Housing Agency will continue to make payments until the owner obtains a judgment or the family moves out.

17.0 CHARGES AGAINST THE SECTION 8 ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE

Occasionally, it is necessary for the McCook Housing Agency to spend money of its Section 8 Administrative Fee Reserve to meet unseen or extraordinary expenditures or for its other housing related purposes consistent with State law.

The McCook Housing Agency Board of Commissioners authorizes the Executive Director to expend without prior Board approval up to \$500.00 for authorized expenditures.

Any item(s) exceeding \$500.00 will require prior Board of Commissioner approval before any charge is made against the Section 8 Administrative Fee Reserve.

18.0 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

No program receipts may be used to indemnify contractors or subcontractors of the McCook Housing Agency against costs associated with any judgment of infringement of intellectual property rights.

19.0 MCCOOK HOUSING AGENCY OWNED HOUSING

Units owned by the McCook Housing Agency and not receiving subsidy under any other program are eligible housing units for Housing Choice Voucher holders. In order to comply with federal regulation, the McCook Housing Agency will do the following:

- A. The McCook Housing Agency will make available through the briefing process both orally and in writing the availability of McCook Housing Agency

owned units (notification will also include other properties owned/managed by the private sector available to Housing Choice Voucher holders).

- B. The McCook Housing Agency will obtain the services of an independent entity to perform the following McCook Housing Agency functions:
 - 1. Determine rent reasonableness for the unit. The independent entity will communicate the rent reasonableness determination to the family and the McCook Housing Agency.
 - 2. To assist the family in negotiating the rent.
 - 3. To inspect the unit for compliance with HQS.
- C. The McCook Housing Agency will gain HUD approval for the independent agency/agencies utilized to perform the above functions
- D. The McCook Housing Agency will compensate the independent agency/agencies from our ongoing administrative fee income.
- E. The McCook Housing Agency or the independent agency/agencies will not charge the family any fee or charge for the services provided by the independent agency.

20.0 QUALITY CONTROL OF SECTION 8 PROGRAM

In order to maintain the appropriate quality standards for the Section 8 program, the McCook Housing Agency will annually review files and records to determine if the work documented in the files or records conforms to program requirements. This shall be accomplished by a supervisor or another qualified person other than the one originally responsible for the work or someone subordinate to that person. The number of files and/or records checked shall be at least equal to the number specified in the Section 8 Management Assessment Program for our size housing agency.

21.0 TRANSITION TO THE NEW HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

A. New HAP Contracts

On and after October 1, 1999, the McCook Housing Agency will only enter into a HAP contract for a tenancy under the voucher program, and will not enter into a new HAP contract for a tenancy under the certificate program.

B. Over-FMR Tenancy

If the McCook Housing Agency had entered into any HAP contract for an over-FMR tenancy under the certificate program prior to the merger date of October 1, 1999, on and after October 1, 1999 such tenancy shall be considered and treated as a tenancy under the voucher program, and will be subject to the voucher program requirements under 24 CFR 982.502, including calculation of

the voucher housing assistance payment in accordance with 24 CFR 982.505. However, 24 CFR 982.505(b)(2) will not be applicable for calculation of the housing assistance payment prior to the effective date of the second regular reexamination of family income and composition on or after the merger date of October 1, 1999.

C. Voucher Tenancy

If the McCook Housing Agency had entered into any HAP contract for a voucher tenancy prior to the merger date of October 1, 1999, on and after October 1, 1999 such tenancy will continue to be considered and treated as a tenancy under the voucher program, and will be subject to the voucher program requirements under 24 CFR 982.502, including calculation of the voucher housing assistance payment in accordance with 24 CFR 982.505. However, 24 CFR 982.505(b) (2) will not be applicable for calculation of the housing assistance payment prior to the effective date of the second regular reexamination of family income and composition on or after the merger date of October 1, 1999.

D. Regular Certificate Tenancy

The McCook Housing Agency will terminate program assistance under any outstanding HAP contract for a regular tenancy under the certificate program entered into prior to the merger date of October 1, 1999 at the effective date of the second regular reexamination of family income and composition on or after the merger date of October 1, 1999. Upon such termination of assistance, the HAP contract for such tenancy terminates automatically. The McCook Housing Agency will give at least 120 days written notice of such termination to the family and the owner, and the McCook Housing Agency will offer the family the opportunity for continued tenant-based assistance under the voucher program. The McCook Housing Agency may deny the family the opportunity for continued assistance in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552 and 24 CFR 982.553.

