

TABLE OF CONTENTS
SECTION 8 ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RENSSELAER

1.0	EQUAL OPPORTUNITY	1
1.1	FAIR HOUSING.....	1
1.2	REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION	2
1.3	COMMUNICATION.....	2
1.4	QUESTIONS TO ASK IN GRANTING THE ACCOMMODATION.....	2
1.5	SERVICES FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PERSONS AND PARTICIPANTS	4
1.6	FAMILY/OWNER OUTREACH.....	4
1.7	RIGHT TO PRIVACY.....	5
1.8	REQUIRED POSTINGS	5
2.0	RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY/OWNER RESPONSIBILITY/OBLIGATION OF THE FAMILY	6
2.1	RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITIES	6
2.2	OWNER RESPONSIBILITY	7
2.3	OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANT	9
3.0	ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION	12
3.1	INTRODUCTION	12
3.2	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.....	12
4.0	MANAGING THE WAITING LIST	22
4.1	OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST	22
4.2	TAKING APPLICATIONS	22
4.3	ORGANIZATION OF THE WAITING LIST	24
4.4	FAMILIES NEARING THE TOP OF THE WAITING LIST	24
4.5	MISSED APPOINTMENTS.....	24
4.6	PURGING THE WAITING LIST	24
4.7	REMOVAL OF APPLICANTS FROM THE WAITING LIST	25
4.8	GROUND FOR DENIAL.....	25
4.9	NOTIFICATION OF NEGATIVE ACTIONS.....	28
4.10	INFORMAL REVIEW	29
5.0	SELECTING FAMILIES FROM THE WAITING LIST	29
5.1	WAITING LIST ADMISSIONS AND SPECIAL ADMISSIONS	29
5.2	PREFERENCES	29
5.3	SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST	30
6.0	ASSIGNMENT OF BEDROOM SIZES (SUBSIDY STANDARDS)	30
6.1	BRIEFING	31
6.2	PACKET	32
6.3	ISSUANCE OF VOUCHER; REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF TENANCY.....	35

6.4	TERM OF THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER	35
6.5	APPROVAL TO LEASE A UNIT	36
6.6	RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY DISAPPROVAL OF OWNER.....	38
6.7	INELIGIBLE/ELIGIBLE HOUSING	39
6.8	SECURITY DEPOSIT.....	40
7.0	MOVES WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE.....	41
7.1	WHEN A FAMILY MAY OR MAY NOT MOVE	41
7.2	PROCEDURES REGARDING FAMILY MOVES.....	43
8.0	PORTABILITY.....	44
8.1	GENERAL POLICIES OF THE RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY	44
8.2	INCOME ELIGIBILITY	46
8.3	PORTABILITY: ADMINISTRATION BY RECEIVING HOUSING AUTHORITY	46
8.4	PORTABILITY PROCEDURES	46
9.0	DETERMINATION OF FAMILY INCOME.....	49
9.1	INCOME, EXCLUSIONS AND DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME.....	49
9.2	INCOME.....	50
9.3	EXCLUSIONS FROM INCOME.....	55
9.4	DEDUCTIONS FROM ANNUAL INCOME	60
9.5	RECEIPT OF A LETTER OR NOTICE FROM HUD CONCERNING INCOME ...	60
9.6	COOPERATING WITH WELFARE AGENCIES	61
10.0	VERIFICATION.....	62
10.1	ACCEPTABLE METHODS OF VERIFICATION	62
10.2	TYPES OF VERIFICATION	70
10.3	VERIFICATION OF CITIZENSHIP OR ELIGIBLE NONCITIZEN STATUS	72
10.4	VERIFICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS	73
10.5	TIMING OF VERIFICATION	74
10.6	FREQUENCY OF OBTAINING VERIFICATION	74
10.7	SPECIAL VERIFICATION FOR ADULT STUDENTS.....	75
10.8	DISCREPANCIES IN VERIFIED INFORMATION	75
11.0	RENT AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT	76
11.1	GENERAL.....	76
11.2	RENT REASONABLENESS	76
11.3	COMPARABILITY	77
11.4	MAXIMUM SUBSIDY	77
	<i>11.4.1 SETTING THE PAYMENT STANDARD</i>	<i>78</i>
	<i>11.4.2 SELECTING THE CORRECT PAYMENT STANDARD FOR A FAMILY</i>	<i>79</i>
	<i>11.4.3 AREA EXCEPTION RENTS</i>	<i>80</i>
11.5	ASSISTANCE AND RENT FORMULAS.....	80
11.6	UTILITY ALLOWANCE.....	84
11.7	DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT	85
11.8	CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP.....	86
11.9	EARNED INCOME DISREGARD (EID).....	87

12.0	INSPECTION POLICIES AND HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS	88
12.1	TYPES OF INSPECTIONS.....	89
12.2	OWNER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY	89
12.3	HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS) 24 CFR 982.401.....	91
12.4	LEAD-BASED PAINT REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES – SEE 24 CFR PART 35.....	97
12.5	EXCEPTIONS TO THE HQS ACCEPTABILITY CRITERIA	97
12.6	TIME FRAMES AND CORRECTIONS OF HQS FAIL ITEMS	97
12.7	EMERGENCY FAIL ITEMS.....	99
12.8	ABATEMENT.....	99
12.9	ALTERNATIVE INSPECTIONS METHODS.....	100
13.0	RESERVED	100
14.0	RECERTIFICATION	100
14.0.1	CHANGES IN LEASE OR RENT	100
14.1	ANNUAL REEXAMINATION	101
14.1.1	<i>EFFECTIVE DATE OF RENT CHANGES FOR ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS</i> ..	102
14.1.2	<i>MISSED APPOINTMENTS</i>	102
14.2	INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS	102
14.2.1	<i>SPECIAL REEXAMINATIONS</i>	104
14.2.2	<i>EFFECTIVE DATE OF RENT CHANGES DUE TO INTERIM OR SPECIAL REEXAMINATIONS</i>	104
14.3	HOUSING AUTHORITY MISTAKES IN CALCULATING RENT	104
15.0	TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE TO THE FAMILY BY THE RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY	105
15.1	THE EIV’S DECEASED TENANTS REPORT	108
16.0	COMPLAINTS, INFORMAL REVIEWS FOR APPLICANTS, INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS	108
16.1	COMPLAINTS	108
16.2	INFORMAL REVIEW FOR THE APPLICANT.....	108
16.3	INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS.....	111
17.0	TERMINATION OF THE LEASE AND CONTRACT	115
17.1	VAWA PROTECTIONS	121
17.2	VERIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING	122
17.3	CONFIDENTIALITY	124
18.0	CHARGES AGAINST THE SECTION 8 ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE	124
19.0	INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS	124
20.0	RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY OWNED HOUSING	125
21.0	QUALITY CONTROL OF SECTION 8 PROGRAM	125

22.0	REPAYMENT AGREEMENTS	126
23.0	HOMEOWNERSHIP OPTION - RESERVED.....	127
24.0	CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CORE VALUES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS.....	127
24.1	PURPOSE	127
24.2	CONFLICT OF INTEREST	127
24.3	PROHIBITION OF SOLICITATION OR ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS	128
24.4	HOUSING AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATIVE AND DISCIPLINARY REMEDIES FOR VIOLATION OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT	128
25.0	SUPPORT FOR OUR ARMED FORCES	128
26.0	ANTI-FRAUD POLICY.....	129
27.0	PROJECT-BASING HOUSING VOUCHERS (RESERVED)	129
28.0	HOUSING CONVERSION ACTIONS (ENHANCED AND REGULAR HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS) (RESERVED).....	130
29.0	COST SAVING POSSIBILITIES.....	130
30.0	PRIVACY	134
	GLOSSARY.....	135

SECTION 8 ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RENSSELAER

1.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

1.1 FAIR HOUSING

It is the policy of the Housing Authority of the City of Rensselaer (Rensselaer Housing Authority) 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority housing programs.

No inquiries shall be made about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. However, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may inquire about a person's sex in order to determine the number of bedrooms a household may be eligible for under the occupancy standards or to accurately complete HUD's 50058.

To further its commitment to full compliance with applicable Civil Rights laws, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will provide Federal/State/local information to applicants for and participants in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority office. In addition, all appropriate written information and advertisements will contain the appropriate Equal Opportunity language and logo.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will assist any family that believes they have suffered illegal discrimination by providing the family copies of the housing discrimination form. The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices and corrective actions for five years.

1.2 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Sometimes people with disabilities may need a reasonable accommodation in order to take full advantage of the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will follow in determining whether it is reasonable to provide a requested accommodation. Because disabilities are not always apparent, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will ensure that all applicants/participants are aware of the opportunity to request reasonable accommodations.

Legitimate reasonable accommodation requests shall be granted if possible and not an undue financial and administrative burden to the Rensselaer Housing Authority. If the request is contrary to a HUD regulatory requirement and not an undue burden, the Rensselaer Housing Authority shall request a waiver of requirement from HUD.

1.3 COMMUNICATION

Anyone requesting an application will also receive a Request for Reasonable Accommodation Form.

Notifications of reexamination, inspection, appointment, or termination of assistance will include information about requesting a reasonable accommodation. Any notification requesting action by the participant will include information about requesting a reasonable accommodation.

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 an 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will obtain

verification that the person requesting the accommodation 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will obtain documentation that the requested accommodation is needed due to the disability. The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority's business is housing. If the request would alter the fundamental business that the Rensselaer Housing Authority conducts, that would not be reasonable. For instance, the Rensselaer Housing Authority would deny a request to have the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority may request a meeting with the individual to investigate and consider equally effective alternatives.

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

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

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 Authority does not have responsibility for the owner's unit and does not have responsibility to make the unit accessible. The Housing Authority may, however, grant a higher payment standard for units where property owners make physical modifications for persons with disabilities so long as the payment standard does not exceed 110% of FMRs.

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

1.5 SERVICES FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PERSONS AND PARTICIPANTS

The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall do its best, within reason, to assist people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). This shall be accomplished by assessing the need of LEP persons using the four factors described in the January 22, 2007 Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons; Notice published in the Federal Register. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall balance these factors in deciding what to do:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service area;
2. The Frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program; and
4. The resources available to the Housing Authority and costs.

Depending upon what this analysis reveals, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may or may not prepare a Language Access Plan (LAP). If a LAP is needed, the guidance outlined in the above reference Notice shall be utilized.

In addition, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will endeavor to have bilingual staff or access to people who speak languages other than English. Finally, the Rensselaer Housing Authority shall utilize multilingual “I speak” cards to the maximum degree possible.

1.6 FAMILY/OWNER OUTREACH

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will publicize the availability and nature of the Section 8 Program for extremely low-income and very low 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will distribute fact sheets to the broadcasting media and initiate personal contacts with members of the news media and community service personnel. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will also try to utilize public service announcements.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 objective of this effort is to develop a waiting list that is representative of our low-income community. A particular emphasis will be placed on attracting eligible individuals and families least likely to apply for the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will hold briefings, as needed, for owners who participate in or who are seeking information about the Section 8 Program. The briefings are intended to:

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

1.7 RIGHT TO PRIVACY

All adult members of both applicant and participant households are required to annually 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. This includes transmitting data to a Receiving Housing Authority under Portability.

1.8 REQUIRED POSTINGS

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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
- H. The Agency's SEMAP score and designation.

2.0 RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY/OWNER RESPONSIBILITY/ OBLIGATION OF THE FAMILY

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

2.1 RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will comply with the consolidated ACC, the application the Rensselaer Housing Authority submitted to HUD to get the specific vouchers, HUD regulations and other requirements, and this Section 8 Administrative Plan.
- B. In administering the program, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will:
 1. Publish and disseminate information about the availability and nature of housing assistance under the program;
 2. Explain the program to owners and families, including both party's rights and responsibilities under the Violence Against Women Act;
 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 people with disabilities find satisfactory housing;
 7. Receive applications from families, determine eligibility, maintain the waiting list, select applicants, issue a housing choice 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 at least annually during the family's participation in the program. The examination includes verification of income and other family information;
16. Establish and adjust the Rensselaer Housing Authority utility allowance;
17. Administer and enforce the housing assistance payments contract with an owner, including taking appropriate action as determined by the Rensselaer Housing Authority, 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority decisions concerning applicants for participation in the program;
20. Conduct informal hearings on certain Rensselaer Housing Authority decisions concerning participant families;
21. Provide sound financial management of the program, including engaging an independent public accountant to conduct audits; and
22. Administer an FSS program (**if applicable**).

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 (screening the tenant).
 2. Maintaining the unit in accordance with HQS, including performance of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance.
 3. Complying with equal opportunity requirements.
 4. Complying with the Housing Assistance Program contract (HAP).
 5. Preparing and furnishing to the Rensselaer Housing Authority information required under the HAP contract.
 6. 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.
 7. Entering into a lease and enforcing tenant obligations under the lease.
 8. Including in the lease a clause that provides that engaging in drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises by the tenant, household member, guest, or any other person under the tenant's control is grounds for the owner to terminate tenancy. In addition, the lease must also provide that the owner may evict a family when the owner determines that a household member is illegally using a drug or when the owner determines that a pattern of illegal use of a drug interferes with the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
 9. 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.
- D. The owner is responsible for notifying the Rensselaer Housing Authority sixty (60) calendar days prior to any rent increase.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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. All 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority Inspection

The family must allow the Rensselaer Housing Authority to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after at least **two** calendar days notice according to state law.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority and the owner 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority must approve the composition of the assisted family residing in the unit. The family must inform the Rensselaer Housing Authority within **10** business days of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child. The family must request approval from the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 notify the Rensselaer Housing Authority within **10** business days if any family member no longer resides in the unit.
4. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority has given approval, a foster child/foster adult or a live-in aide may reside in the unit. The Rensselaer Housing Authority has the discretion to adopt reasonable policies concerning residence by a foster child/foster adult or a live-in aide and defining when the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 the lease, 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any Rensselaer Housing Authority requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with the Rensselaer Housing Authority for this purpose. The family must promptly notify the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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** calendar days. The family must request permission from the Rensselaer Housing Authority for absences exceeding **30**

calendar days. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will make a determination within **5** business days of the request. An authorized absence may not exceed 180 calendar days. Any family absent for more than **30** calendar 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority

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 or people using a housing choice voucher to purchase a home).

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 program.

K. Crime by Household Members

The members of the household may not engage in drug-related criminal activity, other violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. **The use of medical marijuana is included in this ban.**

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.

M. Alcohol and/or Drug Abuse By Household Members

The members of the household must not abuse alcohol and/or drugs in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and/or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority screening criteria in order to be admitted to the Section 8 Program.

3.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- A. Family status. Family includes, but is not limited to, the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital 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 (regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status) 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 (including co-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 (including co-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 (including co-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.
 - d. For purposes of qualifying for low-income housing, does not include a person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence.
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** is a family member of an assisted family who remains in the unit when other family members have left the unit. If the remaining member of a tenant family is a minor or minors, it will be necessary for an adult to temporarily move into a unit to serve as a guardian for children residing in the unit. The income received by the temporary guardian will be counted in determining family income. Although typically a criminal background check is required before anyone can receive Housing Choice Voucher assistance, this requirement will be waived for a guardian in this situation. Instead, the background check will occur after the person moves in. If the results of the check dictate that the person is ineligible for the program, the family shall be given a reasonable time to find a replacement guardian or lose the assistance.
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 family that is:
 - a. An extremely low-income or a very low-income family;
 - b. A low-income family continuously assisted under the 1937 Housing Act, including families relocated from public housing for the convenience of the agency (continuously assisted families are not counted against the income targeting requirements);
 - c. A low-income family that is a nonpurchasing resident in a HOPE 1 or HOPE 2 project or a property subject to a resident homeownership program under 24 CFR 248.173;
 - d. A low-income family or moderate-income family that is displaced as a result of the prepayment of the mortgage or voluntary termination of an insurance contract on eligible low-income housing.
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 housing choice voucher is the highest income limit for the family size for areas within the housing authority'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 Rensselaer Housing Authority's jurisdiction under portability and have the status of applicant rather than of participant at their initial housing authority must meet the income limit for the area where they are initially assisted under the program.
5. Families who are moving into the Rensselaer Housing Authority's jurisdiction under portability and are already program participants at their initial housing authority do not have to meet the income eligibility requirement for the Rensselaer Housing Authority program.
6. Income limit restrictions do not apply to families transferring units within the Rensselaer Housing Authority Section 8 Program.

C. Citizenship/Eligible Immigrant status

To be eligible for a housing choice voucher at least one 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)) or a citizen of the Republic of Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau. However, people in the last category are not entitled to housing assistance in preference to any United States citizen or national resident within Guam.

