

Chapter 3

APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

INTRODUCTION

The policy of RCRHA is to ensure that all families who express an interest in housing assistance are given an equal opportunity to apply, and are treated in a fair and consistent manner. This Chapter describes the policies and procedures for completing an initial application for assistance, placement and denial of placement on the waiting list, and limitations on who may apply. The primary purpose of the intake function is to gather information about the family, but RCRHA will also utilize this process to provide information to the family so that an accurate and timely decision of eligibility can be made. Applicants will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with this Policy.

A. HOW TO APPLY

Families who wish to apply for any of RCRHA's programs must complete a written application form when the application process is open. Applications will be made available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.

Applications are taken at the central administrative office at the Farmville Housing Authority, 4284 Anderson Avenue, Farmville, NC 27828 by appointment or on Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for all Waiting Lists that are open.

The application process will involve a single phase.

The final determination of eligibility referred to as the "full application." The full application takes place when the family approaches the top of the waiting list. At this time, RCRHA ensures that verification of all HUD, State, local, and RCRHA eligibility factors as pursuant to the program are current in order to determine the family's eligibility for an offer of a suitable unit.

B. "INITIAL" APPLICATION PROCEDURES

RCRHA will utilize a full application form. The application will be taken in person or by completion by the applicant of the form itself, whenever the Waiting List is open.

Applications may be mailed to Out-of-State applicants or for purposes of reasonable accommodations.

Translation of the application is available upon request for non-English speaking applicants.

At a minimum, the application will contain questions designed to obtain the following information:

- Names of head of household, spouse/co-head
- Names of all members and age of all members
- Number of family members (used to estimate bedroom size needed)
- Street address and phone numbers
- Mailing address (If PO Box or other permanent address)
- Annual income
- Source(s) of income received by household members
- Information regarding request for reasonable accommodation or for accessible unit
- Social Security Numbers
- Race/ethnicity
- Arrests/Convictions for Drug Related or Violent Criminal Activity
- Questions regarding previous participation in HUD programs

Duplicate applications, including applications from a segment of an applicant household, will not be accepted.

Applications will require an interview and information on the application will be verified prior to admission. Final eligibility will be determined when the full application process is completed and all information is verified.

Applicants are required to inform RCRHA in writing of changes in family composition, income, and address. Applicants are also required to respond to requests from RCRHA to update information on their application, or to determine their continued interest in assistance.

Corrections, updates, or changes on applications will be documented. Obsolete information on paper forms of applications shall be lined through and documented as to its obsolescence, initialized and dated by the employee making such changes, or by the applicant, if such change is

made by the applicant him/herself.

Failure to provide information or to respond to mailings will result in the applicant being removed from the waiting list.

C. PREFERENCE DEFINED

At this time, the preferences recognized by RCRHA are that of Emergency, Substandard Housing, Upwardly Mobile, and Local preference. The preference will be verified prior to admission.

Emergency Preference

The RCRHA shall grant preferences to families of federally declared disasters who are public housing residents from another jurisdiction and other eligible disaster-affected families who are income eligible. These persons will receive preferences over other waiting list placeholders. This preference will remain in place until the emergency no longer exists.

Occupying Substandard Housing

The RCRHA will grant preferences to families that are currently occupying substandard housing. Substandard housing will be determined and verified through the local code enforcement provisions and agency.

Upwardly Mobile Preference

The RCRHA shall grant preferences to applicants with an adult member for the previous 6 months has been continuously and is currently working at least 20 hours per week. This preference is equally extended to all elderly/disabled families and all families whose head is receiving disability income based on their inability to work.

Local Preference

For the purpose of priority for admission, the RCRHA will provide for a residency preference for persons who reside in the jurisdictional area that the RCRHA operates the program, over families that do not reside, work or notified that they will be working in the jurisdictional area of RCRHA.

Other Provisions for Preferences

The qualification for preference must exist at the time the preference is verified regardless of the length of time an applicant has been on the Waiting List. The preference is based on current status of the family at the time of admission.