22.0 PROCEDURES IN THE TIME OF CRISIS

In times of crisis rules and procedures shall be modified or suspended with the approval of the Board of Commissioners. The revision of these rules and procedures shall include but not be limited to:

- Eliminating face to face contact in respect to applications, reviews, move in, move out, briefings and inspections and
- Forwarding telephone calls to staff home or cell phones when housing authority offices are closed by order of the state or federal government and
- Suspending all work orders that are not an emergency and
- Eliminating all travel, training, and any other staff activities and
- Eliminating all resident activities such as social gatherings and
- Encourage all residents to conduct contact between residents and staff by mail or telephone.

These modifications shall remain in place throughout the time of the crisis.

GLOSSARY

1937 Housing Act: The United States Housing Act of 1937 [42 U.S.C. 1437 et seq.]

Absorption: In portability, the point at which a receiving housing Agency stops billing the initial housing Agency for assistance on behalf of a portable family. [24 CFR 982.4]

Adjusted Annual Income: The amount of household income, after deductions for specified allowances, on which tenant rent is based.

Administrative fee: Fee paid by HUD to the housing Agency for the administration of the program.

Administrative Plan: The plan that describes housing Agency policies for the administration of the tenant-based programs.

Admission: The point when the family becomes a participant in the program. In a tenant-based program, the date used for this purpose is the effective date of the first HAP Contract for a family (first day of initial lease term).

Adult: A household member who is 18 years or older or who is the head of the household, or spouse, or co-head.

Allowances: Amounts deducted from the household's annual income in determining adjusted annual income (the income amount used in the rent calculation). Allowances are given for elderly families, dependents, medical expenses for elderly families, disability expenses, and child care expenses for children under 13 years of age. Other allowance can be given at the discretion of the housing Agency.

Amortization Payment: In a manufactured home space rental: The monthly debt service payment by the family to amortize the purchase price of the manufactured home. If furniture was included in the purchase price, the debt service must be reduced by 15% to exclude the cost of the furniture. The amortization cost is the initial financing, not refinancing. Set-up charges may be included in the monthly amortization payment.

Annual Contributions Contract (ACC): The written contract between HUD and a housing Agency under which HUD agrees to provide funding for a program under the 1937 Act, and the housing Agency agrees to comply with HUD requirements for the program.

Annual Income: All amounts, monetary or not, that:

- a. Go to (or on behalf of) the family head or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other family member, or
- b. Are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date; and
- c. Are not specifically excluded from Annual Income.
- d. Annual Income also includes amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access.

Applicant (applicant family): A family that has applied for admission to a program but is not yet a participant in the program.

Assets: see net family assets.

Asset Income: Income received from assets held by household members. If assets total more than \$5,000, income from the assets is "imputed" and the greater of actual asset income and imputed asset income is counted in annual income.

Assisted lease (lease): A written agreement between an owner and a family for the leasing of a dwelling unit to the family. The lease establishes the conditions for occupancy of the dwelling unit by a family with housing assistance payments under a HAP contract between the owner and the housing Agency.

Certificate: A document issued by a housing agency to a family selected for admission to the Certificate Program. The certificate describes the program and the procedures for housing Agency approval of a unit selected by the family. The certificate also states the obligations of the family under the program.

Certification: The examination of a household's income, expenses, and family composition to determine the household's eligibility for program participation and to calculate the household's rent for the following 12 months.

Child: For purposes of citizenship regulations, a member of the family other than the family head or spouse who is under 18 years of age.

Child care expenses: Amounts anticipated to be paid by the family for the care of children under 13 years of age during the period for which annual income is computed, but only where such care is necessary to enable a family member to actively seek employment, be gainfully employed, or to further his or her education and only to the extent such amounts are not reimbursed. The amount deducted shall reflect reasonable charges for child care. In the case of childcare necessary to permit employment, the amount deducted shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.

Citizen: A citizen or national of the United States.

Common space: In shared housing: Space available for use by the assisted family and other occupants of the unit.

Congregate housing: Housing for elderly or persons with disabilities that meets the HQS for congregate housing.

Consent form: Any consent form approved by HUD to be signed by assistance applicants and participants for the purpose of obtaining income information from employers and SWICAs, return information from the Social Security Administration, and return information for unearned income from the Internal Revenue Service. The consent forms may authorize the collection of other information from assistance applicants or participant to determine eligibility or level of benefits.

Contiguous MSA: In portability, an MSA that shares a common boundary with the MSA in which the jurisdiction of the initial housing Agency is located.