Family eligibility for assistance.

1. A family shall not be eligible for assistance unless at least one 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(F) 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.

All adults must be able to sign the lease. If the State of New York forbids individuals with ineligible immigration status from executing contracts (i.e., leases or other legal binding documents), then they are ineligible for this program.

D. Social Security Number Documentation

Prior to admission, every family member must provide the Rensselaer Housing Authority with a complete and accurate Social Security Number unless they do not contend eligible immigration status. New family members must provide this verification prior to being added to the lease. If the new family member became a member of the household within six months prior to the date of voucher issuance and is under the age of six and has not been assigned a Social Security Number, the family shall have ninety (90) calendar days after starting to receive the assistance to provide a complete and accurate Social Security Number. The Housing Authority shall grant one ninety (90) day extension for newly-added family members under the age of six if in its sole discretion it determines that the person's failure to comply was due to circumstances that could not have reasonably been foreseen and was outside the control of the person. If the Social Security Number is not provided within the required period, the assistance shall be terminated.

If a person is already a program participant and has not disclosed his or her Social Security Number, it must be disclosed at the next re-examination or re-certification.

Participants aged 62 or older as of January 31, 2010 whose initial eligibility determination was begun before January 31, 2010 are exempt from the required disclosure of their Social Security Number. This exemption continues even if the individual moves to a new assisted unit.

The best verification of the Social Security Number is the original Social Security card. If the card is not available, the Housing Authority will accept an original document issued by a federal or state government agency, which contains the name of the individual and the Social Security Number of the individual, along with other identifying information of the individual or such other evidence of the Social Security Number as HUD may prescribe in administrative instructions.

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 the Social Security Number of each household member cannot be provided to the Rensselaer Housing Authority within **30** calendar days of it being requested, the family is **removed from the waiting list**. During this **30** calendar days, if all household members have not disclosed their SSN at the time a voucher becomes available, the Rensselaer Housing Authority must offer the available voucher to the next eligible applicant family on the waiting list.

If an individual fails to provide the verification within the time allowed, the family will be denied assistance or will have their assistance terminated. The Housing Authority shall grant one ninety (90) day extension from termination if in its sole discretion it determines that the person's failure to comply was due to circumstances that could not have reasonably been foreseen and there is a reasonable likelihood that the person will be able to disclose a Social Security Number by the deadline.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority to obtain from State Wage Information Collection Agencies (SWICAs) 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority to verify with previous or current employers or other sources of 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;
- d. A statement allowing the Rensselaer Housing Authority permission to access the applicant's criminal record with any and all police and/or law enforcement agencies; and
- e. 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. Suitability for tenancy

The Rensselaer Housing Authority determines eligibility for participation and will also conduct criminal background checks on all adult household members, including live-in aides. The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority may contact law enforcement agencies where the individual had lived or request a check through the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC). This criminal background check will proceed after each adult household member has signed a consent form designed by the Rensselaer Housing Authority. The information received as a result of the criminal background check shall be used solely for screening purposes. The information shall be maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed once the purpose(s) for which it was requested has been accomplished and the period for filing a challenge to the Rensselaer Housing Authority's action has expired without a challenge or final disposition of any litigation has occurred.

In deciding whether to exercise their discretion to assist an individual or household that has engaged in criminal activity, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will consider all of the circumstances relevant to the particular admission or eviction decision, including but not limited to the seriousness of the offending action.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will check with the State sex offender registration program and will ban for life any individual who is registered as a

lifetime sex offender. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will check with our state registry and if the applicant has resided in another State(s), with that State(s)'s list. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will utilize the US Department of Justice's Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender website as an additional resource. The Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Database is an online, searchable database, hosted by the Department of Justice, which combines the data from individual state sex offender registries.

If an applicant is about to be denied housing based on either the criminal check or the sex offender registration program, the applicant will be informed of this fact and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the information before the denial or eviction occurs. Applicants that are denied housing will be given a "Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act" which provides information on their rights and responsibilities under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). A copy of the HUD-approved Certification form shall also be provided with the notice.

Additional screening is the responsibility of the owner. Upon the written request of a prospective owner, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will provide to the owner the name, address, and phone number of the applicant's current landlord and any previous landlords that are known to the housing authority.

In addition, if an owner submits a request to the Rensselaer Housing Authority for criminal records concerning an adult member of an applicant or resident household, signed consent forms, and the owner's standards for prohibiting admission, the Rensselaer Housing Authority must request the criminal conviction records from the appropriate law enforcement agency or agencies, as determined by the Housing Authority. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority receives criminal conviction records requested by an owner, the Rensselaer Housing Authority must determine whether criminal action by a household member, as shown by such criminal conviction records, may be a basis for applicant screening, lease enforcement or eviction, as applicable in accordance with HUD regulations and the owner's criteria. The Rensselaer Housing Authority must notify the owner whether the Housing Authority has received criminal conviction records concerning the household member, and of its determination whether such criminal conviction records may be a basis for applicant screening, lease enforcement or eviction. However, the PHA must not disclose the household member's criminal conviction record or the content of that record to the owner, but merely the fact of whether or not they comply with HUD regulations and the owner's criteria. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will charge owners a fee of **\$000** for this service.

The same service shall be available to owners of federally assisted housing in their attempt to determine if an applicant is on the state sex offender list upon the request of the owner. Once again, the information itself will not be disclosed to the owner; the Rensselaer Housing Authority will merely apply the criteria the owner establishes. The fee for this service shall be **\$000**.

New admissions of medical marijuana users are prohibited. This does not include FDA-approved marijuana synthetics, as HUD has ruled that federal law preempts state law on this issue.

G. Special College Student Eligibility Rules

No assistance shall be provided under Section 8 of the 1937 Act to any individual who:

1. Is enrolled as a student at an institution of higher education, as defined under section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002);
2. Is under 24 years of age;
3. Is not a veteran of the United States military;
4. Is unmarried;
5. Does not have a dependent child; and
6. Is not otherwise individually eligible, or has parent who, individually or jointly, are not eligible on the basis of income to receive assistance under section 8 of the 1937 Act.

The above restriction does not apply to a person with disabilities as such term is defined in section 3(b)(3)(E) of the 1937 ACT and who was receiving Section 8 assistance on November 20, 2005.

A student, under the age of 24 may still be income eligible for assistance in circumstances where the student can demonstrate independence from parents, where the student can demonstrate the absence of parents, or where an examination of the student's parents' income may not be relevant.

1. The individual is of legal contract age under state law.
2. The individual has established a household separate from parents or legal guardians for at least one year prior to application for occupancy or the individual meets the U.S. Department of Education's definition of an "independent student." Section 480(d) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (the HEA), 20 U.S.C. 1087vv(d).
3. The individual is not claimed as a dependent by parents or legal guardians pursuant to IRS regulations.
4. The individual obtains a certification of the amount of financial assistance that will be provided by parents, signed by the individual providing the support, even if no assistance will be provided.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will verify to determine whether a student is independent for purposes of using the student's income alone for determining Section 8 eligibility (Student's Independence Verification Requirements). Those items include:

1. Reviewing and verifying previous address information to determine evidence of a separate household;
2. Verifying the student meets the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of “independent student”;
3. Reviewing a student’s prior year income tax returns to verify the student is independent or verifying the student meets the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of “independent student”; and
4. Verifying income provided by a parent by requiring a written certification from the individual providing the support. Certification is also required if the parent is providing no support to the student. Financial assistance that is provided by persons not living in the unit is part of annual income. (Except if the student meets the Department of Education’s definition of “independent student” in paragraphs (2), (3) or (8) set forth below).

An “independent student” is defined as:

1. The individual is 24 years of age or older by December 31 of the award year;
2. The individual is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court or was an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older;
3. The individual is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual’s State of legal residence;
4. The individual is a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States (as defined in subsection c)(1) of HEA) or is currently serving on active duty in the Armed Forces for other than training purposes;
5. The individual is a graduate or professional student;
6. The individual is a married individual;
7. The individual has legal dependents other than a spouse;
8. The individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth (as such terms are defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.), or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting, by—
 - a. A local educational agency homeless liaison, designated pursuant to section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the
 - b. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
 - c. The director of a program funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act or a designee of the director;
 - d. The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (relating to emergency shelter grants) or a designee of the director; or
 - e. A financial aid administrator; or

9. The individual is a student for whom a financial aid administrator makes a documented determination of independence by reason of other unusual circumstances.

4.0 MANAGING THE WAITING LIST

4.1 OPENING AND CLOSING THE WAITING LIST

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. The notice will include the Fair Housing logo and slogan and otherwise be in compliance with Fair Housing requirements.

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.

4.2 TAKING APPLICATIONS

Families wishing to apply for the Section 8 Program will be required to complete an application for housing assistance. When the waiting list is open, applications will be accepted on **Tuesday through Thursday between the hours 8:30am and 11:00am and 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm** at:

**Rensselaer Housing Authority
85 Aiken Avenue
Rensselaer, NY 12144**

Applications are taken to compile a waiting list. Due to the demand for Section 8 assistance in the Rensselaer Housing Authority jurisdiction, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will later verify the information in the applications relevant to the applicant's eligibility, admission, and level of benefit.

When the waiting list is open, applications may be made in person on **Tuesday through Thursday between the hours 8:30am and 11:00am and 1pm to 3pm**. Applications will be mailed to interested families upon request.

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

Persons with disabilities who require a reasonable accommodation in completing an application may call the Rensselaer Housing Authority to make special arrangements to complete their application.

All applicants and/or families already on a waiting list will be provided with the option of having their names placed on any and all open waiting lists maintained by the Rensselaer Housing Authority. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority adds new programs, such as a project-based voucher program, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will notify existing participants and new applicants by utilizing the same means it would use in opening its waiting list under 24 CFR §982.206(a) such as by (1) advertising through local and minority newspapers and the internet; (2) local postings at the Rensselaer Housing Authority, post offices, libraries, and community centers; and (3) outreach to social service organizations that may serve the same clientele that will be occupying the PBV units. Please note that the Rensselaer Housing Authority will not notify each family on the tenant-based waiting list by individual notice.

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, and information establishing any preferences to which they may be entitled. This first phase results in the family's placement on the waiting list if deemed apparently eligible.

Upon receipt of the family's pre-application, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will make a preliminary determination of eligibility. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will notify the family in writing of the date and time of placement on the waiting list and the approximate amount of time before housing assistance may be offered. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 is encouraged to report changes in their applicant status including changes in family composition, income, or preference factors. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will annotate the applicant's file and will update their place on the waiting list. Confirmation of the changes will be confirmed with the family in writing.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will ensure that verification of all preferences, eligibility, suitability selection factors are current in order to determine the family's final eligibility for admission into the Section 8 Program.

Applicants will also be given the opportunity to update their HUD Form 92006 if applicable and if they so desire.

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 significant contact between the Rensselaer Housing Authority and the applicant will be documented in the applicant file.

All files (applicant or participant) shall be retained for three years from the date the file is closed, whether this is due to the surrender of a housing choice voucher or the removal of a person from the waiting list, whichever is later.

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 nears the top of the waiting list, 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 preference will be verified. Annual income must be verified within 60 calendar days of the issuance of a housing choice voucher. 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will allow the family to reschedule appointments for good cause. Generally, no more than one opportunity will be given to reschedule without good cause, and no more than two opportunities for good cause. When a good cause exists, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will work closely with the family to find a more suitable time. Applicants will be offered the right to an informal review before being removed from the waiting list.

4.6 PURGING THE WAITING LIST

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Authority to update the information regarding address, family composition, income category and preferences.

The purge shall consist of the Rensselaer Housing Authority mailing via first class mail a form to be completed by the person on the waiting list and returned to the housing authority within a specified number of calendar days. If the envelope is returned as undeliverable or if no response is received from the applicant within the specified time frame, the applicant shall be stricken from the waiting list. If the envelope is returned with a forwarding address on it, the housing authority shall mail the form to the new address, with a new deadline for response.

4.7 REMOVAL OF APPLICANTS FROM THE WAITING LIST

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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;
- C. The applicant does not meet either the eligibility or screening criteria for the program; or
- D. The applicant has been issued a Housing Choice Voucher.

The reason for all removals from the waiting list shall be carefully documented in the applicant's file and retained for three years from the date the file is closed.

4.8 GROUNDS FOR DENIAL

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 family member who was evicted from federally assisted housing within the past five years because of drug-related criminal activity. The five year limit is based on the date of such eviction, not the date the crime was committed.

However, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may admit the household if the PHA determines:

- 1. The evicted household member who engaged in drug-related criminal activity has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the Rensselaer Housing Authority; or
 - 2. The circumstances leading to the eviction no longer exist (for example, the criminal household member is imprisoned or has died).
- F. Have a household member who is currently engaging in illegal use of a drug;
 - G. Have a household member whose illegal drug use or a pattern of illegal drug use may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents;
 - H. Have a household member who has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing;
 - I. Have a household member who is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program;
 - J. Have a household member whose abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents;
 - K. Have a household member who is a fugitive felon, parole violator or person fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees;
 - L. Have a household member who is currently engaged in, or has engaged in the following during the last three years before the projected date of admission:
 - 1. Drug-related criminal activity;
 - 2. Violent criminal activity;
 - 3. Other criminal activity which may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons residing in the immediate vicinity; or

4. Other criminal activity which may threaten the health or safety of the owner, property management staff, or persons performing a contract administration function or responsibility on behalf of the Rensselaer Housing Authority (including a Rensselaer Housing Authority employee or a Rensselaer Housing Authority contractor, subcontractor or agent).

For purposes of this section, a household member is “currently engaged in” criminal activity if the person has engaged in the behavior recently enough to justify a reasonable belief that the behavior is current.

- M. Have a family member who violated any family obligations under previous participation in the program;
- N. Have a family member who has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years;
- O. Have a family member that the Rensselaer Housing Authority ever terminated assistance for under the program;
- P. Have a family member who has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any Federal housing program;
- Q. Currently owes rent or other amounts to the Rensselaer Housing Authority or to another Housing Authority in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act;
- R. Have not reimbursed any Housing Authority 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;
- S. Have breached an agreement with Rensselaer Housing Authority to pay amounts owed to a Housing Authority or amounts paid to an owner by a Housing Authority;
- T. If a family participating in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, a family fails to comply, without good cause, with the family’s FSS Contract of Participation;
- U. Have engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior towards any Rensselaer Housing Authority staff member or resident;
- V. If a welfare-to-work (WTW) family fails, willfully and persistently, to fulfill its obligations under the welfare-to-work voucher program.

- W. New admissions of medical marijuana users are prohibited (this does not include FDA-approved marijuana synthetics). HUD has ruled that federal law preempts state law on this issue.

For denying an admission based on any criminal activity, an arrest record, alone, will not serve as sufficient evidence of criminal activity that can support an adverse admission decision. Before the Rensselaer Housing Authority denies admission to an individual or household on the basis of criminal activity by a household member or guest, it will determine that the relevant individual actually engaged in such activity.

An arrest record can trigger an inquiry into whether there is sufficient evidence to determine that a person engaged in disqualifying criminal activity, but is not itself evidence on which to base a determination. The Rensselaer Housing Authority can utilize other evidence, such as police reports detailing the circumstances of the arrest, witness statements, and other relevant documentation to assist them in making a determination that disqualifying conduct occurred. Reliable evidence of a conviction for criminal conduct that would disqualify an individual for tenancy may also be the basis for determining that the disqualifying conduct in fact occurred.

If the Rensselaer Housing Authority denies admission to the Rensselaer Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher program on the basis of a criminal record, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will provide the person with the criminal record (i.e., the family member) and the applicant head of household with a copy of the criminal record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of that record, in the procedures for the Informal Review Process for Applicants. The applicant will have five (5) calendar days to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the record in writing. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority does not receive the dispute within the allotted time, the applicant will be denied.

The fact that an applicant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking is not an appropriate basis for denial of program assistance or for denial of admission, if the applicant otherwise qualifies for assistance or admission. The Authority will require verification in all cases where an applicant claims protection against an action proposed to be taken by the Authority involving such individual. Types of acceptable verifications are outlined in Section 17.2 of this Section 8 Administrative Plan, and must be submitted within 14 business days after receipt of the Housing Authority's written request for verification.

4.9 NOTIFICATION OF NEGATIVE ACTIONS

Any applicant whose name is being removed from the waiting list will be notified by the Rensselaer Housing Authority, 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 in writing. 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority'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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will provide a reasonable accommodation. If the applicant indicates that they did not respond due to a disability, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority determines that an applicant does not meet the criteria for receiving Section 8 assistance, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will use the assistance for those families. If this occurs, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will maintain records demonstrating that these targeted housing choice vouchers were used appropriately. When one of these targeted vouchers turns over, the voucher shall be issued to applicants with the same specific characteristic as the targeted program describes.

