

Proposed Section 8 Waiting List Preference Point System

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Homeless- Applicants who are living in substandard (dilapidated, declared unfit for habitation, without a kitchen, without adequate source of heat, without/unsafe electricity, without usable bathtub/shower, without operable indoor plumbing, without flush toilet), applicants who are homeless according to HUD guidelines (living in a shelter, are being court order evicted within one week and no other housing is available, living in places not meant for human habitation).

One of the following is required as proof of homelessness:

1. Homelessness Certification form signed by a profession that the applicant is currently working with who will verify that the family is homeless according to HUD's definition.
2. A date/time stamped copy of court order granting eviction.
3. Verification of residence in a homeless shelter.

Involuntary Displacement-Applicant who have been involuntarily displaced due to disaster, government action/relocation to avoid reprisals, action of housing owner, inaccessibility of the housing unit caused by a family member's mobility or other impairment that makes the person unable to use critical elements of the unit, or property disposition. Additional information on the factors which lead to eligibility for this preference follows.

1. Disaster, causing the applicant's housing to be uninhabitable due to disasters such as fire, flood or high winds.

2. Relocation to avoid reprisals if family members provided information on criminal activities to a law enforcement agency, and based on a threat assessment, a law enforcement agency recommends re-housing the family to avoid or minimize a risk of violence against family members as a reprisal for providing such information.

3. Inaccessibility of housing unit caused by a family member's mobility or other impairment that makes the person unable to use critical elements of the unit, provided

the owner is not legally obligated to make the changes to the unit that would make critical elements accessible to the disabled person as a reasonable accommodation.

4. Action of the housing owner that forces the applicant to vacate the unit, provided the applicant cannot control or prevent the owner's actions and has met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy, and is due to an action by the owner other than a rent increase. Examples include, but are not limited to: conversion of an applicant's housing unit to non-rental or non-residential use; closing of an applicant's housing unit for rehabilitation or condemnation; use by the owner for personal or family use or occupancy; sale of a housing unit in which an applicant resides under an agreement that the unit must be vacant when possession is transferred; or any other legally authorized act that results or will result in the withdrawal by the owner of the unit or structure from the rental market. This preference does not apply where the owner has provided notice of non-renewal as set forth in the lease. The preference is intended to cover situations in which the owner ends the lease prior to the end of the agreed upon lease term.

Applicants who postpone assistance- Applicants whose names have come to the top of the waiting list, but must postpone acceptance of Section 8 assistance, may be placed back at the top of the waiting list at a later date. This preference is intended to avoid penalizing applicants who are residing in housing under rental agreements or program components with a specific time limit or expiration date, whose names have reached the top of the Section 8 waiting list and also to discourage applicants from prematurely terminating their existing housing commitments. These applicants would be given the next available Section 8 Voucher upon the completion of their housing commitment. These applicants include those who are:

- residing in a Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation unit who have resided there for less than one year;
- residing in group homes or similar supportive, congregate housing and are less than 6 months from being able to live independently;
- residing at a supportive services Public Housing site who have not fulfilled the terms of their family development plan and wish to remain on site until the completion of their plan; and
- applicants verifying that they are bound by the terms of an existing rental lease until a specific expiration date, which is less than 6 months from the date their name reached the top of the waiting list.

Residency Preference- Applicants living or working in Portage County. Applicants who have accepted employment, as verified by the employer, in Portage County also qualify for this preference.

Public Housing Transfer- Public Housing residents who wish to transfer to the Section 8 program for the following reasons:

- To relocate closer to their employment if employment is five (5) or more miles from the unit the resident currently resides in.
- To enable large families who are under housed to seek housing with more bedrooms than are available at their public housing development.
- To enable families who become over housed, including sole remaining family members, the opportunity to move into more suitable housing.
- To accommodate families who are eligible and desire to participate in a homeownership program sponsored by Neighborhood Development Program or by the PMHA.

Foreclosure Prevention- Households that are otherwise eligible for admission to the Voucher program receive a preference for admission and receive a Voucher solely for the purpose of renegotiating their foreclosure so that they may remain in the home they own. Up to 20 vouchers will be utilized for purposes of the foreclosure prevention initiative.

Disabled/Employed/Elderly- A family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities, sixty-two (62) years of age or older or employed.

PMHA will verify the individual is a person with disabilities by obtaining a certification from physician or other reliable source (e.g. nonprofit disability organization, psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist, rehabilitation specialist, licensed social worker, etc.) or statement/letter from Social Security Administration documenting receipt of SSI or Disability payments.

The employment preference is available to applicants where the head of household, spouse or co-head is employed. This preference is also available to households where the head of household is elderly or disabled. To be eligible for this preference on the basis of employment, the qualifying member must have worked a minimum average of 20 hours per week for a minimum period of three months prior to the date the applicant claims eligibility for the preference.

Veterans- This preference is available to applicants where the head of household, spouse or co-head is a veteran or survivor of a veteran who actively served in a branch of the United States Armed Services. The term survivor includes the spouse or widow of a veteran (unless remarried). A person who served in the military that was dishonorably discharged is not eligible for the veteran's preference.

Applicants may claim or change Preference Points at any time from the date of the pre-application through admission to the program. To claim preference points, the applicant must complete a Preference Certification. When Preference Points are claimed/changed, the applicant's name will be moved to the appropriate position on the waiting list according to the time and date of the pre-application.

Applicants who qualify for Preferences will be issued a Voucher before any other applicant who is not so qualified. If an applicant no longer qualifies for a preference or a preference cannot be verified when assistance is offered, the applicant will be assigned a place on the waiting list based on the time and date the original application was received.