Continuously assisted: An applicant is continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act if the family is already receiving assistance under any 1937 Housing Act program when the family is admitted to the Voucher Program.

Cooperative: Housing owned by a non-profit corporation or association, and where a member of the corporation or association has the right to reside in a particular apartment, and to participate in management of the housing.

Domicile: The legal residence of the household head or spouse as determined in accordance with State and local law.

Decent, safe, and sanitary: Housing is decent, safe, and sanitary if it satisfies the applicable housing quality standards.

Department: The Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Dependent: A member of the family (except foster children and foster adults) other than the family head or spouse, who is under 18 years of age, or is a person with a disability, or is a full-time student.

Disability assistance expenses: Reasonable expenses that are anticipated, during the period for which annual income is computed, for attendant care and auxiliary apparatus for a disabled family member and that are necessary to enable a family member (including the disabled member) to be employed, provided that the expenses are neither paid to a member of the family nor reimbursed by an outside source.

Disabled family: A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities; or two or more persons with disabilities living together; or one or more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides.

Disabled person: See "person with disabilities."

Displaced family: A family in which each member, or whose sole member, is a person displaced by governmental action (such as urban renewal), or a person whose dwelling has been extensively damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster declared or otherwise formally recognized pursuant to Federal disaster relief laws.

Displaced person: A person displaced by governmental action (such as urban renewal), or a person whose dwelling has been extensively damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster declared or otherwise formally recognized pursuant to Federal disaster relief laws.

Drug related criminal activity: Illegal use or personal use of a controlled substance, and the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, use or possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use, of a controlled substance.

Drug trafficking: The illegal manufacture, sale, or distribution, or the possession with intent to manufacture, sell, or distribute, of a controlled substance.

Elderly family: A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age; or two or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living together; or one or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living with one or more live-in aides.

Elderly person: A person who is at least 62 years of age.

Evidence of citizenship or eligible status: The documents that must be submitted to evidence citizenship or eligible immigration status.

Exception rent: An amount that exceeds the published fair market rent.

Extremely low-income families: Those families whose incomes do not exceed 30% of the median income for the area, as determined by the Secretary with adjustments for smaller and larger families.

Fair Housing Act: Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.).

Fair market rent (FMR): The rent, including the cost of utilities (except telephone), as established by HUD for units of varying sizes (by number of bedrooms), that must be paid in the housing market area to rent privately owned, existing, decent, safe and sanitary rental housing of modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities. FMRs are published periodically in the Federal Register.

Family includes but is not limited to:

- a. A family with or without children (the temporary absence of a child from the home due to placement in foster care shall not be considered in determining family composition and family size);
- b. An elderly family;
- c. A near-elderly family;
- d. A disabled family;
- e. A displaced family;
- f. The remaining member of a tenant family; and
- g. A single person who is not an elderly or displaced person, or a person with disabilities, or the remaining member of a tenant family.

Family members: include all household members except live-in aides, foster children and foster adults. All family members permanently reside in the unit, though they may be temporarily absent. All family members are listed on the HUD-50058.

Family self-sufficiency program (FSS program): The program established by a housing Agency to promote self-sufficiency of assisted families, including the coordination of supportive services (42 U.S.C. 1437u).

Family share: The portion of rent and utilities paid by the family or the gross rent minus the amount of the housing assistance payment.

Family unit size: The appropriate number of bedrooms for a family as determined by the housing Agency under the housing Agency's subsidy standards.

50058 Form: The HUD form that Housing Agency's are required to complete for each assisted household in public housing to record information used in the certification and re-certification process, and, at the option of the housing Agency, for interim reexaminations.

FMR/exception rent limit: The Section 8 existing housing fair market rent published by HUD headquarters, or any exception rent. For a tenancy in the Voucher Program, the housing Agency may adopt a payment standard up to the FMR/exception rent limit.

Full-time student: A person who is carrying a subject load that is considered full-time for day students under the standards and practices of the educational institution attended. An educational institution includes a vocational school with a diploma or Certificate Program, as well as an institution offering a college degree.

Gross rent: The sum of the rent to the owner plus any utilities.

Group Home: A dwelling unit that is licensed by a State as a group home for the exclusive residential use of two to twelve persons who are elderly or persons with disabilities (including any live-in aide).

Head of household: The adult member of the family who is the head of the household for purposes of determining income eligibility and rent.

Household members: include all individuals who reside or will reside in the unit and who are listed on the lease, including live-in aides, foster children and foster adults.