5.2 *PREFERENCES*

Consistent with the Rensselaer Housing Authority Agency Plan, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will select families based on the the date and time of application. This is consistent with the Rensselaer Housing Authority's Agency Plan and the Consolidated Plan that covers our jurisdiction.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not exclude or penalize a family in admission to the program, solely because the family resides in public housing.

5.3 SELECTION FROM THE WAITING LIST

The date and time of application will be utilized to determine the sequence within the above-prescribed preferences.

Notwithstanding the above, if necessary to meet the statutory requirement that 75% of newly admitted families in any fiscal year be families who are extremely low-income (unless a different target is agreed to by HUD), the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Authority 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.

6.0 ASSIGNMENT OF BEDROOM SIZES (SUBSIDY STANDARDS)

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will issue a housing choice 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
5	5	10

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 currently under a 50% or

more joint custody decree, 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 **five (5)** will share a bedroom.
- C. Persons of different generations 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will grant exceptions to normal occupancy standards when a family requests a larger size than the guidelines allow and documents a disability or a medical reason why the larger size is necessary.

The family unit size will be determined by the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 housing choice voucher all of the adult members of the family 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 two 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 Authority 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 Authority 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 Authority's jurisdiction;
- D. Types of eligible housing;
- E. An explanation of how portability works, including how the family's assistance can be affected through re-screening by the Receiving Housing Authority, changes in the subsidy and payment standards, and other elements of the portability process that could affect the family's assistance. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not discourage the family from choosing to live anywhere in or outside its jurisdiction under portability procedures, unless otherwise expressly authorized by statute, regulation, PIH Notice, or court order;
- F. An explanation of the advantages of living in an area that does not have a high concentration of poor families, including maps that show locations of housing opportunities outside areas of poverty or minority concentration, both within and outside its jurisdiction and neighboring its jurisdiction; has assembled information about job opportunities, schools, transportation, and other services in these areas;
- G. An explanation that the family share of rent may not exceed 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard when the family initially rents a unit and the fact that the family may have to pay a security deposit from its own funds;
- H. For a welfare-to-work family, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will include specification of any local obligations of a welfare-to-work family and an explanation that failure to meet these obligations is grounds for the Rensselaer Housing Authority to deny or terminate assistance.
- I. A description of the homeownership program if one exists; and
- J. An explanation of information contained in the Housing Choice Voucher packet.

6.2 PACKET

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

- A. The term of the housing choice voucher and the Housing Authority's policy on extensions and how suspensions of the term work under HUD's regulation. The packet will include information on how to request an extension and forms for requesting extensions;

- B. How the Housing Authority determines the housing assistance payment and total tenant payment for the family;
- C. Information on how the payment standard is determined, exception payment standard rent areas, and the utility allowance schedule;
- D. How the Housing Authority determines the maximum rent for an assisted unit;
- E. Where the family may lease a unit. For families qualified to lease outside the Housing Authority's jurisdiction, the packet includes an explanation of how portability works, including how the family's assistance can be affected through re-screening by the Receiving Housing Authority, changes in the subsidy and payment standards, other elements of the portability process that could affect the family's assistance, and a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of contact persons at neighboring housing authorities;

The Section 8 Jurisdiction for the Rensselaer Housing Authority along with the City of Rensselaer, include but are not limited to Poestenkill, West Sand Lake, Wynantskill, Averill Park, Defreestville, East Greenbush and North Greenbush, as well as any area in Rensselaer County within a 30-mile radius of The City of Rensselaer that is not covered by a Section 8 office.

This policy was established in RHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan in order to comply with HUD's ruling to use funds provided for special purpose, such as desegregation by participating with homeowners outside of areas of low-income or minority concentration.

- 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 Authority approval of a unit;
- H. A statement of the Housing Authority's policy on providing information to prospective owners. This policy requires applicants to sign disclosure statements allowing the Housing Authority to provide prospective owners with the family's current and prior addresses and the names and addresses of the landlords for those addresses;
- I. The Housing Authority's subsidy standards, including when the Housing Authority will consider granting exceptions to the standards such as a reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability;
- J. The HUD brochure on how to select a unit ("A Good Place to Live") and any other information HUD provides on the subject;

- K. The HUD-required lead-based paint brochure;
- L. Information on Federal, State, and local equal opportunity laws; the brochure "Fair Housing: It's Your Right;" and a copy of the housing discrimination complaint form;
- M. A list of landlords or other resources (such as newspapers, organizations, and online search tools) known to the Rensselaer Housing Authority who may be willing to lease a unit to the family or help the family find a unit, including owners with properties located outside areas of poverty or minority concentration;
- N. Notice that if the family includes a person with disabilities, the family may request a current list of accessible units known to the Rensselaer Housing Authority that may be available;
- O. The family's obligations under the program;
- P. The grounds upon which the Housing Authority may terminate assistance because of the family's action or inaction;
- Q. Rensselaer Housing Authority informal hearing procedures, including when the Housing Authority is required to provide the opportunity for an informal hearing, and information on how to request a hearing;
- R. The Rensselaer Housing Authority owner information brochure. This brochure can be given by the applicant to a prospective owner to help explain the program;
- S. An explanation of rights afforded to Housing Choice Voucher participants under the Violence Against Women Act;
- T. A written explanation of the advantages of living in an area that does not have a high concentration of poor families, including maps that show locations of housing opportunities outside areas of poverty or minority concentration, both within and outside its jurisdiction and neighboring its jurisdiction; has assembled information about job opportunities, schools, transportation, and other services in these areas; and
- U. A listing or map that delineates areas of poverty or minority concentration in the jurisdiction. Also, applicants shall be given information about job opportunities, schools, and other services in non-concentrated neighborhoods.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will issue the housing choice 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 terms of the HUD tenancy addendum shall prevail over any conflicting provisions of the lease. The family will submit the proposed lease and the request form to the Housing Authority during the term of the housing choice voucher. The Housing Authority will review the request, the lease, and the HUD required tenancy addendum and make an initial determination of approval of tenancy. The Housing Authority 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 Authority will schedule an appointment to inspect the unit within 15 calendar 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 Authority 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 Authority will provide the prospective owner with information regarding the program. Information will include Housing Authority and owner responsibilities for screening and other essential program elements. The Housing Authority will provide the owner with the family's current and prior address as shown in the Housing Authority records along with the name and address (if known) of the landlords for those addresses.

Additional screening is the responsibility of the owner.

6.4 *TERM OF THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER*

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

The Housing Authority may grant one or more extensions of the term, but the initial term plus any extensions will not exceed 120 calendar days from the initial date of issuance without an extraordinary reason. 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 Authority will grant the length of request sought by the family or 60 calendar days, whichever is less.

If the family includes a person with disabilities and the family requires an extension due to the disability, the Housing Authority will grant an extension allowing the family the full 120 calendar days search time. If the Housing Authority determines that additional search time would be a reasonable accommodation, it will grant the additional search time.

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

If a family's voucher expires, the family is no longer eligible for housing assistance. They are free to re-apply to the Housing Choice Voucher program and start over again at the bottom of the waiting list. If the waiting list is closed, they must wait until the Rensselaer Housing Authority is once again accepting applicants for the Section 8 program. They will be treated exactly like all other new applicants for the program.

6.5 APPROVAL TO LEASE A UNIT

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Authority and passes HQS;
- C. The lease is approvable and includes the following:
 1. The names of the owner and the resident;
 2. The address of the unit rented;
 3. The term of the lease (initial term and any provisions for renewal);
 4. The amount of the monthly rent to owner;
 5. A specification of what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the owner, and what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the family; and

- 6. The required HUD tenancy addendum.
- D. The rent to owner is reasonable;
- E. The family's share of rent does not exceed 40% of their monthly adjusted income if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard;
- F. The owner certifies that he or she is not in a conflict of interest situation with the resident.
- G. The owner has not been found to be debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation by HUD or the Housing Authority; and
- H. The family continues to meet all eligibility and screening criteria.

If tenancy approval is denied, the Housing Authority will advise the owner and the family in writing and advise them also of any actions they could take that would enable the Housing Authority to approve the tenancy. If non-life-threatening conditions fail the inspection, the owner must correct the failures within thirty (30) calendars and provide acceptable proof of the appropriate repairs to the Rensselaer Housing Authority.

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

- A. The unit passes the Housing Authority HQS inspection;
- B. The family's share of rent does not exceed 40% of their monthly adjusted income if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard;
- C. The landlord and resident sign the lease to include the HUD required addendum; and
- D. The Housing Authority approves the leasing of the unit.

The Housing Authority 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 Authority will execute the contract. The Housing Authority 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 calendar days after the beginning of the lease term.

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

6.6 RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY DISAPPROVAL OF OWNER

The Housing Authority will deny participation by an owner at the direction of HUD (one who has been debarred, suspended, or is subject to a limited denial of participation). The Housing Authority will also deny the owner's participation for any of the following reasons:

- A. The owner has violated any obligations under a Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Contract;
- B. The owner has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any Federal housing program;
- C. The owner has engaged in drug-related criminal activity or any violent criminal activity;
- D. The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with HQS for units leased under Section 8 or with applicable housing standards for units leased with project-based Section 8 assistance or leased under any other Federal housing program;
- E. The owner has a history or practice of renting units that fail to meet State or local codes;
- F. The owner has not paid State or local real estate taxes, fines, or assessments;
- G. The owner refuses (or has a history of refusing) to evict families for drug-related or violent criminal activity, or for activity that threatens the health, safety or right of peaceful enjoyment of the:
 - 1. premises by residents, Rensselaer Housing Authority employees or owner employees; or
 - 2. residences by neighbors;
- H. If the owner is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother or any member of the family of an applicant seeking the initial use of a housing choice voucher (currently shopping) unless the Rensselaer Housing Authority determines that approving the unit would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities;

- I. The Housing Authority has been informed by HUD that the federal government has instituted an administrative or judicial action against the owner for a violation of the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements and such action is pending or a court or administrative agency has determined that the owner violated the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements; or
- J. Other conflicts of interest under Federal, State, or local law.

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 or units being purchased under a Section 8 Homeownership Program; 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will approve leases for the following housing types:

- A. Single family dwellings
- B. Apartments
- C. Manufactured housing
- D. Manufactured home space rentals
- E. Lease-purchase agreements. A family leasing a unit with assistance under the program may enter into an agreement with an owner to purchase the unit. So long as the family is receiving such rental assistance, all requirements applicable to families otherwise leasing units under the tenant-based program apply. Any homeownership premium (e.g., increment of value attributable to the value of the lease-purchase right or agreement such as an extra monthly payment to accumulate a downpayment or reduce the purchase price) included in the rent to the owner that would result in a higher subsidy amount than would otherwise be paid by the Rensselaer Housing Authority must be absorbed by the family.

In determining whether the rent to owner for a unit subject to a lease-purchase agreement is a reasonable amount in accordance with 24 CFR 982.503, any homeownership premium paid by the family to the owner must be excluded when the Rensselaer Housing Authority determines rent reasonableness.

If a property has both HUD issued project-based assisted units and market rate units, housing choice vouchers can be utilized in the market rate units, but not the project-based units. In this situation, rent reasonableness will dictate that the rent for the housing choice voucher unit will equal the HUD-approved rent (the basic rent) for the project-based units as long as it is within the Rensselaer Housing Authority's payment standard. Also, the Rensselaer Housing Authority's utility schedule will be utilized in setting the rent, not the property's utility schedule. Finally, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will re-certify everyone living in a property utilizing tenant-based housing choice vouchers and the landlord will be responsible for the re-certification of those residing in the property using project-based vouchers.

6.8 SECURITY DEPOSIT

The owner may collect a security deposit from the participant 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 residents in the same complex.

When the resident 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 participant, damages to the unit or for other amounts the family owes under the lease.

The owner must give the participant 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 resident in compliance with State law.

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.

7.0 MOVES WITH CONTINUED ASSISTANCE

Participating families are allowed to move to another unit after the initial lease has expired, if the landlord and the participant have mutually agreed to terminate the lease, or if the Housing Authority has terminated the HAP contract. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will issue the family a new housing choice voucher if the family does not owe the Rensselaer Housing Authority or any other Housing Authority money, has not violated a Family Obligation, has not moved or been issued a housing choice voucher within the last 12 months, and if the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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. This policy is consistent with all civil rights laws and regulations.

7.1 *WHEN A FAMILY MAY OR MAY NOT MOVE*

For families already participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 resident a notice to vacate, has commenced an action to evict the family, or has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the participant; or
- C. The participant has given notice of lease termination (if the participant has a right to terminate the lease on notice to the owner).
- D. The family or a member of the family is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as provided in 24 CFR part 5, subpart L, and the move is needed to protect the health or safety of the family or family member. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not terminate assistance if the family, with or without prior notification to the housing authority, already moved out of a unit in violation of the lease, if such move occurred to protect the health or safety of a family member who is or has been the victim of

domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who reasonably believed he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the dwelling unit.

For families already participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will not allow the family to move to a new unit if:

- A. The family is not income eligible in the receiving agency's jurisdiction; or
- B. The family has moved out of their unit in violation of the lease unless the reason for the move is to protect a victim of VAWA who is otherwise in full compliance with all other program requirements and reasonable believed to be in imminent danger from the abuser.

For families already participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may deny a family's request to move to a new unit:

- A. If the family violates any family obligations under the program;
- B. If any member of the family has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years;
- C. If a PHA has ever terminated assistance under the program for any member of the family;
- D. If any member of the family has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any Federal housing program;
- E. If the family currently owes rent or other amounts to the PHA or to another PHA in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act;
- F. If the family has not reimbursed any PHA 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;
- G. If the family breaches an agreement with the PHA to pay amounts owed to a PHA, or amounts paid to an owner by a PHA. (The PHA, at its discretion, may offer a family the opportunity to enter an agreement to pay amounts owed to a PHA or amounts paid to an owner by a PHA. The PHA may prescribe the terms of the agreement.);
- H. If a family participating in the FSS program fails to comply, without good cause, with the family's FSS contract of participation;
- I. If the family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel;

- J. If a welfare-to-work (WTW) family fails, willfully and persistently, to fulfill its obligations under the welfare-to-work voucher program;
- K. If the family has been engaged in criminal activity or alcohol abuse
- L. If the family does not comply with our policy on the timing and frequency of moves.
- M. If the family is not eligible to portability due to being a nonresident when admitted to the program; or
- N. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority has insufficient funding for continued assistance to the family.
 - 1. A voucher cannot be rescinded if the Rensselaer Housing Authority has approved a move, subsequently finds out a funding shortfall will occur and the family cannot remain in its old unit (e.g. the unit has already been leased to another family).
 - 2. Under portability, a n initial housing authority cannot terminate a portability unit because it is not a party to the HAP contract.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority's jurisdiction, will be required to attend a mover's briefing prior to the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard when initially renting a unit;

- E. Portability requirements and opportunities;
- F. The need to have a reexamination conducted within 120 calendar 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 calendar 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority'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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority, 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 RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY

A family whose head or spouse has a domicile (legal residence) in the jurisdiction of the Rensselaer Housing Authority at the time the family first submits its application for participation in the program to the Rensselaer Housing Authority may lease a unit anywhere in the jurisdiction of the Rensselaer Housing Authority or outside the

Rensselaer Housing Authority jurisdiction as long as there is another entity operating a tenant-based Section 8 program covering the location of the proposed unit.

If the head or spouse of the assisted family does not have a legal residence in the jurisdiction of the Rensselaer Housing Authority at the time of its application, the family will not have any right to lease a unit outside of the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority.

A family's eligibility to exercise the portability option is to be determined by the Initial Housing Authority.

If a family chooses to port to another housing authority's jurisdiction, the Initial Housing Authority shall inform the family that it may be re-screened by the Receiving Housing Authority and may lose its assistance if the family fails to meet the Receiving Housing Authority's screening criteria.

Families participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program will not be allowed to move more than once in any 12-month period and under no circumstances will the Rensselaer Housing Authority allow a participant to improperly break a lease. Under extraordinary circumstances the Rensselaer Housing Authority may consider allowing more than one move in a 12-month period. This does not apply when the family or a member of the family is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking and the move is needed to protect the health or safety of the family or family member.

Families may only move to a jurisdiction where a Section 8 Program is being administered. If more than one housing authority operates a Housing Choice Voucher in the jurisdiction where the participant is moving, the participant may choose which housing authority the participant wants to administer the voucher.

For income targeting purposes, the family will count towards the initial housing authority's goals unless the receiving housing authority absorbs the family. If absorbed, the admission will count towards the receiving housing authority's goals.