The RCRHA will have all preferences as equal in weight. Therefore a family either has a preference or a family does not have a preference. All families with a preference will be housed before families that do not have a preference, except when the criteria is for filling accessible units.

Notwithstanding all the above preferences, families who are elderly, disabled or displaced will be offered housing before other single persons.

Buildings Designed for the Elderly and Disabled

Preference will be given to elderly and disabled families for buildings or units that are specifically designed for the elderly or disabled. If there are no elderly or disabled families on the list, preference will be given to near-elderly families. If there are no near-elderly families on the waiting list, units will be offered to families who qualify for the appropriate bedroom size using the above priorities.

Accessible Units

Accessible Units will be first offered to families who may benefit from the accessible feature. The unit will be offered to a family that has the need for the specific unit that is living in the development. If no family in the development needs the specific unit features, it will then be offered to a family in another development that need the specific unit features. If no family in any development needs the specific unit's features, then it will be offered to a family on the waiting list that needs the specific unit features. If no family on the waiting list needs the unit with the special features, then it will be offered to the next family on the waiting list that is eligible for the unit in accordance with any other priority, and date and time. The non-disabled family will agree to move to a non-disabled unit should a family with a disability have a need for the disabled unit features. Any family required to move will be given a 30-day notice.

D. COMPLETION OF A FULL APPLICATION

All preferences claimed on the application will be verified while the family is on the waiting list.

The qualification for preference must exist at the time the preference is verified regardless of the length of time an applicant has been on the waiting list because the preference is based on current status.

An applicant on the Waiting List who will be selected in the next 120 days will be sent a letter to complete a full application. The letter will notify the applicant of an application interview and request the applicant to bring all documents which verify all factors to be verified. Factors to be verified will be listed in the letter. Documents presented at the time of full application are not in lieu of third party verification.

Applicants are required at the full application interview to:

Complete a Personal Declaration Form prior to the full application interview.

Sign Release of Information Forms including authorization form for criminal background checks of all adult household members, and consent for verification of Immigration status.

Participate in a full application interview with a RCRHA representative during which the

applicant will be required to furnish complete and accurate information as requested by the interviewer. The RCRHA interviewer will complete the full application form with answers supplied by the applicant. The applicant will sign and certify that all information is complete and accurate.

Full application must be completed at the time of the interview.

Requirement to Attend Interview

RCRHA utilizes the full application interview to discuss the family's circumstances in greater detail, to clarify information that has been provided by the family, and to ensure that the information is complete. The interview is also used as a vehicle to meet the informational needs of the family by providing information about the application and verification process, as well as to advise the family of other RCRHA services or programs that may be available.

The head of household and spouse must attend the interview and sign the housing application.

It is the applicant's responsibility to reschedule the interview if s/he misses the appointment.

Reasonable accommodation will be made for persons with a disability who requires an advocate or accessible offices. A designee will be allowed to provide some information, but only with permission of the person with a disability.

All adult members must sign form HUD-9886, "Release of Information"; the declarations and consents related to citizenship/immigration status; and any other documents required by RCRHA. Applicants will be required to sign specific verification forms for information that are not covered by the HUD-9886. Failure to do so will be cause for denial of the application for failure to provide necessary certifications and release as required by RCRHA. All adults will be further required to sign all local RCRHA release forms.

Information provided by the applicant will be verified, including information related to family composition, income, allowances and deductions, assets, eligible immigration status, full time student status and other factors related to preferences, eligibility and rent calculation.

If RCRHA determines at or after the interview that additional information or document(s) are needed, RCRHA will request the document(s) or information in writing. The family will be given ten (10) working days to supply the information; however extensions may be given for extenuating circumstances such as information that must be obtained from out of state.

If the information is not supplied in this time period, RCRHA will provide the family a notification of denial for assistance. (See Chapter on Complaints, Grievances and Appeals.)

E. PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

At the time of application, the following items will be verified to determine qualification for

admission:

- Preference verification
- Family composition and type (elderly/non elderly), inclusive of family status, familial/marital status when needed for Head or spouse definition, or for inclusion in the household of a minor who is not yet born to or adopted by the assisted family, or legal guardianship, or right to custody, including temporary right to custody.
- Annual Income* inclusive of tips and meals, including income that is expressly excluded by regulation where the RCRHA is required verify.
- Assets and Asset Income*
- Deductions from Annual Income including but not limited to full-time student status, including students who are 18 or over, childcare expenses for children under 13 where such expenses allow an adult family member to be employed or to further his/her education or seek employment, total medical expenses of all family members in households whose Head or spouse is elderly or disabled, disability assistance expenses to include only those costs associated with attendant care or auxiliary apparatus which allow an adult family member to be employed, disability for determination of allowance or deductions.
- Social Security Numbers (SSN) of all family members when they have a SSN Certification of non-issuance for any family members who do not have Social Security Numbers.
- Non-economic selection criteria used in applicant screening, inclusive of criminal history report, past landlord reports, credit reports, rent payment history.
- Citizenship or eligible immigration status, including date and place of birth.
- All members over 18 years of age.

*In the event that the family appears to be eligible for income that is not reported to be received (i.e. TANF, unemployment compensation, child support, etc.), the absence of such income will be verified.

Timeliness of Verifications

All verifications will be obtained prior to initial lease date to ensure that current and accurate data is being used in calculating rents and eligibility.

Certification by the appropriate staff member will be made when verification of all necessary

items for each application is completed.

Verifications for the public housing program must be dated within 60 days from the date of the interview and not exceed 120 days in age, prior to admission to the unit. The family will be questioned prior to admission in regard to any change in status. If changes are reported, they will be verified to determine their effect on eligibility, preference rating (if any), rent, and unit size required.

The applicant file shall contain documentation of all verifications.

Systems of Verification

To assure that the data upon which determinations of eligibility, preference status (if any), rent to be paid, and size of dwelling unit required are based on full, true, and complete information to the best of staff's ability, the data on each applicant shall be verified and consist of the following types and systems of verification:

The RCRHA will verify information through the five methods of verification acceptable to HUD **in the following order**:

1. **Enterprise Income Verification (EIV):** The verification of income at admission or before or during a family reexamination, through an independent source that systematically and uniformly maintains income information in computerized form for a large number of individuals.
2. **Third-Party Written:** The RCRHA's second choice to supplement the EIV is a written third party verification to substantiate claims made by an applicant or resident.
3. **Third-Party Oral:** The RCRHA may also use telephone verifications.
4. **Review of Documents:** The RCRHA will review documents, when relevant, to substantiate the claim of an applicant or resident.
5. **Notarized Statement:** A notarized statement will be accepted **only when extensive attempts have been made to obtain all of the first four methods above and no other form of verification is available.**

If third party verification is not received directly from the source, RCRHA staff will document the file as to why third party verification was impossible to obtain and another method was used (such as reviewing documents families provide.)

The RCRHA will not delay the processing of an application beyond two weeks because a third party information provider does not return the verification in a timely manner.

For applicants, verifications used to determine adjusted income may not be more than **60 days** old at the time of the original lease. For residents, they are valid for **120 days** from date of receipt. All documents supplied should be dated within the last 60 days of the interview.

Regardless of these timeframes, Criminal History Reports will be useable as a valid verification for no longer than **120** calendar days.

F. FINAL DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

After the verification process is completed, RCRHA will make a final determination of eligibility. This decision is based upon information provided by the family, the verification completed by RCRHA, and the tenant suitability determination (see Chapter on Eligibility for Admission).

Because HUD can make changes in rules or regulations and family circumstances may have changed during the review process that affect an applicant's eligibility, it is necessary to make final eligibility determination.

The household is not actually eligible for a unit offer until this final determination has been made, even though they may have been listed on the waiting list.