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP): The monthly assistance by a housing Agency, which includes (1) a payment to the owner for rent to the owner under the family's lease, and (2) an additional payment to the family if the total assistance payment exceeds the rent to owner.

Housing quality standards (HQS): The HUD minimum quality standards for housing assisted under the Section 8 program.

Housing voucher: A document issued by a housing Agency to a family selected for admission to the Voucher Program. This document describes the program and the procedures for housing Agency approval of a unit selected by the family. The voucher also states the obligations of the family under the program.

Housing voucher holder: A family that has an unexpired housing voucher.

Imputed income: For households with net family assets of more than \$5,000, the amount calculated by multiplying net family assets by a HUD-specified percentage. If imputed income is more than actual income from assets, the imputed amount is used in determining annual income.

Income category: Designates a family's income range. There are three categories: low income, very low income and extremely low-income.

Incremental income: The increased portion of income between the total amount of welfare and earnings of a family member prior to enrollment in a training program and welfare and earnings of the family member after enrollment in the training program. All other amounts, increases and decreases, are treated in the usual manner in determining annual income.

Initial Housing Agency: In portability, both: (1) a housing Agency that originally selected a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the selecting housing Agency; and (2) a housing Agency that absorbed a family that later decides to move out of the jurisdiction of the absorbing housing Agency.

Initial payment standard: The payment standard at the beginning of the HAP contract term.

Initial rent to owner: The rent to owner at the beginning of the initial lease term.

Interim (examination): A reexamination of a household's income, expenses, and household status conducted between the annual recertifications when a change in a household's circumstances warrant such a reexamination.

Jurisdiction: The area in which the housing Agency has Agency under State and local law to administer the program.

Lease: A written agreement between an owner and tenant for the leasing of a dwelling unit to the tenant. The lease establishes the conditions for occupancy of the dwelling unit by a family with housing assistance payments under a HAP Contract between the owner and the housing Agency.

Live-in aide: A person who resides with one or more elderly persons, or near-elderly persons, or persons with disabilities, and who:

- a. Is determined to be essential to the care and well-being of the persons;
- b. Is not obligated for the support of the persons; and
- c. Would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services.

Low-income families: Those families whose incomes do not exceed 80% of the median income for the area, as determined by the Secretary with adjustments for smaller and larger families. [1937Act)

Manufactured home: A manufactured structure that is built on a permanent chassis, is designed for use as a principal place of residence, and meets the HQS.

Manufacture home space: In manufactured home space rental: A space leased by an owner to a family. A manufactured home owned and occupied by the family is located on the space.

Medical expenses: Medical expenses, including medical insurance premiums, that are anticipated during the period for which annual income is computed, and that are not covered by insurance.

Mixed family: A family whose members include those with citizenship or eligible immigration status, and those without citizenship or eligible immigration status.

Moderate rehabilitation: Rehabilitation involving a minimum expenditure of \$1000 for a unit, including its prorated share of work to be accomplished on common areas or systems, to:

- a. upgrade to decent, safe and sanitary condition to comply with the Housing Quality Standards or other standards approved by HUD, from a condition below these standards (improvements being of a modest nature and other than routine maintenance; or
- b. repair or replace major building systems or components in danger of failure.

Monthly adjusted income: One twelfth of adjusted income.

Monthly income: One twelfth of annual income.

Mutual housing is included in the definition of "cooperative".

National: A person who owes permanent allegiance to the United States, for example, as a result of birth in a United States territory or possession.

Near-elderly family: A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62; or two or more persons, who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62, living together; or one or more persons who are at least 50 years of age but below the age of 62 living with one or more live-in aides.

Net family assets:

- a. Net cash value after deducting reasonable costs that would be incurred in disposing of real property, savings, stocks, bonds, and other forms of capital investment, excluding interests in Indian trust land and excluding equity accounts in HUD homeownership programs. The value of necessary items of personal property such as furniture and automobiles shall be excluded.
- b. In cases where a trust fund has been established and the trust is not revocable by, or under the control of, any member of the family or household, the value of the trust fund will not be considered an asset so long as the fund continues to be held in trust. Any income distributed from the trust fund shall be counted when determining annual income.
- c. In determining net family assets, housing authorities or owners, as applicable, shall include the value of any business or family assets disposed of by an applicant or tenant for less than fair market value (including a disposition in trust, but not in a foreclosure or bankruptcy sale) during the two years preceding the date of application for the program or reexamination, as applicable, in excess of the consideration received therefore. In the case of a disposition as part of a separation or divorce settlement, the disposition will not be considered to be for less than fair market value if the applicant or tenant receives important consideration not measurable in dollar terms.