If a family has moved out of their assisted unit in violation of the lease, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will not issue a voucher and will terminate assistance in compliance with Section 17.0, Termination of the Lease and Contract. This will not apply if the family has complied with all program requirements and the family has moved out of the assisted dwelling unit in order to protect the health or safety of an individual who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who reasonably believed he or she was imminently threatened by harm from further violence if he or she remained in the assisted dwelling unit.

Any of the above general policies will be waived by the Rensselaer Housing Authority in order to help participants who are compliant with their existing leases but who reasonably believe they need to move to protect the health and/or safety of a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In order to exercise this waiver, the participant shall provide the Rensselaer Housing Authority with appropriate verification. Types of acceptable verifications are outlined in Section 17.2 of this Section 8 Administrative Plan, and must be submitted within 14 business days after receipt of the Housing Authority's written request for verification.

To the degree possible, portability moves will be utilized to affirmatively further fair housing.

8.2 INCOME ELIGIBILITY

- A. A family must be income-eligible in the area where the family first leases a unit with assistance in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- B. If a portable family is already a participant in the Initial Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program, income eligibility is not re-determined.

8.3 PORTABILITY: ADMINISTRATION BY RECEIVING HOUSING AUTHORITY

- A. When a family utilizes portability to move to an area outside the Initial Housing Authority jurisdiction, another Housing Authority (the Receiving Housing Authority) must administer assistance for the family if that Housing Authority has a tenant-based program covering the area where the unit is located.
- B. A Housing Authority with jurisdiction in the area where the family wants to lease a unit must issue the family a housing choice voucher. If there is more than one such housing authority, the family may choose which housing authority shall become the Receiving Housing Authority. The Initial Housing Authority shall provide the family with the appropriate contact information for the Receiving Housing Authority.

8.4 PORTABILITY PROCEDURES

- A. When the Rensselaer Housing Authority is the Initial Housing Authority:
 - 1. The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will determine whether the family is income-eligible in the area where the family wants to lease a unit (if applicable and otherwise eligible to move).

3. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will advise the family how to contact and request assistance from the Receiving Housing Authority.
4. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will, within ten (10) calendar days, notify the Receiving Housing Authority to expect the family. If there are more than one agencies administering vouchers in the area the family wants to move to, the family shall choose which one to use.
5. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will immediately mail, email or fax the Receiving Housing Authority a completed Part I of HUD Form 50058 (Family Report) for the family, related verification information, and a copy of the family's voucher. If the family is an applicant and not a participant, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will provide the Receiving Housing Authority with the family information and income information in a format similar to that utilized by the 50058. It shall also provide any verification information and a copy of the voucher signed by the participant and the Rensselaer Housing Authority.

B. When the Rensselaer Housing Authority is the Receiving Housing Authority:

1. When the portable family requests assistance from the Rensselaer Housing Authority, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will within ten (10) business days inform the Initial Housing Authority via email or other delivery confirmation whether it will bill the Initial Housing Authority for assistance on behalf of the portable family, or absorb the family into its own program. Completing Part II of HUD Form 52665 in a timely manner (10 business days or less of the date the HAP contract is executed) will accomplish this. When the Rensselaer Housing Authority receives a portable family, the family will be absorbed if funds are available and a housing choice voucher will be issued.
2. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will issue a voucher to the family. The term of the Rensselaer Housing Authority's voucher will not expire before 30 calendar days after the expiration date of any Initial Housing Authority's housing choice voucher. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will determine whether to extend the housing choice voucher term. The family must submit a request for tenancy approval to the Rensselaer Housing Authority during the term of the Rensselaer Housing Authority's housing choice voucher.
3. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will determine the family unit size for the portable family. The family unit size is determined in accordance with the Rensselaer Housing Authority's subsidy standards. If we want to do so, the Rensselaer Housing Authority reserves the right to conduct an income reexamination for a participant family. Also, when a receiving housing

authority, the Rensselaer Housing Authority's policies will govern the ported voucher.

4. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will within ten (10) calendar days notify the Initial Housing Authority 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 housing choice voucher.
5. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority opts to conduct a new reexamination, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will not delay issuing the family a housing choice 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will perform all Housing Authority program functions, such as criminal background checks, home visits, reexaminations of family income and composition. At any time, either the Initial Housing Authority or the Rensselaer Housing Authority may make a determination to deny or terminate assistance to the family in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552.
7. The Rensselaer Housing Authority may deny or terminate assistance for family action or inaction in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552 and 24 CFR 982.553.
8. As the receiving housing authority, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will accept all eligible portability families, with limited exceptions. If an exception is utilized, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will seek prior written approval from HUD.
9. If a family is denied admission to the program, the participant is entitled to request an inform hearing.
10. If the family decides not to lease in our jurisdiction, it shall be referred back to the Initial Housing Authority.

C. Absorption by the Rensselaer Housing Authority

1. If funding is available under the consolidated ACC for the Rensselaer Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program when the portable family is received, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will absorb the family into its Housing Choice Voucher Program. After absorption, the family is assisted with funds available under the consolidated ACC for the Rensselaer Housing Authority's Tenant-Based Program. The decision to

absorb, or not, will be communicated in writing to the initial housing authority as soon as possible. A decision to absorb is irreversible without the permission of the initial housing authority.

D. Portability Billing

1. To cover assistance for a portable family, the Receiving Housing Authority may bill the Initial Housing Authority for housing assistance payments and administrative fees. The billing procedure will be as follows:
 - a. As the Initial Housing Authority, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will promptly reimburse the Receiving Housing Authority for the full amount of the housing assistance payments made by the Receiving Housing Authority for the portable family. The amount of the housing assistance payment for a portable family in the Receiving Housing Authority's program is determined in the same manner as for other families in the Receiving Housing Authority's program.
 - b. The Initial Housing Authority will promptly reimburse the Receiving Housing Authority for the lesser of 80% of its prorated column B administrative fee, 100% of the Receiving Housing Authority's normal column B administrative fee, or a negotiated amount that both housing authorities agree to of the Initial Housing Authority'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 Authority. If both Housing Authorities agree, we may negotiate a different amount of reimbursement. If HUD is prorating the administrative fee, the prorated amount will be used.

E. When a Portable Family Moves

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

9.0 DETERMINATION OF FAMILY INCOME

9.1 INCOME, EXCLUSIONS AND DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME

To determine annual income, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority subtracts 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. Go to (or on behalf of) 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.

If it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over a 12-month period (e.g. seasonal or cyclic income), or the Rensselaer Housing Authority believes that past income is the best available indicator of expected future income, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may annualize the income anticipated for a shorter period, subject to a redetermination at the end of the shorter period.

- B. Annual income includes, but is not limited to the amounts specified in the federal regulations currently found in 24 CFR 5.609:
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. Income that could have been derived from assets worth more than \$1000 that were disposed of for less than fair market value within the past two years will be counted as income.

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. Welfare assistance payments
 - i. Welfare assistance payments made under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program are included in annual income only to the extent such payments:
 - (1). Qualify as assistance under the TANF program definition at 45 CFR 260.31; and
 - (2). Are not otherwise excluded under paragraph Section 9.3 of this Plan.
 - ii. 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:

- (1). The amount of the allowance or grant exclusive of the amount specifically designated for shelter or utilities; plus
- (2). 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. Imputed welfare income.

- 1). A family's annual income includes the amount of imputed welfare income (because of welfare benefits reductions resulting from either welfare fraud or the failure to comply with economic self-sufficiency requirements, as specified in notice to the Rensselaer Housing Authority by the welfare agency), plus the total amount of other annual income.
- 2). At the request of the Rensselaer Housing Authority, the welfare agency will inform the Rensselaer Housing Authority in writing of the amount and term of any specified welfare benefit reduction for a family member, and the reason for such reduction, and will also inform the Rensselaer Housing Authority of any subsequent changes in the term or amount of such specified welfare benefit reduction. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will use this information to determine the amount of imputed welfare income for a family.
- 3). A family's annual income includes imputed welfare income in family annual income, as determined at an interim or regular reexamination of family income and composition, during the term of the welfare benefits reduction (as specified in information provided to the Rensselaer Housing Authority by the welfare agency).
- 4). The amount of the imputed welfare income is offset by the amount of additional income a family receives that commences after the time the sanction was imposed. When such additional income from other sources is at least equal to the imputed welfare income, the imputed welfare income is reduced to zero.

- 5). The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not include imputed welfare income in annual income if the family was not an assisted resident at the time of the sanction.
- 6). If a participant is not satisfied that the Rensselaer Housing Authority has calculated the amount of imputed welfare income in accordance with HUD requirements, and if the Rensselaer Housing Authority denies the family's request to modify such amount, then the Rensselaer Housing Authority shall give the resident written notice of such denial, with a brief explanation of the basis for the Rensselaer Housing Authority's determination of the amount of imputed welfare income. The Rensselaer Housing Authority's notice shall also state that if the resident does not agree with the determination, the resident may contest the decision in accordance with our informal review policy.
- 7). Relations with welfare agencies
 - a). The Rensselaer Housing Authority will ask welfare agencies to inform it of any specified welfare benefits reduction for a family member, the reason for such reduction, the term of any such reduction, and any subsequent welfare agency determination affecting the amount or term of a specified welfare benefits reduction. If the welfare agency determines a specified welfare benefits reduction for a family member, and gives the Rensselaer Housing Authority written notice of such reduction, the family's annual incomes shall include the imputed welfare income because of the specified welfare benefits reduction.
 - b). The Rensselaer Housing Authority is responsible for determining the amount of imputed welfare income that is included in the family's annual income as a result of a specified welfare benefits reduction as determined by the welfare agency, and specified in the notice by the welfare agency to the agency. However, the Rensselaer Housing Authority is not responsible for determining whether a reduction of welfare benefits by the welfare agency was correctly determined by the welfare agency in accordance with welfare program

requirements and procedures, nor for providing the opportunity for review or hearing on such welfare agency determinations.

- c). Such welfare agency determinations are the responsibility of the welfare agency, and the family may seek appeal of such determinations through the welfare agency's normal due process procedures. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall rely on the welfare agency notice to the Rensselaer Housing Authority of the welfare agency's determination of a specified welfare benefits reduction.
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. If a participant purchases a home using the Section 8 Homeownership option, if one is offered by the Rensselaer Housing Authority, the value of this asset shall be excluded from the income calculation for the first ten years of ownership from the closing date. For all re-certifications occurring after ten years of ownership, the value of the asset shall equal the fair market value of the property minus any loans on the property and minus 10% of the fair market value of the property (expenses to convert to cash as determined by PIH Notice 2012-3).

The fair market value of the property will be determined by the assessed value as determined by the City, Town or Village Assessor if the assessed value is made at market value. This market value will be obtained by reviewing and documenting the local assessment roll or the owner's most recent property tax bill. If a market value tax assessment is not available, then the Rensselaer Housing Authority will use the sales comparison method examining at least three comparable properties in the surrounding (or similar) neighborhood that possess comparable factors that affect market value.

For determining the loans on the property, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will first try to verify the current payoff amount of the loan(s) included on the participant's monthly mortgage statement. If the payoff amount is not available, the Housing Authority may deduct the loan balance from the market value and document the file as to the method used.

9.3 *EXCLUSIONS FROM INCOME*

Annual income does not include the following amounts specified in the federal regulations currently found in 24 CFR 5.609:

- 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 participant family, who are unable to live alone) or payments made under Kin-GAP or similar guardianship care programs for children leaving the juvenile court system;
- 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 are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of medical expenses for any family member;
- E. Income of a live-in aide;
- F. The amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution for tuition. For Section 8, any financial assistance, in excess of amount received for tuition, than an individual receives under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), from private sources, or from an institution of higher education (as defined under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)), shall be considered income to that individual, except that financial assistance described in this paragraph is not considered annual income for persons over the age of 23 with dependent children. For purposes of this paragraph, "financial assistance" does not include loan proceeds for the purpose determining income. See definition of Tuition in Glossary;
- 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 Authority 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, resident initiative coordination, and serving as a member of the Rensselaer Housing Authority's governing board. 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). This specifically includes temporary income payments from the U. S. Census Bureau, defined as employment lasting no longer than 180 days per year and not culminating in permanent employment;
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 provided to an eligible household under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2017(b));
- b. Payments to Volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5044(f)(1), 5058);
- c. Certain payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(c));
- d. Income derived from certain sub-marginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes (25 U.S.C. 459e);
- e. Payments or allowances made under the Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 8624(f));
- f. Income derived from the disposition of funds to the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians (Pub. L. 94-540, Section 6);
- g. The first \$2000 of per capita shares received from judgment funds awarded by the Indian National Gaming Commission or the U.S. Claims Court, the interests of individual Indians in trust or restricted lands, and the first \$2000 per year of income received by individual Indians from funds derived from interests held in such trust or restricted lands (25 U.S.C. 1407-1408). This exclusion does not include proceeds of gaming operations regulated by the Commission;
- h. Amounts of scholarships funded under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070), including awards under Federal work-study program or under the Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs (20 U.S.C. 1087uu). For Section 8 programs only (42 U.S.C. 1437f), any financial assistance in excess of amounts received by an individual for tuition and any other required fees and charges under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 *et seq.*), from private sources, or an

institution of higher education (as defined under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002), shall not be considered income to that individual if the individual is over the age of 23 with dependent children (Pub. L. 109-115, section 327) (as amended);

- i. Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1985 (42 U.S.C. 3056(g));
- j. Payments received on or after January 1, 1989, from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund (Pub. L. 101-201) or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in *In Re Agent Orange Liability Litigation*, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.);
- k. Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (Pub. L. 96-420, 25 U.S.C. 1728);
- l. The value of any child care provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858q);
- m. Earned income tax credit (EITC) refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991, for programs administered under the United States Housing Act of 1937, title V of the Housing Act of 1949, section 101 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, and sections 221 (d)(3), 235, and 236 of the National Housing Act (26 U.S.C. 32(l));
- n. Payments by the Indian Claims Commission to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakima Indian Nation or the Apache Tribe of Mescalero Reservation (Pub. L. 95-433);
- o. Allowances, earnings and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12637(d));
- p. Any allowance paid under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1883(c) to children of Vietnam veterans born with spina bifida (38 U.S.C. 1802-05), children of women Vietnam veterans born with certain birth defects (38 U.S.C. 1811-16), and children of certain Korean service veterans born with spina bifida (38 U.S.C. 1821);
- q. Any amount of crime victim compensation (under the Victims of Crime Act) received through crime victim assistance (or payment or reimbursement of the cost of such assistance) as determined under the Victims of Crime Act because of the commission of a

crime against the applicant under the Victims of Crime Act (42 U.S.C. 10602(c));

- r. Allowances, earnings and payments to individuals participating in programs under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2931(a)(2));
- s. Any amount received under the Richard B. Russell School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1760(e)) and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1780(b)), including reduced-price lunches and food under the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC);
- t. Payments, funds or distributions authorized, established, or directed by the Seneca Nation Settlement Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 1774f(b));
- u. Payments from any deferred U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts (42 U.S.C. § 1437a(b)(4));
- v. Compensation received by or on behalf of a veteran for service-connected disability, death, dependency, or indemnity compensation as provided by an amendment by the Indian Veterans Housing Opportunity Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111-269, 25 U.S.C. 4103(9)) to the definition of income applicable to programs authorized under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) (25 U.S.C. 4101 *et seq.*) and administered by the Office of Native American Programs;
- w. A lump sum or a periodic payment received by an individual Indian pursuant to the Class Action Settlement Agreement in the case entitled *Elouise Cobell et al. v. Ken Salazar et al.*, 816 F. Supp. 2d 10 (Oct. 5, 2011 D.D.C.) for a period of one year from the time of receipt of that payment as provided in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111-291);
- x. Any amounts in an “individual development account” as provided by the Assets for Independence Act, as amended in 2002 (Pub. L. 107-110, 42 U.S.C. 604(h)(4));
- y. Per capita payments made from the proceeds of Indian Tribal Trust Cases as described in PIH Notice 2013-30 “Exclusion from Income of Payments under Recent Tribal Trust Settlements” (25 U.S.C. 117b(a)); and
- z. Major disaster and emergency assistance received by individuals and families under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Pub. L. 93-288, as amended) and comparable disaster assistance provided by States, local

governments, and disaster assistance organizations (42 U.S.C. 5155(d)).

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not provide exclusions from income in addition to those already provided for by HUD.