Noncitizen: A person who is neither a citizen nor national of the United States.

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA): For budget Agency that HUD distributes by competitive process, the Federal Register document that invites applications for funding. This document explains how to apply for assistance, and the criteria for awarding the funding.

Occupancy standards: The standards that the housing Agency establishes for determining the appropriate number of bedrooms needed to house families of different sizes or composition.

Owner: Any person or entity, including a cooperative, having the legal right to lease or sublease existing housing.

Participant (participant family): A family that has been admitted to the housing Agency's program and is currently assisted in the program. The family becomes a participant on the effective date of the first HAP contract executed by the housing Agency for the family (first day of initial lease).

Payment standard: In a voucher tenancy, the maximum monthly assistance payment for a family (before deducting the total tenant payment by family contribution). For a voucher tenancy, the housing Agency sets a payment standard in the range from 90% to 110% of the current FMR.

Person with disabilities: A person who:

- a. Has a disability as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act,

"Inability to engage in any substantial, gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment that can be expected to result in death

or that has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months, or

In the case of an individual who attained the age of 55 and is blind and unable by reason of such blindness to engage in substantial, gainful activity requiring skills or ability comparable to those of any gainful activity in which he has previously engaged with some regularity and over a substantial period of time."

- b. Is determined, pursuant to regulations issued by the Secretary, to have a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that:
 - (1) is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration,
 - (2) substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently, and
 - (3) is of such a nature that such ability could be improved by more suitable housing conditions, or
- c. Has a developmental disability as defined in Section 102(7) of the of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act.

"Severe chronic disability that:

- (1) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
- (2) is manifested before the person attains age 22;
- (3) is likely to continue indefinitely;
- (4) results in substantial functional limitation in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: (1) self care, (2) receptive and responsive language, (3) learning, (4) mobility, (e) self-direction, (6) capacity for independent living, and (7) economic self-sufficiency; and
- (5) reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated."

This definition does not exclude persons who have the disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

No individual shall be considered to be a person with disabilities for purposes of eligibility solely based on any drug or alcohol dependence.

Portability: Renting a dwelling unit with Section 8 tenant-based assistance outside the jurisdiction of the initial housing Agency.

Premises: The building or complex in which the dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

Private space: In shared housing: The portion of a contract unit that is for the exclusive use of an assisted family.

Preservation: This program encourages owners of eligible multifamily housing projects to preserve low-income housing affordability and availability while reducing the long-term cost of providing rental assistance. The program offers several approaches to restructuring the debt of properties developed with project-based Section 8 assistance whose HAP contracts are about to expire.

Proration of assistance: The reduction in a family's housing assistance payment to reflect the proportion of family members in a mixed family who are eligible for assistance.

Public Housing Agency: A State, county, municipality or other governmental entity or public body (or agency or instrumentality thereof) authorized to engage in or assist in the development or operation of low-income housing.

Reasonable rent: A rent to owner that is not more than charged: (a) for comparable units in the private unassisted market; and (b) for a comparable unassisted unit in the premises.

Receiving Housing Agency: In portability, a housing Agency that receives a family selected for participation in the tenant-based program of another housing Agency. The receiving housing Agency issues a certificate or voucher, and provides program assistance to the family.

Re-certification: A reexamination of a household's income, expenses, and family composition to determine the household's rent for the following 12 months.

Remaining member of a tenant family: A member of the family listed on the lease who continues to live in an assisted household after all other family members have left.

Rent to owner: The monthly rent payable to the owner under the lease. Rent to owner covers payment for any housing services, maintenance, and utilities that the owner is required to provide and pay for.

Set-up charges: In a manufactured home space rental, charges payable by the family for assembly, skirting and anchoring the manufactured home.

Shared housing: A unit occupied by two or more families. The unit consists of both common space for shared use by the occupants of the unit and separate private space for each assisted family.

Shelter Allowance: That portion of a welfare benefit (e.g., TANF) that the welfare agency designates to be used for rent and utilities.

Single person: Someone living alone or intending to live alone who does not qualify as an elderly person, a person with disabilities, a displaced person, or the remaining member of a tenant family.

Single room occupancy housing (SRO): A unit for occupancy by a single eligible individual capable of independent living that contains no sanitary facilities or food preparation facilities, or contains either, but not both, types of facilities.

Special admission: Admission of an applicant that is not on the housing Agency waiting list, or without considering the applicant's waiting list position.

Special housing types: Special housing types include: SRO housing, congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, cooperatives (including mutual housing), and manufactured homes (including manufactured home space rental).

State Wage Information Collection Agency (SWICA): The State agency receiving quarterly wage reports from employers in the State, or an alternative system that has been determined by the Secretary of Labor to be as effective and timely in providing employment-related income and eligibility information.

Statement of family responsibility: An agreement in the form prescribed by HUD, between the housing Agency and a Family to be assisted under the Moderate Rehabilitation Program, stating the obligations and responsibilities of the family.

Subsidy standards: Standards established by a housing Agency to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms and amount of subsidy for families of different sizes and compositions.

Suspension: Stopping the clock on the term of a family's certificate or voucher, for such period as determined by the housing Agency, from the time when the family submits a request for housing Agency approval to lease a unit, until the time when the housing Agency approves or denies the request. Also referred to as tolling.

Tenant: The person or persons (other than a live-in aide) who executes the lease as lessee of the dwelling unit.

Tenant rent: The amount payable monthly by the family as rent to the owner minus any utility allowance.

Third-party (verification): Oral or written confirmation of a household's income, expenses, or household composition provided by a source outside the household, such as an employer, doctor, school official, etc.

Tolling: see suspension.

Total tenant payment (TTP):

- (1) Total tenant payment is the amount calculated under Section 3(a)(1) of the 1937 Act. which is the higher of :

30% of the family's monthly adjusted income;

10% of the family's monthly income;

Minimum rent; or

if the family is receiving payments for welfare assistance from a public agency and a part of such payments, adjusted in accordance with the family's actual housing costs, is specifically designated by such agency to meet the family's housing costs, the portion of such payments which is so designated.

If the family's welfare assistance is ratably reduced from the standard of need by applying a percentage, the amount calculated under Section 3(a)(1) shall be the amount resulting from one application of the percentage.

Utility allowance: If the cost of utilities (except telephone) and other housing services for an assisted unit is not included in the tenant rent but is the responsibility of the family occupying the unit, an amount equal to the estimate made or approved by a housing Agency or HUD of the monthly cost of a reasonable consumption of such utilities and other services for the unit by an energy-conservative household of modest circumstances consistent with the requirements of a safe, sanitary, and healthful living environment.

Utility hook-up charge: In a manufactured home space rental, costs payable by a family for connecting the manufactured home to utilities such as water, gas, electrical and sewer lines.

Utility reimbursement: The amount, if any, by which the utility allowance for the unit, if applicable, exceeds the total, tenant payment for the family occupying the unit.

Verification:

- a. The process of obtaining statements from individuals who can attest to the accuracy of the amounts of income, expenses, or household member status (e.g., employers, public assistance agency staff, doctors).
- b. The three types of verification are:
 - (1) Third-party verification, either written or oral, obtained from employers, public assistance agencies, schools, etc.)
 - (2) Documentation, such as a copy of a birth certificate or bank statement
 - (3) Family certification or declaration (only used when third-party or documentation verification is not available)

Very low-income families: Low-income families whose incomes do not exceed 50% of the median family income for the area, as determined by the Secretary with adjustments for smaller and larger families. *[1937 Act]*

Violent criminal activity: Any illegal criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another.

Voucher (rental voucher): A document issued by a housing Agency to a family selected for admission to the Housing Choice Voucher Program. This document describes the program and the procedures for housing Agency approval of a unit selected by the family and states the obligations of the family under the program.

Voucher holder: A family holding a voucher with unexpired search time.

Waiting list admission: An admission from the housing Agency waiting list. *[24 CFR 982.4]*

Welfare assistance. Welfare or other payments to families or individuals, based on need, that are made under programs funded by Federal, State or local governments. *[24 CFR 5.603(d)]*

Welfare rent: In "as-paid" welfare programs, the amount of the welfare benefit designated for shelter and utilities.

ACRONYMS

ACC	Annual Contributions Contract
CACC	Consolidated Annual Contributions Contract
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
FMR	Fair Market Rent
FSS	Family Self Sufficiency (program)
HA	Housing Agency
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
HCDA	Housing and Community Development Act
HQS	Housing Quality Standards
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
INS	(U.S.) Immigration and Naturalization Service
NAHA	(Cranston-Gonzalez) National Affordable Housing Act
NOFA	Notice of Funding Availability
OMB	(U.S.) Office of Management and Budget
PBC	Project-Based Certificate (program)
QHWRA	Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998
PHA	Public Housing Agency
TTP	Total Tenant Payment