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. The sum of the following, to the extent the sum exceeds three percent of annual income:
 - 1. Unreimbursed medical expenses of any elderly family or disabled family including any fee paid by the participant for the Medicare Prescription Drug Program; and
 - 2. Unreimbursed reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expenses for each member of the family who is a person with disabilities, to the extent necessary to enable any member of the family (including the member who is a person with disabilities) to be employed, but this allowance may not exceed the earned income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older who are able to work because of such attendant care or auxiliary apparatus.
- D. Reasonable child care expenses for children 12 and younger necessary to enable a member of the family to be employed or to further his or her education. This deduction shall not exceed the amount of employment income that is included in annual income.
- E. For persons with disabilities already participating in the program, the incremental earnings due to employment during a cumulative 12-month period following the date of the initial hire shall be excluded. This is referred to as the Earned Income Disregard. **Note** – Earned Income Disregard has been moved to Section **11.9** of the Administrative Plan

9.5 RECEIPT OF A LETTER OR NOTICE FROM HUD CONCERNING INCOME

- A. If a Section 8 participant receives a letter or notice from HUD concerning the amount or verification of family income, the letter shall be brought to the person

responsible for income verification within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt by the participant.

- B. The **Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee** shall reconcile any difference between the amount reported by the participant and the amount listed in the HUD communication. This shall be done as promptly as possible.
- C. After the reconciliation is complete, the Rensselaer Housing Authority shall, if appropriate, adjust the participant's rental contribution beginning at the start of the next month. If the reconciliation is completed during the final five (5) calendar days of the month, the new rent shall take effect on the first day of the second month following the end of the current month. In addition, if the participant had not previously reported the proper income, the Rensselaer Housing Authority shall do one of the following:
 - 1. Immediately collect the back over paid assistance paid by the agency;
 - 2. Establish a repayment plan for the resident to pay the sum due to the agency;
 - 3. Terminate the participant from the program for failure to report income; or
 - 4. Terminate the participant from the program for failure to report income and collect the back over paid assistance paid by the agency.

9.6 COOPERATING WITH WELFARE AGENCIES

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will make its best efforts to enter into cooperation agreements with local welfare agencies under which the welfare agencies will agree:

- A. To target assistance, benefits and services to families receiving assistance in the public housing and Section 8 tenant-based assistance program to achieve self-sufficiency.
- B. To provide written verification to the Rensselaer Housing Authority concerning welfare benefits for families applying for or receiving assistance in our housing assistance programs.

9.7 COOPERATING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will comply, on a case-by-case basis, with information requests from Federal, State or local law enforcement officers regarding possible fugitive felons and/or a parole or probation violators. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will supply upon legitimate request (1) the current address, (2) Social Security number and (3) photograph (if available) of any recipient of assistance.

The Federal, State or local enforcement officer must submit a request that is (1) written, (2) on law enforcement agency letterhead, and (3) is signed by the requesting officer and his or her immediate supervisor. The request for information must provide the name of the fugitive felon and/or parole or probation violator being sought, and may include other personal information used for identification. The request should also comply with the following requirements:

- A. The law enforcement agency shall notify Rensselaer Housing Authority that the fugitive felon and/or parole or probation violator (i) is fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody or confinement after conviction, under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, which is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, or which, in the case of the State of New Jersey, is a high misdemeanor; or (ii) is violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under Federal or State law; or (iii) has information that is necessary for the officer to conduct his/her official duties;
- B. The location or apprehension of the recipient is within the Rensselaer Housing Authority's official duties; and,
- C. The request is made in the proper exercise of the law enforcement agency's official duties.

10.0 VERIFICATION

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 non-citizen 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

The Housing Authority 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; and citizenship/eligible non-citizen status. Age and relationship will only be verified in those instances where needed to make a determination of level of assistance.

A. ACCEPTABLE VERIFICATION METHODS:

Age, relationship, U.S. citizenship, and Social Security numbers will generally be verified with documentation provided by the family. For citizenship, documentation such as listed below will be required. 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 the following five verification methods acceptable to HUD, in the order of preference indicated:

1. Up-front Income Verifications (UIV)

UIV is the verification of income through an independent source that systematically maintains income information in computerized form for a large number of individuals.

Current UIV resources include the following:

- a. Enterprise Income Verification (EIV)** – The EIV System is a web-based application, which provides PHAs with employment, wage, unemployment compensation and social security benefit information of tenants who participate in the Public Housing and various Section 8 programs under the jurisdiction of the Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH). Information in EIV is derived from computer matching programs initiated by HUD with the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), for all program participants with valid personal identifying information (name, date of birth (DOB), and social security number (SSN)) reported on the form HUD-50058. Use of the EIV system in its entirety is mandatory for all annual and interim re-examinations. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will monitor the following EIV reports on a monthly basis – (1) Deceased Tenants Report, (2) Identity Verification Report, and (3) the Immigration Report. In addition, it will monitor on a quarterly basis the following EIV reports – (1) Income Discrepancy Report, (2) Multiple Subsidy Report, and (3) the New Hires Report. Whether or not an admission is homeless will be noted in the 50058.
- b. Tenant Assessment Subsystem (TASS)** – HUD’s online system for Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) information.
- c. State Wage Information Collection Agencies (SWICAs)**

- d. State systems for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program**
- e. Credit Bureau Information (CBA) credit reports**
- f. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Letter 1722**
- g. Private sector databases (e.g. The Work Number)**

The Housing Authority will use additional UIV resources as they become available. This will be done before, during and/or after regular and interim reexaminations of household income as appropriate.

It is important to note that UIV data will only be used to verify a participant's eligibility for participation in a rental assistance program and to determine the level of assistance the participant is entitled to receive and only by properly trained persons whose duties require access to this information. Any other use, unless approved by the HUD Headquarters UIV Security System Administrator, is specifically prohibited and will not occur.

No adverse action can be taken against a participant until the Rensselaer Housing Authority has independently verified the IV information and the participant has been granted an opportunity to contest any adverse findings through the established grievance procedure. The consequences of adverse findings may include the Rensselaer Housing Authority requiring the immediate payment of any over-subsidy, the entering into a repayment agreement, eviction, criminal prosecution, or any other appropriate remedy.

Furthermore, the information the Rensselaer Housing Authority derives from the UIV system will be protected to ensure that it is utilized solely for official purposes and not disclosed in any way that would violate the privacy of the affected individuals.

The EIV Income Report must remain in the tenant file for the duration of tenancy and no longer than three years from the end of participation (EOP) date. The Rensselaer Housing Authority is required to maintain at a minimum, the last three years of the form HUD-50058, and supporting documentation for all annual and interim reexaminations of family income. All records are to be maintained for a period of at least three years from the effective date of the action. Once the data has served its purpose, it shall be destroyed by either burning or shredding the data.

2. Third-Party Written Verifications

An original or authentic document generated by a third-party source dated either within the 60-day period preceding the reexamination or the Rensselaer Housing Authority request date. Such documentation may be in the possession of the participant (or applicant), and is commonly referred to as participant-provided documents. It is the HUD's position that such participant-provided documents are written third-party verification since these documents originated from a third-party source. The Rensselaer Housing Authority may, at its discretion, reject any participant-provided documents and follow up directly with the source to obtain necessary verification of information.

Examples of acceptable participant-provided documentation (generated by a third-party source) include, but are not limited to: pay stubs, payroll summary report, employer notice/letter of hire/termination, SSA benefit verification letter, bank statements, child support payment stubs, welfare benefit letters and/or printouts, and unemployment monetary benefit notices. Current acceptable participant-provided documents will be used for income and rent determinations.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will obtain four weeks' worth of current and consecutive pay stubs for determining annual income from wages. For new income sources or when four weeks' worth of pay stubs are not available, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will project income based on the information from a traditional written third-party verification form or the best available information. (Four weeks' worth is equal to four (4) pay stubs if paid weekly, two (2) paystubs if paid bi-weekly, and one (1) pay stub if paid monthly. In all cases, they must be current and consecutive).

Note: Documents older than 60 days (from the Rensselaer Housing Authority interview/determination or request date) is acceptable for confirming effective dates of income.

Third-party written verifications may also be used to supplement Up-front Income Verifications. They will be utilized when there is a discrepancy of \$200 a month or more and the participant disputes the UIV results.

Note: Social Security benefit information in EIV is updated every three months. If the tenant agrees with the EIV-reported benefit information, PHAs do not need to obtain or request a benefit verification letter from the tenant.

3. Written Third-Party Verification Form

Also known as traditional third-party verification. A standardized form to collect information from a third-party source is distributed by the

Rensselaer Housing Authority. The form is completed by the third-party by hand (in writing or typeset) when sent the form by the Rensselaer Housing Authority.

HUD recognizes that third-party verification request forms sent to third-party sources often are not returned. In other instances, the person who completes the verification form may provide incomplete information; or some participants may collude with the third-party source to provide false information; or the participant intercepts the form and provides false information.

HUD requires the Rensselaer Housing Authority to rely on documents that originate from a third-party source's computerized system and/or database, as this process reduces the likelihood of incorrect or falsified information being provided on the third-party verification request form. The use of acceptable participant-provided documents, which originate from a third-party source, will improve the integrity of information used to determine a family's income and rent and ultimately reduce improper subsidy payments. This verification process will also streamline the income verification process.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will allow fourteen (14) calendar days for the return of third-party written verifications prior to continuing on to the next type of verification.

4. Third-Party Oral Verifications

This type of verification includes direct contact with the source, in person or by telephone. When this method is used, staff members will be required to document in writing with whom they spoke, the date of the conversation, the telephone number, and the facts obtained.

The Housing Authority will allow five (5) business days for the return of third party oral verifications prior to continuing on to the next type of verification.

5. Review of Documents

When UIV, written and oral third-party verifications are not available within the fourteen (14) calendar day period allowed in paragraph 3 and five (5) business days period allowed in paragraph 4 above, the Housing Authority will use the information received by the family, provided that the documents provide complete information. Photocopies of the documents, excluding government checks, provided by the family will be maintained in the file. In cases in which documents are viewed and cannot

be photocopied, staff reviewing the documents will complete a written statement as to the contents of the document(s).

6. Self-Certification and Self-Declaration

When UIV, written and oral third-party verifications are not available within the fourteen (14) calendar day period allowed in paragraph 3 and five (5) business days period allowed in paragraph 4 above, and hand-carried verification cannot be obtained, the Housing Authority will accept a statement detailing information needed, signed by the head, spouse, co-head, or other adult family member.

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 any verification method other than Up-Front Income Verification is utilized, the Housing Authority will document the reason for the choice of the verification methodology in the applicant/resident’s file.

The following chart comes from PIH Notice 2010-19.

Level	Verification Technique	Ranking
6	Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using HUD’s Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system (not available for income verifications of applicants)	Highest (Mandatory)
5	Up-front Income Verification (UIV) using non-HUD system	Highest (Optional)
4	Written Third-Party	High (Mandatory to supplement)

	Verification	EIV-reported income sources and when EIV has no data; Mandatory for non-EIV reported income sources; Mandatory when participant disputes EIV-reported employment and income information and is unable to provide acceptable documentation to support dispute)
3	Written Third-Party Verification Form	Medium-Low (Mandatory if written third-party verification documents are not available or rejected by the PHA; and when the applicant or participant is unable to provide acceptable documentation)
2	Oral Third-Party Verification	Low (Mandatory if written third-party verification is not available)
1	Tenant Declaration	Low (Use as a last resort when unable to obtain any type of third party verification)

B. DISCREPANCIES IN VERIFIED INCOME

HUD has established the criteria for what constitutes a *substantial difference* in cases where UIV income data differs from third-party written, third-party oral,

and/or family-provided income information. HUD defines a *substantial difference* as one that is \$ 200 or more per month.

Where there is a **substantial difference** between the UIV and any other sources, the Housing Authority will independently verify the UIV information through other sources and the family will be granted an opportunity to contest any adverse findings. The Housing Authority shall follow the guidelines below:

1. The Housing Authority shall request written **thirty-party verification** from the income source(s).
2. The Housing Authority will review **historical income** data for patterns of employment, paid benefits, and/or receipts of other income when the Authority cannot readily anticipate income, such as in cases of seasonal employment, unstable working hours, and suspected fraud.
3. The Housing Authority must **analyze all data** (UIV, third-party verified data, and other documents including information provided by the family) and attempt to resolve the income discrepancy.
4. The Housing Authority will use the most **current verified income data** (and historical income data if appropriate) to calculate anticipated annual income.

If the foregoing procedure reveals and verifies a source of income and/or amount of income of \$200 or more per month that was not disclosed by the resident family, and the family has been given the opportunity to contest the findings, then the Housing Authority shall do one of the following:

1. Immediately calculate and collect the back rent due to the agency;
2. Establish a repayment plan for the resident to pay the sum due to the agency (see Section 19 for information on Repayment Agreements);
3. Terminate the lease and evict for failure to report income
4. Terminate the lease, evict for failure to report income, and collect the back rent due to the agency; and/or
5. Utilize other actions including criminal prosecution, reporting to the Credit Bureau, and/or any other appropriate remedy.

C. UPFRONT INCOME VERIFICATIONS PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS:

It is important to note that UIV data will only be used to verify a resident's eligibility for participation in a rental assistance program and to determine the

level of assistance the resident is entitled to receive and only by properly trained persons whose duties require access to this information. Any other use, unless approved by the HUD Headquarters UIV Security System Administrator, is specifically prohibited and will not occur.

No adverse action can be taken against a resident until the Housing Authority has independently verified the UIV information and the resident has been granted an opportunity to contest any adverse findings through the established grievance procedure. The consequences of adverse findings may include the Housing Authority requiring the immediate payment of any over-subsidy, the entering into a repayment agreement, eviction, criminal prosecution, or any other appropriate remedy.

Furthermore, the information the Housing Authority derives from the UIV system will be protected to ensure that it is utilized solely for official purposes and not disclosed in any way that would violate the privacy of the affected individuals.

Once the data has served its purpose, it shall be destroyed by either burning or shredding the data.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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	Not Allowed	Original Social Security Card, an appropriate government letter showing the number or other HUD-allowed method
Citizenship	N/A	Signed certification, voter's registration card, birth certificate, etc.
Eligible immigration status	INS SAVE confirmation #	INS card
Disability	Letter from medical professional, SSI, etc	Proof of SSI or Social Security disability payments
Full time student status (if	Letter from school	For high school and/or college

Verification Requirements for Individual Items		
Item to Be Verified	3rd party verification	Hand-carried verification
>18)		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
Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage		A card issued by the private prescription drug plan with the words Medicare Rx on it.
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 held as an investment	Assessment, bluebook, etc	Receipt for purchase, other evidence of worth
Cash value of whole life insurance policies	Letter from insurance company	Current statement

Verification Requirements for Individual Items		
Item to Be Verified	3rd party verification	Hand-carried verification
Assets disposed of for less than fair market value	N/A	Original receipt and receipt at disposition, other evidence of worth
Income		
Earned income	Letter from employer	Multiple pay stubs
Self-employed	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
Social Security		Letter from Social Security as verified by HUD computer systems
Periodic payments (i.e., 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 non-citizen 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 eligible noncitizens must sign a declaration of their status and a verification consent form and provide their original INS documentation. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will make a copy of the individual's INS documentation and place the copy in the file. The Rensselaer Housing Authority also will verify their status through the INS SAVE system. If the INS SAVE system cannot confirm eligibility, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 noncitizens, 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.

Noncitizen students on student visas, though in the country legally, are not eligible to be admitted to the Section 8 Program. If they are members of families that include citizens, the rent must be pro-rated.

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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 individuals state that they do not have a Social Security Number they will be required to sign a statement to this effect. An adult must sign for minor children. The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 participating 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 calendar days to provide the verification. If the individual is at least 62 years of age, they will be given 120 calendar 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 sixty (60) calendar 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 Authority will verify and update only those elements reported to have changed.

10.6 FREQUENCY OF OBTAINING VERIFICATION

Household income and composition will be verified at least annually.

For each family member, citizenship/eligible noncitizen status will be verified only once unless the family member is an eligible immigrant in a transitional stage of admission. In this situation, their status must be updated until they are admitted for permanent residency. 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, 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.

10.7 SPECIAL VERIFICATION FOR ADULT STUDENTS

In addition to other verification procedures, student head of households must provide a written signed certification that the student does or does not receive any financial support from his or her parents or guardians and whether or not the student is receiving an athletic scholarship. If support is received, the certification must state the amount of the anticipated support. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall verify using normal third party verification procedures that amount by communicating directly with the supporting person(s). If an athletic scholarship is involved, the Rensselaer Housing Authority shall determine if any of the scholarship is available for housing costs.

10.8 DISCREPANCIES IN VERIFIED INFORMATION

An EIV Income Report shall be pulled from the system before annual or interim reexamination are conducted for any family and compared with family-reported information. If the EIV report reveals an income source that was not reported by the participant or a substantial difference (defined as \$2400 or more annually) in the reported income information, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will:

- A. Discuss the income discrepancy with the participant; and
- B. Request the participant to provide any documentation to confirm or dispute the unreported or underreported income and/ or income sources; and
- C. In the event the participant is unable to provide acceptable documentation to resolve the income discrepancy, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will request from the third party source, any information necessary to resolve the income discrepancy; and
- D. If applicable, determine the participant's underpayment of rent as a result of unreported or underreported income, retroactively*; and
- E. Take any other appropriate action.

*The Rensselaer Housing Authority will determine the retroactive rent as far back as the existence of complete file documentation (form HUD-50058 and supporting documentation) to support such retroactive rent determinations.

The participant will be provided an opportunity to contest the Rensselaer Housing Authority's determination of overpayment of the HAP. Participants will be promptly notified in writing of any adverse findings made on the basis of the information verified

through the aforementioned income discrepancy resolution process. The participant may contest the findings in accordance with established grievance procedures. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not terminate, deny, suspend, or reduce the family's assistance until the expiration of any notice or grievance period.

When there is an unsubstantial or no disparity between participant-reported and EIV-reported income information, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will obtain from the participant, any necessary documentation to complete the income determination process. As noted previously, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may reject any participant-provided documentation, if the Authority deems the documentation unacceptable. Documentation provided by the participant will only be rejected for only the following reasons:

- A. The document is not an original; or
- B. The original document has been altered, mutilated, or is not legible; or
- C. The document appears to be a forged document (i.e. does not appear to be authentic).

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will explain to the participant, the reason(s) the submitted documents are not acceptable and request the participant to provide additional documentation. If at any time, the participant is unable to provide acceptable documentation that the Rensselaer Housing Authority deems necessary to complete the income determination process, the Authority will submit a traditional third-party verification form to the third-party source for completion and submission to the Rensselaer Housing Authority.

If the third-party source does not respond to the Rensselaer Housing Authority's request for information, the Authority is required to document the participant file of its attempt to obtain third-party verification and that no response to the third party verification request was received.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will then pursue lower level verifications in accordance with the verification hierarchy.

11.0 RENT AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

11.1 GENERAL

[Reserved]

11.2 RENT REASONABLENESS

The Housing Authority 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 calendar days before the contract anniversary date there is a **10%** decrease in the published FMR as compared to the previous FMR; and
- C. If the Housing Authority or HUD directs that reasonableness be re-determined.

11.3 COMPARABILITY

In making a rent reasonableness determination, the Housing Authority will compare the real rent for the unit to the rent of comparable units in the same or comparable neighborhoods that are not assisted under any federal, state or local program. The Housing Authority will consider the location, type, quality, size, number of bedrooms, age, amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities of the unit and the comparable units. The results of this determination shall be documented in the participant's file.

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 Authority 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 MAXIMUM SUBSIDY

The payment standard adopted by the Rensselaer Housing Authority or one over 110% of the Fair Market Rent that has been approved by HUD determines the maximum subsidy for a family.

For the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the minimum payment standard will be 90% of the FMR and 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 non-insured 236 project, a 515 project of the Rural Development Administration, a Section 202 or 811 project, or a Section 221(d)(3) below market interest rate project, the maximum subsidy may not exceed the basic rent charged including the cost of tenant-paid utilities. Furthermore, if any of the units also receive the benefit of a State, local, or federal housing subsidy (e.g., Section 8 project-based housing assistance payments contract), they are ineligible units under the HCV program.

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.

11.4.1 Setting the Payment Standard

The Statute requires that the payment standard be set by the Housing Authority at between 90 and 110% of the FMR without HUD's prior approval. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will review its determination of the payment standard annually after publication of the FMRs. All revisions shall occur within three months of HUD's publication of any change in the FMR if the payment standard is no longer within the acceptable range. The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 housing choice 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 located only in poverty-impacted neighborhoods, or pay over 40% of income for rent, the payment standard may be raised to the level judged necessary to alleviate these hardships. The objective is to allow families a reasonable selection of modest, decent, and safe housing in a range of neighborhoods.

The payment standard will be established on a jurisdiction-wide basis.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority may voluntarily switch to SAFMRs after we have considered the following factors:

- A. Whether adoption of SAFMRs is likely to have an adverse effect on the availability of rental housing that is both affordable and available to program participants and applicants;
- B. The effect on families of SAFMR adoption and consider whether to adopt the *hold harmless* or *gradual reduction in subsidy* options available;
- C. Identify any areas where the difference between the jurisdiction-wide FMR and the (lower) SAFMR is exactly 10 percent and opt-in will therefore trigger the need for rent reasonableness determinations;
- D. Whether to apply SAFMRs to its PBV program, if applicable, in which case PBV-assisted projects may also be subject to a rent reasonableness determination.

After our analysis, if RHA decides to convert to SAFMRs. RHA will have notify HUD at SAFMRS@hud.gov to request their concurrence in the change. The change will occur for vouchers issued after 60 days of receiving HUD concurrence.

Even if the Rensselaer Housing Authority is using a jurisdiction-wide payment standard, it can establish a zip code specific exception payment standard within the 90 to 110% band if circumstances warrant it merely by notifying HUD at SAFMRS@hud.gov. If

done, the exception payment standard will apply to all property within the affected zip code.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority may establish a higher payment standard of up to 120% of the FMR without HUD approval if requested as a reasonable accommodation by a family that includes a person with a disability. The higher payment standard will only be implemented after documenting in the participant's file that:

- A. A rent reasonableness analysis was conducted in accordance with the HCV program regulations.
- B. The family requested lease approval for the unit and requested an exception payment standard as a reasonable accommodation in writing accompanied by a letter from a medical professional explaining what is needed in the family's residence; and
- C. The unit has features that meet the needs of a family member with disabilities. For example, a unit may be suitable because of its physical features or for other reasons, such as having the requisite number of bedrooms, location on an accessible transit route, or proximity to accessible employment, education, services, or recreation.

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 Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority may consider adjusting payment standards at times other than the annual review when circumstances warrant.

Before increasing any payment standard, the Housing Authority 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.

If the Rensselaer Housing Authority reduces its payment standard after HUD adjusts/reduces its FMRs the Rensselaer Housing Authority will not reduce the assistance to our current participants as long as they continue to live in the unit they were occupying at the time of the reduction. Also, the payment standard for new participants or movers shall not be reduced by more than **10%** from one year to the next.

11.4.2 Selecting the Correct Payment Standard for a Family

- A. For the housing choice 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 Authority 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 on the effective date of the HAP contract. Families who have been issued a voucher where the search time may extend past the effective date of a new payment standard shall be informed of both the old and new payment standards once the amount of the new payment standard has been determined.
- 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.

11.4.3 Area Exception Rents

In order to help families find housing outside areas of high poverty or when housing choice voucher holders are having trouble finding housing for lease under the program, the Housing Authority may establish an exception payment standard up to and including 110% of a HUD-approved zip code FMR on its own simply by notifying HUD at SAFMRs@hud.gov. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority exercises this option it shall apply to both the tenant-based and Project-Based programs.

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

11.5 ASSISTANCE AND RENT FORMULAS

A. Total Tenant Payment

The total tenant payment is equal to the highest of:

1. 10% of the family's monthly income
2. 30% of the family's adjusted monthly income
3. The Minimum rent
4. If the family is receiving payments for welfare assistance from a public agency and a part of those 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 those 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 this provision is the amount resulting from one application of the percentage.

Plus any rent above the payment standard.

B. Minimum Rent.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority has set the minimum rent as \$ **50**. However, if the family requests a hardship exemption, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will suspend the minimum rent for the family beginning the month following the family's hardship request. The suspension will continue until the Housing Authority can determine whether 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.

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 including a family that includes a member who is a noncitizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act who would be entitled to public benefits but for title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996;
 - b. When the family would be evicted because it is unable to pay the minimum rent;
 - c. When the income of the family has decreased because of changed circumstances, including loss of employment; and
 - d. When a death has occurred in the family.

2. No hardship. If the Housing Authority determines there is no qualifying hardship, the minimum rent will be reinstated, including requiring back payment of minimum rent to the Housing Authority for the time of suspension.
3. Temporary hardship. If the Housing Authority 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 calendar days from the month following 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 Authority will offer a reasonable repayment agreement for any minimum rent back payment paid by the Housing Authority on the family's behalf during the period of suspension.
4. Long-term hardship. If the Housing Authority 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 Authority's determination regarding the hardship. No escrow deposit will be required in order to access the informal hearing procedures.

C. 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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.

D. Manufactured Home Space Rental: Section 8 Vouchers

- 1. The payment standard for a participant renting a manufactured home space is the published FMR.
- 2. The space rent is the sum of the following as determined by the Housing Authority:
 - a. Rent to the owner for the manufactured home space;
 - b. Owner maintenance and management charges for the space;
 - c. Payments made to amortize the cost of purchasing the manufactured home, including taxes and insurance (any increase due to refinancing after purchase is not included); and
 - d. Utility allowance for participant 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.

E. 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.

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 resident rent equals the prorated family share minus the full utility allowance.

11.6 UTILITY ALLOWANCE

The Housing Authority maintains a utility allowance schedule for all tenant-paid utilities (except telephone and cable television), 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 Authority uses normal patterns of consumption for the community as a whole and current utility rates.

The Housing Authority 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 Authority 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 the Rensselaer Housing Authority.

The Housing Authority uses the lower of the appropriate utility allowance for the voucher size or the utility allowance amount for the unit size of the unit actually leased by the family.

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

The Housing Authority 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 participant. Any savings resulting from utility costs below the amount of the allowance belong to the participant. The Rensselaer Housing Authority reserves the right to pay the utility allowance directly to the utility companies. The family will be notified of the amount paid to the utility supplier.

11.7 DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

The Housing Authority pays the owner the lesser of the housing assistance payment or the rent to owner. If payments are not made within **30** business days of when due after the first two months of the HAP contract term, the owner may charge the Rensselaer Housing Authority a late payment, agreed to in the Contract and in accordance with generally accepted practices in the Rensselaer jurisdiction if the following conditions apply:

- A. It is the owner's practice to charge such penalties for assisted and unassisted residents; and
- B. The owner also charges such penalties against the resident for late payment of family rent to the owner.

Late charges will not be paid when the reason for the lateness is attributable to factors beyond the control of the Rensselaer Housing Authority.

A housing assistance payment is considered made upon being mailed by the Rensselaer Housing Authority.

Any original Section 8 Voucher payment checks not cashed by the owner or landlord prior to their expiration date must be returned to the Section 8 Administrator prior to the reissuance of a new Voucher payment check. The owner/landlord will be responsible for a Twenty-Five Dollar (\$25,00) reissuance fee as well as any charges incurred from the bank for stop payment charges per check.

If an owner receives HAP for any month in which the owner is ineligible to receive HAP because of a deceased tenant, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will immediately notify the owner in writing of the ineligible HAP and require the owner to repay the overpayment within 30 days. If the owner does not comply, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may deduct the amount due to the Authority from any amounts due to the owner under any other HAP contract. If there is no other HAP contract with the owner, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may seek and obtain additional relief by judicial order or action in accordance with state and local laws.

In instances where a deceased single member household has been deceased for a period greater than 6 months and the owner received HAP, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may determine that the owner has breached the HAP contract. As such, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may exercise any of its rights and remedies under the HAP contract, or any other available rights and remedies for such breach. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will notify the owner of such determination, including a brief statement of the reasons for the determination. The notice by the Authority to the owner may require the owner to take corrective action, as verified or determined by the Rensselaer Housing Authority, by a deadline prescribed in the notice.

Unless otherwise terminated, the housing assistance payment contract shall end 180 calendar days after the last housing assistance payment is made.

11.8 CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

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

In addition, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority may withhold the rent payment until the taxpayer identification number is received.

11.9 EARNED INCOME DISREGARD (EID)

For persons with disabilities already participating in the in the Section 8 program, Earned Income Disregard (EID) excludes income earned by family members who meet one of the following criteria:

1. Families whose income increases as a result of employment of a disabled family member who was previously unemployed (defined as working less than 10 hours a week at the established minimum wage) for one or more years.
2. Families whose income increases during the participation of a disabled family member in any economic self-sufficiency or other job training program.
3. Persons with disabilities who are or were, within 6 months, assisted under a State TANF or Welfare-to-Work program for at least \$500.

CURRENT EID PARTICIPANTS

For family members that currently benefit from the EID, and/or who become eligible prior to **4/1/2017**:

Initial Twelve Month Exclusion

- Qualified families will receive during the first cumulative 12 month period beginning with date of employment, an exclusion of 100% of any increase of annual income as a result of employment. EID will begin on the first day of the month following the effective date of employment.

Second Twelve Month Phase-In Exclusion

- Qualified families will receive during the second cumulative 12 month period of time after the expiration of the initial cumulative twelve month period as stated above, an exclusion of 50% of any increase of annual income as a result of employment.

Maximum Four Year Disallowance

- The Earned Income Disregard is limited to a lifetime 48 month period for each family member. Each qualified family member may receive a full 12 month

income exclusion and a full 12 month phase-in come exclusion beginning from the date of the initial exclusion.

- The EID benefit is limited to a lifetime 48-month period for the qualifying family member;
- The lifetime Disregard will end 48 months after it began, regardless of how many months were “used”.

EID PARTICIPANTS QUALIFYING ON OR AFTER 4/1/2017:

For family members qualifying on or after **4/1/2017**, the two (12) month periods of income exclusion are not cumulative over the total 24 month period. EID for these family members is as follows:

- Once a family member is determined to be eligible for the EID, the 24 month period starts;
- If the family member discontinues the employment that initially qualified the family for the EID, the 24 month period continues;
- During the 24 month period, EID benefits are recalculated based on changes to family member income and employment (no change from current practice);
- During the first 12 month period, a PHA must exclude all increased income resulting from the qualifying employment of the family member. After the first 12 month period, the Housing Authority will exclude from annual income of the family 50 percent of any increase in income of such family member as a result of employment over the family member’s income before the qualifying event (i.e., the family member’s baseline income);
- The EID benefit is limited to a lifetime 24-month period for the qualifying family member;
- The lifetime Disregard will end 24 months after it began, regardless of how many months were “used”.

12.0 INSPECTION POLICIES AND HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 biennially, and at other times as needed, to determine if the units meet HQS.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 cannot be at home for the scheduled inspection appointment, the family must call and reschedule the inspection or

make arrangements to enable the Housing Authority to enter the unit and complete the inspection.

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

12.1 TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

There are seven types of inspections the Rensselaer Housing Authority will perform:

- A. Initial Inspection - An inspection that must take place to ensure that the unit passes HQS before assistance can begin.
- B. Regular Inspection - An inspection to determine that the unit continues to meet HQS. Regular inspections shall be made at least biennially
- C. Complaint Inspection - An inspection caused by the Authority 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 based on at least the minimum number required by the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP).

12.2 OWNER AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Owner Responsibility for HQS
 - 1. The owner must maintain the unit in accordance with HQS.
 - 2. If the owner fails to maintain the dwelling unit in accordance with HQS, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will take prompt and vigorous action to enforce the owner obligations. The Rensselaer Housing Authority'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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority and the Rensselaer Housing Authority verifies the correction. If a defect is life threatening, the owner must correct the defect within no more than 24 hours. If the failure is of the lead-based paint standard on a regular or interim inspection, the 24 hour standard becomes a reasonable period of time as determined by the Rensselaer Housing Authority. For other defects the owner must correct the defect within no more than 30 calendar days (or any Rensselaer Housing Authority approved extension). If the required repair is not made in a timely manner, the rent shall be abated beginning with the next rent check. If **two** consecutive checks are abated, the assistance shall be cancelled.
4. The owner is not responsible for a breach of the HQS that is not caused by the owner, and for which the family is responsible. Furthermore, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may terminate assistance to a family because of the HQS breach caused by the family.

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 resident;
 - 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 participant; 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority approved extension).
3. If the family has caused a breach of the HQS, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will take prompt and vigorous action to enforce the family obligations. The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Requirement

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 resident 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 Requirement

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. Performance Requirement

The Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act, the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, and implementing regulations at part 35, subparts A, B, M, and R of this title apply to units assisted under this part.

2. Acceptability Criteria

The requirements apply to dwelling units built prior to 1978 that are occupied or can be occupied or expected to be occupied by families with children under six years of age, excluding zero bedroom dwellings.

During initial and regular inspections of pre-1978 units that are occupied or will be occupied or expected to be occupied by families with children under 6 years of age, the inspector must conduct a visual assessment for deteriorated paint surfaces and the owner must stabilize deteriorated surfaces. Applicable areas include painted surfaces within the dwelling unit, exterior painted surfaces associated with the dwelling unit, and common areas of the building through which residents must pass to gain access to the unit and areas frequented by resident children under six years of age, including play areas and child care facilities.

For units occupied by environmental intervention blood lead level (lead poisoned) children under six years of age, a risk assessment must be conducted (paid for by the PHA), and the owner must complete hazard reduction activities if lead hazards are identified during the risk assessment.

- J. Access

1. Performance Requirement

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 Requirement

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 Requirement

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).
- c. All bedroom/sleeping areas must have a smoke detector. Units must be in compliance with Section 704.2 of the New York State property maintenance code.

12.4 LEAD-BASED PAINT REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES – SEE 24 CFR PART 35

12.5 EXCEPTIONS TO THE HQS ACCEPTABILITY CRITERIA

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

- A. In each room, there will be at least one exterior window that can be opened and that contains a screen.
- B. Adequate heat shall be considered to be 68 degrees.
- C. In units where the resident must pay for utilities, each unit must have separate metering device(s) for measuring utility consumption.
- D. A 3/4" overflow pipe must be present on the hot water heater safety valves and installed down to within 6 inches of the floor.

12.6 TIME FRAMES AND CORRECTIONS OF HQS FAIL ITEMS

- A. Correcting Initial HQS Fail Items

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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, the owner and the participant will

be advised to notify the Rensselaer Housing Authority to reschedule a re-inspection when the repairs have been properly completed.

On an initial inspection, the owner will be given up to 30 calendar 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 in Section 12.7), 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 calendar days to correct the failed item(s).

If the owner fails to correct the HQS failed items after proper notification has been given, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will abate payment and terminate the contract in accordance with Sections 12.8 and 17.0.

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

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 calendar days of the initial inspection.
4. For major repairs, the owner will have up to 30 calendar days to complete.

D. Extensions

At the sole discretion of the Rensselaer Housing Authority, extensions of up to 30 calendar 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 calendar days after the initial inspection date, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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, propane, or LP 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 as of the first day of the next month.

If the corrections of deficiencies are not made the abatement will continue until the HAP contract is terminated. When the deficiencies are corrected, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will end the abatement the day the unit passes inspection. Rent will resume the day the unit passes inspection and be paid the first day of the next month.

For participant caused HQS deficiencies, the owner will not be held accountable and the rent will not be abated. The participant is held to the same standard and timeframes for correction of deficiencies as owners. If repairs are not completed by the deadline, the

Rensselaer Housing Authority will send a notice of termination to both the participant and the owner. The participant will be given the opportunity to request an informal hearing.

HAP contracts will be terminated after giving the owner thirty (30) calendar days' notice from the first day of a month. It will be sent with the Notice of Abatement. Termination will end any abatement action.

12.9 ALTERNATIVE INSPECTIONS METHODS

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not conduct regular inspections for units otherwise inspected under the HOME program, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program, or HUD for a two-year period from the last such inspection. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will otherwise conduct all the other types of inspections called for in Section 12.1.

13.0 RESERVED

14.0 RECERTIFICATION

14.0.1 CHANGES IN LEASE OR RENT

If the participant and owner agree to any changes in the lease, all changes must be in writing, and the owner must immediately give the Rensselaer Housing Authority a copy of the changes. The lease, including any changes, must be in accordance with this Administrative Plan.

Owners must notify the Rensselaer Housing Authority of any changes in the amount of the rent at least sixty (60) calendar days before the changes go into effect. Any such changes are subject to the Rensselaer Housing Authority determining them to be reasonable.

Assistance shall not be continued unless the Rensselaer Housing Authority has approved a new tenancy in accordance with program requirements and has executed a new HAP contract with the owner if any of the following changes are made:

- A. Requirements governing participant or owner responsibilities for utilities or appliances;
- B. In the lease terms reducing the length of the lease;
- C. If the participant moves to a new unit, even if the unit is in the same building or complex.

The approval of the Rensselaer Housing Authority is not required for changes other than those specified in A, B, or C above.

However, owners wishing to change ownership must receive the written permission of the Housing Authority prior to assigning a HAP contract. The owner shall inform the Rensselaer Housing Authority of the impending change and give the Authority **60** calendar days to review the prospective owner to make sure they are appropriate. The new owner shall meet the same criteria as the existing owner. Approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.

14.1 ANNUAL REEXAMINATION

At least annually (within 365 calendar days of the anniversary date of the HAP contract) the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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, deductions (eligible 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will determine the family's annual income and will calculate their family share.

Also, during the recertification, each household shall be asked whether any member is subject to the lifetime registration requirement under a state registration program. The Housing Authority will verify this information using the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Database and document this information in the same method used at admission. For any admissions after June 25, 2001 (the effective date of the Screening and Eviction for Drug Abuse and Other Criminal Activity final rule), if the recertification screening reveals that the tenant or a member of the tenant's household is subject to a lifetime sex offender registration requirement, or that the tenant has falsified information or otherwise failed to disclose his or her criminal history on their application and/or recertification forms, the Housing Authority will pursue eviction of the household.

If a family is about to be evicted from housing based on either the criminal check or the sex offender registration program, the applicant will be informed of this fact and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the information before the eviction occurs.

14.1.1 Effective Date of Rent Changes for Annual Reexaminations

The new family share will generally be effective upon the anniversary date with 30 calendar 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.

14.1.2 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority taking action to terminate the family's assistance. If there is no response to the second letter, a termination notice will be issued to both the family and the owner. The termination notice will inform the family of its right to request an informal hearing.

14.2 INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS

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

Families will be required to report any increase in income or decreases in allowable expenses between annual reexaminations.

Families are required to report the following changes to the Rensselaer Housing Authority within **10** business days 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

In circumstances of a family break-up, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will make a determination of which family member will retain the housing choice voucher, taking into consideration the following factors:

1. To whom the housing choice 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. If the family break-up results from an occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will ensure that the victim retains assistance. The factors to be considered in making this decision include:
 - a. Whether the assistance should remain with family members remaining in the original assisted unit.
 - b. The interest of minor children or of ill, elderly, or disabled family members.
 - c. Whether family members are forced to leave the unit as a result of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
 - d. Whether any of the family members are receiving protection as victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and whether the abuser is still in 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will make determinations on a case by case basis.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 16.2.

In order to add a household member other than through birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody (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, 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will take timely action to process the interim reexamination and recalculate the family share.

14.2.1 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority may schedule special reexaminations every **60** calendar days until the income stabilizes and an annual income can be determined.

14.2.2 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 a delay, then 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.

14.3 HOUSING AUTHORITY MISTAKES IN CALCULATING RENT

If the Rensselaer Housing Authority makes a mistake in calculating a resident's rent contribution and overcharges the resident, the resident shall receive a refund for the

amount of the mistake going back a maximum of twelve months. The refund shall be given to the resident as soon as practical or credited to the resident's account, whichever the resident desires unless the resident owes the Housing Authority money in which case the debt shall be offset to the degree possible before the resident chooses between the two refund methods.

15.0 TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE TO THE FAMILY BY THE RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Rensselaer Housing Authority may at any time terminate program assistance for a participant because of any of the following actions or inactions by the household:

- A. If the family violates any family obligations under the program;
- B. If the family was evicted from housing assisted under the Section 8 program for serious violations of the lease;
- C. If a family member fails to sign and submit consent forms;
- D. 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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;
- E. Have a household member who is currently engaging in illegal use of a drug;
- F. Have a household member whose pattern of illegal drug use interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. The members of the household may not engage in drug-related criminal activity, other violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises. The use of medical marijuana is included in this ban.;
- G. Have a household member who has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing;
- H. Have a household member who is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program;

- I. If any member of the family commits drug-related or violent criminal activity in violation of Section 2.3 of this Administrative Plan and 24 CFR 982.551;
- J. Have a household member whose abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents;
- K. Have a household member who is a fugitive felon, parole violator or person fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees;
- L. Have a family member who violates any family obligations under the program;
- M. Have a family member who has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years;
- N. Have a family member that Rensselaer Housing Authority has ever terminated assistance for under the program;
- O. Have a family member that has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any Federal housing program;
- P. Currently owes rent or other amounts to the Rensselaer Housing Authority or to another Housing Authority in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act;
- Q. Have not reimbursed any Housing Authority 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;
- R. Have breached an agreement with Rensselaer Housing Authority to pay amounts owed to a Housing Authority, or amounts paid to an owner by a Housing Authority;
- S. If a family participating in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program fails to comply, without good cause, with the family's FSS Contract of Participation;
- T. Have engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior towards any Rensselaer Housing Authority staff member or resident;
- U. If a welfare-to-work (WTW) family fails, willfully and persistently, to fulfill its obligations under the welfare-to-work voucher program.

For purposes of this section, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may terminate assistance for criminal activity by a household member as authorized in this section if the

Rensselaer Housing Authority determines, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that the household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted of such activity.

An arrest record, alone, will not serve as sufficient evidence of criminal activity that can support a termination decision. Before the Rensselaer Housing Authority terminates the assistance of an individual or household on the basis of criminal activity by a household member or guest, it will determine that the relevant individual actually engaged in such activity.

An arrest record can trigger an inquiry into whether there is sufficient evidence to determine that a person engaged in disqualifying criminal activity, but is not itself evidence on which to base a determination. The Rensselaer Housing Authority can utilize other evidence, such as police reports detailing the circumstances of the arrest, witness statements, and other relevant documentation to assist them in making a determination that disqualifying conduct occurred. Reliable evidence of a conviction for criminal conduct that would disqualify an individual for tenancy may also be the basis for determining that the disqualifying conduct in fact occurred.

If the Rensselaer Housing Authority proposes to terminate assistance for criminal activity as shown by a criminal record, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will notify the household of the proposed action to be based on the information and must provide the person with the criminal record (i.e., the family member) and the head of household with a copy of the criminal record and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of that record, in accordance with the procedures established for the Informal Hearing for Participants. The household will have fourteen (14) calendar days to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the record in writing.

Any family absent from the assisted unit for more than **30** consecutive calendar days (180 is the maximum) must be terminated from the program.

In circumstances of a family break-up, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will make a determination of which family member will retain the housing choice voucher, taking into consideration the following factors:

- A. To whom the housing choice voucher was issued.
- B. The interest of minor children or of ill, elderly, or disabled family members.
- C. Whether the assistance should remain with the family members remaining in the unit.
- D. 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will be bound by the court's determination of which family members continue to receive assistance in the program.

15.1 THE EIV'S DECEASED TENANTS REPORT

The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall generate the EIV's Deceased Tenants Report monthly shortly before disbursing HAP payments to owners to see if the system flags deceased residents. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall review the report and follow up with any listed families immediately and take any necessary corrective action as set forth in PIH Notice 2010-50 or successor publications.

If it is a single member household, notify the owner in writing of the deceased Head of Household and suspend HAP payments for any month following the month in which the death occurred. If the property is occupied by a live-in-aide to the deceased person, the assistance will end and the landlord and aide must decide on the future of the aide's tenancy.

If an owner received HAP for any month in which the owner was ineligible to receive HAP because of a deceased tenant, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will immediately notify the owner in writing of the ineligible HAP and require the owner to repay the overpayment within 30 days. If the owner does not comply, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will deduct the amount due to the Agency from any amounts due to the owner under any other HAP contract. If there is no other HAP contract with the owner, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may seek and obtain additional relief by judicial order or action in accordance with state and local laws.

16.0 COMPLAINTS, INFORMAL REVIEWS FOR APPLICANTS, INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS

16.1 COMPLAINTS

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

16.2 INFORMAL REVIEW FOR THE APPLICANT

A. Informal Review for the Applicant

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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

Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority subsidy standards.
2. A Rensselaer Housing Authority determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a housing choice voucher term.
3. A Rensselaer Housing Authority determination not to grant approval to lease a unit under the program or to approve a proposed lease.
4. A Rensselaer Housing Authority determination that a unit selected by the applicant is not in compliance with HQS.
5. A Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority.

C. Informal Review Process

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will give an applicant an opportunity for an informal review of the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority decision.
3. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will notify the applicant of the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 deny assistance to an applicant because of action or inaction by members of the family, the Housing Authority 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 of assistance on other family members who were not involved in the action or failure.

The Housing Authority may impose, as a condition of 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 Authority may permit the other members of a participant family to receive assistance.

If the Housing Authority seeks to deny 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 Authority provides notice to the family of the Housing Authority determination to deny assistance. In determining whether to deny assistance for these reasons the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 calendar days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or within 30 calendar 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 calendar days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or of the INS appeal decision to request the review.

16.3 INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS

A. When a Hearing is Required

1. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will give a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing to consider whether the following Rensselaer Housing Authority decisions relating to the individual circumstances of a participant family are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations, and Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority utility allowance schedule.
 - c. A determination of the family unit size under the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority policy and HUD rules.
 - f. Denial of a hardship exemption to the minimum rent requirement.
2. In cases described in paragraphs 16.3(A)(1)(d), (e), and (f) of this Section, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will give the opportunity for an informal hearing before the Rensselaer Housing Authority terminates housing assistance payments for the family under an outstanding HAP contract.

B. When a Hearing is not Required

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not provide a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing for any of the following reasons:

1. Discretionary administrative determinations by the Rensselaer Housing Authority.
2. General policy issues or class grievances.
3. Establishment of the Rensselaer Housing Authority schedule of utility allowances for families in the program.
4. A Rensselaer Housing Authority determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a housing choice voucher term.
5. A Rensselaer Housing Authority determination not to approve a unit or lease.
6. A Rensselaer Housing Authority determination that an assisted unit is not in compliance with HQS. (However, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of the family size.
8. A determination by the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 16.3(A)(1)(a), (b), and (c) of this Section, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will notify the family that the family may ask for an explanation of the basis of the Rensselaer Housing Authority'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 16.3(A)(1)(d), (e), and (f) of this Section, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority and participants will adhere to the following procedures:

1. Discovery

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

4. Evidence

The Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority is not bound by a hearing decision:

- a. Concerning a matter for which the Rensselaer Housing Authority is not required to provide an opportunity for an informal hearing under this Section, or that otherwise exceeds the authority of the person conducting the hearing under the Rensselaer Housing Authority hearing procedures.
- b. Contrary to HUD regulations or requirements, or otherwise contrary to Federal, State, or local law.
- c. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority determines that it is not bound by a hearing decision, the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Authority 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 Authority 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 Authority may permit the other members of a participant family to continue receiving assistance.

If the Housing Authority 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 Authority provides notice to the family of

the Housing Authority determination to deny or terminate assistance. In determining whether to terminate assistance for these reasons the Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority 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 calendar days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or within 30 calendar 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 calendar days of receipt of the *Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance*, or of the INS appeal decision.

17.0 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 participant, 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority. 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority after the initial lease term. The length of the notice that is required is stated in the lease (generally 30 calendar days).

2. By the owner

The owner may terminate tenancy and evict by judicial action a family for criminal activity by a covered person in accordance with this section if the owner determines that the covered person has engaged in a criminal activity, regardless of whether the covered person has been arrested or convicted for such activity and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction. Arrests alone are not sufficient evidence of criminal activity.

An arrest record, alone, will not serve as sufficient evidence of criminal activity that can support an eviction decision. Before an owner denies admission to or evicts an individual or household on the basis of criminal activity by a household member or guest, it will determine that the relevant individual actually engaged in such activity.

An arrest record can trigger an inquiry into whether there is sufficient evidence to determine that a person engaged in disqualifying criminal activity, but is not itself evidence on which to base a determination. An owner can utilize other evidence, such as police reports detailing the circumstances of the arrest, witness statements, and other relevant documentation to assist them in making a determination that disqualifying conduct occurred. Reliable evidence of a conviction for criminal conduct that would disqualify an individual for tenancy may also be the basis for determining that the disqualifying conduct in fact occurred.

If the law and regulation permit the owner to take an action but do not require action to be taken, the owner may take or not take the action in accordance with the owner's standards for eviction. The owner may consider all of the circumstances relevant to a particular eviction case, such as:

- a. The seriousness of the offending action;
- b. The effect on the community of denial or termination or the failure of the owner to take such action;
- c. The extent of participation by the leaseholder in the offending action;
- d. The effect of denial of admission or termination of tenancy on household members not involved in the offending activity;
- e. The demand for assisted housing by families who will adhere to lease responsibilities;

- f. The extent to which the leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action;
- g. The effect of the owner's action on the integrity of the program.

The owner may require a family to exclude a household member in order to continue to reside in the assisted unit, where that household member has participated in or been culpable for action or failure to act that warrants termination.

In determining whether to terminate tenancy for illegal use of drugs or alcohol abuse by a household member who is no longer engaged in such behavior, the owner may consider whether such household member is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully. For this purpose, the owner may require the participant to submit evidence of the household member's current participation in, or successful completion of, a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or evidence of otherwise having been rehabilitated successfully.

The owner's termination of assistance actions must be consistent with the fair housing and equal opportunity provision of 24 CFR 5.105.

- 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 imposes obligations on the participant 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 (including property management staff) residing on the premises or in the immediate vicinity of the premises;
 - iv. Any drug-related or violent criminal activity engaged in on or near the premises by any resident, household member, or guest, or such activity engaged in on the premises by any

other person under the tenant's control, is grounds for the owner to terminate tenancy;

- v. When the owner determines that a household member is illegally using a drug or when the owner determines that a pattern of illegal use of a drug interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
- vi. If a participant is fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, or that, in the case of the State of New Jersey, is a high misdemeanor; or violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under Federal or State law.
- vii. If the tenant is violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under Federal or State law.
- viii. 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.

The owner may terminate tenancy and evict by judicial action a family for criminal activity by a covered person in accordance with this section if the owner determines that the covered person has engaged in the criminal activity, regardless of whether the covered person has been arrested or convicted for such activity and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction. However, an arrest alone is insufficient evidence to terminate a tenancy.

- 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 participant by instituting court action after or simultaneously providing written notice to the participant specifying the grounds for termination. The owner must give the Rensselaer Housing Authority a copy of any owner eviction notice to the participant at the same time that the owner gives the notice to the participant.
- 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. By mutual agreement

The family and the owner may at any time mutually agree to terminate the lease.

B. Termination of the Contract

1. Automatic termination of the contract

- a. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority terminates assistance to the family, the contract terminates automatically.
- b. If the family moves out of the unit, the contract terminates automatically.
- c. 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 the lease and State and local law.

3. Termination of the HAP contract by the Rensselaer Housing Authority

The Housing Authority may terminate the HAP contract because:

- a. The Housing Authority 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. When the family breaks up and the Rensselaer Housing Authority determines that the family members who move from the unit will continue to receive the assistance.
- d. The Rensselaer Housing Authority determines that there is insufficient funding in their contract with HUD to support continued assistance for families in the program.
- e. 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 Act.
 - 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-related criminal activity or any violent criminal activity.
- f. If a welfare-to-work family fails to fulfill its obligations under the welfare-to-work voucher program.

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 Authority will continue to make payments until the owner obtains a judgment or the family moves out.

17.1 VAWA PROTECTIONS

Under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), notwithstanding the title of the statute, protections are not limited to women but cover victims regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, Housing Choice Voucher participants have the following specific protections, which will be observed by the Rensselaer Housing Authority:

- A. An incident or incidents or actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking will not be construed as a serious or repeated violation of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of that violence, and shall not in itself be good cause for terminating the assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence by either the Rensselaer Housing Authority or the owner or property manager.
- B. An applicant for assistance or a tenant/participant receiving assistance under a covered housing provider may not be denied admission to, denied assistance under, terminated from participation in, or evicted from housing on the basis or as a direct result of the fact that the applicant or tenant/participant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, if the applicant or tenant otherwise qualifies for admission, assistance, participation, or occupancy.
- C. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall provide each applicant and participant a HUD prescribed Notice of Occupancy Rights and Certification form. It shall also be provided with any notice of eviction. In addition, the Authority shall make an adopted Emergency Transfer Plan and Emergency Transfer Request available upon request.
- D. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall keep a record of all emergency transfer requests requested under the Emergency Transfer Plan and the outcome of these requests for three years.
- E. The Housing Authority may terminate the assistance to remove a lawful occupant or tenant who engages in criminal acts or threatened acts of violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to family members or others without terminating the assistance or evicting victimized lawful occupants. Also, the owner or property manager may evict a lawful occupant or tenant who engages in criminal acts or threatened acts of violence or stalking to family members or affiliated individuals without evicting other victimized lawful occupants. This is also true even if the household member or affiliated individual is not a signatory to the lease. Under VAWA, both the Rensselaer Housing Authority and the owner or property manager are granted the authority to bifurcate the lease. The VAWA victim must be the one who retains the assistance.
- F. The Housing Authority and owner or property manager may honor court orders regarding the rights of access or control of the property.

- G. There is no limitation on the ability of the Housing Authority to terminate assistance for other good cause unrelated to the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, other than the victim may not be subject to a “more demanding standard” than non-victims. Likewise, an owner or property manager can evict for good cause unrelated to the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. This is provided that neither subjects such a tenant to a more demanding standard than other tenants in making the determination whether to evict, or to terminate assistance or occupancy rights.
- H. There is no prohibition on the owner evicting if it “can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing goods or services to the property if that tenant’s (victim’s) tenancy is not terminated.” An actual and imminent threat consists of a physical danger that is real, would occur within an immediate timeframe, and could result in death or serious bodily harm. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include: the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the length of time before the potential harm would occur.
- I. Any protections provided by law which give greater protection to the victim are not superseded by these provisions.

17.2 VERIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING

The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall require and the owner or property manager may require verification in all cases where an individual claims protection under VAWA against an action involving such individual proposed to be taken by the Housing Authority or owner/manager. The request for verification shall take the form of a written request by the Rensselaer Housing Authority to the claimant.

- A. **Requirement for Verification.** The law allows, but does not require, the Rensselaer Housing Authority or a Section 8 owner or property manager to verify that an incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking claimed by a tenant or other lawful occupant is bona fide and meets the requirements of the applicable definitions set forth in this policy. The Housing Authority shall require verification in all cases where an individual claims protection against an action involving such individual proposed to be taken by the Housing Authority. Section 8 owners or managers receiving rental assistance administered by the Housing Authority may elect to require verification, or not to require it as permitted under applicable law.

Verification of a claimed incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking may be accomplished in one of the following three ways:

1. ***HUD-approved form*** - By providing to the Housing Authority or to the requesting Section 8 owner or property manager a written certification, on the form approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), that the individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that the incident or incidents in question are bona fide incidents of actual or threatened abuse meeting the requirements of the applicable definition(s) set forth in this policy. The incident or incidents in question must be described in reasonable detail as required in the HUD-approved form, and the completed certification must include the name of the perpetrator, only if the name of the perpetrator is safe to provide and is known to the victim.
2. ***Other documentation*** - by providing to the Housing Authority or to the requesting Section 8 owner or property manager documentation signed by an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or a medical professional, from whom the victim has sought assistance in addressing the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of the abuse, described in such documentation. The professional providing the documentation must sign and attest under penalty of perjury (28 U.S.C. 1746) to the professional's belief that the incident or incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse meeting the requirements of the applicable definition(s) set forth in this policy. The victim of the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking described in the documentation must also sign and attest to the documentation under penalty of perjury.
3. ***Police or court record*** – by providing to the Housing Authority or to the requesting Section 8 owner or property manager a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement or court record describing the incident or incidents in question.

B. *Time allowed to provide verification/ failure to provide.* An individual who claims protection against adverse action based on an incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and who is requested by the Housing Authority, or a Section 8 owner or property manager to provide verification, must provide such verification within 14 business days after receipt of the written request for verification. Failure to provide verification, in proper form within such time will result in loss of protection under VAWA and this policy against a proposed adverse action. The submission of false information may be the basis for the termination of assistance or for eviction.

- C. **Managing conflicting documentation.** In cases where the Rensselaer Housing Authority receives conflicting certification documents from two or more members of a household, each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the perpetrator, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may determine which is the true victim by requiring third-party documentation as described in 24 CFR 5.2007 and in accordance with any HUD guidance as to how such determinations will be made. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall honor any court orders addressing rights of access or control of the property, including civil protection orders issued to protect the victim and issued to address the distribution or possession of property among the household.

17.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

All information provided under VAWA including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, shall be retained in confidence and shall not be entered into any shared database or provided to any related entity except to the extent that the disclosure is:

- A. Requested or consented to by the individual in writing;
- B. Required for used in an eviction proceeding; or
- C. Otherwise required by applicable law.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall provide its tenants notice of their rights under VAWA including their right to confidentiality and the limits thereof.

18.0 CHARGES AGAINST THE SECTION 8 ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE

Occasionally, it is necessary for the Rensselaer Housing Authority to spend money from its Section 8 Administrative Fee Reserve to meet unseen or extraordinary expenditures or for its other housing related purposes consistent with federal and State law.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority Board of Commissioners authorizes the Executive Director to expend without prior Board approval up to **(Reserved)** for authorized expenditures.

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

19.0 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

20.0 RENSSELAER HOUSING AUTHORITY OWNED HOUSING

Units owned by the Rensselaer Housing Authority (see definition) 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 Rensselaer Housing Authority will do the following:

- A. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will make available through the briefing process both orally and in writing the availability of Rensselaer Housing Authority owned units (notification will also include other properties owned/managed by the private sector available to Housing Choice Voucher holders).
- B. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will obtain the services of an independent entity to perform the following Rensselaer Housing Authority functions:
 - 1. Determine rent reasonableness for the unit. The independent entity will communicate the rent reasonableness determination to the family and the Rensselaer Housing Authority.
 - 2. To assist the family in negotiating the rent.
 - 3. To inspect the unit for compliance with HQS.
- C. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will gain HUD approval for the independent agency/agencies utilized to perform the above functions.
- D. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will compensate the independent agency/agencies from our ongoing administrative fee income.
- E. The Rensselaer Housing Authority, or the independent agency/agencies, will not charge the family any fee or charge for the services provided by the independent agency.

21.0 QUALITY CONTROL OF SECTION 8 PROGRAM

In order to maintain the appropriate quality standards for the Section 8 program, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will regularly (at least 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 (SEMAP) for our size housing authority.

Among the areas that shall have quality control reviews are the following:

- A. The proper people were selected from the waiting list and their selection criteria were actually met by the applicants.
- B. The determination of rent reasonableness.
- C. Participants are paying the appropriate rent and their income and expenses were properly verified both upon admission and re-certification.
- D. HQS inspections were properly made.
- E. HQS deficiencies were properly followed up on and appropriate repairs were made in a timely manner.

If significant errors are found during a quality control review, then appropriate training shall be immediately conducted for the person or persons who made the errors and that person shall correct all of his or her errors.

22.0 REPAYMENT AGREEMENTS

When a participant owes the Rensselaer Housing Authority back charges and is unable to pay the balance by the due date, the resident may request that the Rensselaer Housing Authority allow them to enter into a Repayment Agreement. The Rensselaer Housing Authority has the sole discretion of whether to accept such an agreement. All Repayment Agreements must assure that the full payment is made within a period not to exceed **12** months. If feasible, the total amount paid will not exceed 40% of monthly adjusted income. All Repayment Agreements must be in writing and signed by both parties. They must include the following elements:

- A. Reference to the paragraphs in the Section 8 information packet whereby the participant is in non-compliance and may be subject to termination of assistance.
- B. The monthly retroactive repayment amount is in addition to the family's regular rent contribution and is payable to the Rensselaer Housing Authority.
- C. The terms of the agreement may be renegotiated if there is a decrease or increase in the family's income.
- D. Late and missed payments constitute default of the repayment agreement and may result in termination of assistance.

Refusal to enter into a Repayment Agreement for monies owed will subject the family to eviction procedures.

Note: If the housing authority has a minimum rent greater than \$0, they must allow for repayment agreements for those tenants whose rental amount is the minimum rent and who have had their rent abated for a temporary period.

23.0 HOMEOWNERSHIP OPTION - RESERVED

24.0 CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CORE VALUES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

24.1 PURPOSE

This Code of Conduct establishes standards for employee and Commissioner conduct that will assure the highest level of public service. Recognizing that compliance with any ethical standards rests primarily on personal integrity and specifically in this situation with the integrity of the employees and Commissioners of the Rensselaer Housing Authority, this Section sets forth those acts or omissions of acts that could be deemed injurious to the general mission of the Authority.

This Code of Conduct is not intended, nor should it be construed, as an attempt to unreasonably intrude upon the individual employee or Commissioner's right to privacy and the right to participate freely in a democratic society and economy.

24.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In accordance with 24 CFR 982.161, neither the Rensselaer Housing Authority nor any of its contractors or subcontractors may enter into any contract or arrangement in connection with the tenant-based programs in which any of the following classes of persons has any interest, direct or indirect, during his or her tenure with the Rensselaer Housing Authority or for one year thereafter:

- A. Any present or former member or officer of the Housing Authority (except a participant commissioner);
- B. Any employee of the Housing Authority or any contractor, subcontractor or agent of the Housing Authority who formulates policy or who influences decisions with respect to the programs;
- C. Any public official, member of a governing body, or State or local legislator who exercises functions or responsibilities with respect to the Rensselaer Housing Authority's programs; or

D. Any member of the Congress of the United States.

Any member of the classes described in A, B, C, or D, must disclose their interest or prospective interest to the Housing Authority and HUD.

The Conflict of Interest prohibition under this section (24.2) may be waived by the HUD Field Office upon the request of the Rensselaer Housing Authority for good cause.

24.3 PROHIBITION OF SOLICITATION OR ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No Commissioner or Authority employee shall solicit any gift or consideration of any kind, nor shall any Authority employee accept or receive a gift having value in excess of \$25 regardless of the form of the gift, from any person who has an interest in any matter proposed or pending before the Authority.

24.4 HOUSING AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATIVE AND DISCIPLINARY REMEDIES FOR VIOLATION OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT

Violations of this Code of Conduct Policy will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Rensselaer Housing Authority's Personnel Policy or as determined by action of the Board of Commissioners.

25.0 SUPPORT FOR OUR ARMED FORCES

A major and important component of our armed forces are the part-time military personnel that serve in various Reserve and National Guard units. The Rensselaer Housing Authority is very supportive of these men and women. An unfortunate fact of service in both the Reserves and National Guard is that from time to time their personnel are activated to full-time status and asked to serve our country in a variety of ways and circumstances. Whenever the Federal Government activates Reserve and/or National Guard personnel, the Rensselaer Housing Authority wants to support these brave warriors in the following manners:

- A. If a family finds it necessary for another adult to temporarily move into a unit solely to serve as a temporary guardian for children residing in the unit, the income received by the temporary guardian will not be counted in determining family income. The presence of the temporary guardian will need to be approved by the landlord.
- B. Although typically a criminal background check is required before anyone can participate in the housing choice voucher program, this requirement will be waived for a temporary guardian. Instead, the background check will occur after the person moves into the assisted unit. If the results of the check dictate that the person is ineligible for the program, the family shall be given a reasonable time to find a replacement temporary guardian.

- C. Recognizing that activation in the Reserves or National Guard can be very disruptive to a family's income, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will expeditiously re-evaluate a resident's portion of the rent if requested to do so.
- D. A unit cannot be held by a family that is not residing in it as their primary residence for more than 180 consecutive calendar days because of a specific federal regulation. If all members of a military family are temporarily absent from the unit because a member of the family has been called to active duty, the family can retain control of the unit by paying the required rent and returning to the unit within 30 calendar days of the conclusion of the active duty service. If the service extends beyond 180 calendar days, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will seek a waiver of the 180 calendar day limit from HUD.

26.0 ANTI-FRAUD POLICY

The Rensselaer Housing Authority is fully committed to combating fraud in its Section 8 housing program. It defines fraud as a single act or pattern of actions that include false statements, the omission of information, or the concealment of a substantive fact made with the intention of deceiving or misleading the Rensselaer Housing Authority. It results in the inappropriate expenditure of public funds and/or a violation of Section 8 requirements.

Although there are numerous different types of fraud that may be committed, the two most common are the failure to fully report all sources of income and the failure to accurately report who is residing in the residence. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall aggressively attempt to prevent all cases of fraud.

When a fraudulent action is discovered, the Rensselaer Housing Authority shall take action. It shall do one or more of the following things depending on circumstances and what it determines appropriate:

- A. Require the resident to immediately repay the amount in question;
- B. Require the resident to enter into a satisfactory repayment agreement;
- C. Terminate the resident's rental assistance;
- D. Refer the case for criminal prosecution; or
- E. Take such other action as the Rensselaer Housing Authority deems appropriate.

27.0 PROJECT-BASING HOUSING VOUCHERS (RESERVED)

28.0 HOUSING CONVERSION ACTIONS (ENHANCED AND REGULAR HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS) (RESERVED)

29.0 COST SAVING POSSIBILITIES

There shall be one basic principle that will guide the Rensselaer Housing Authority in implementing any or all of these options – what must the Rensselaer Housing Authority do to assist the maximum number of eligible people in a quality Housing Choice Voucher Program while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the program. The Rensselaer Housing Authority shall endeavor to protect elderly and disabled families from significant impact (defined as loss of one's Housing Choice Voucher) but recognizes that what is feasible is dependent on the amount of funding provided to the program.

The options are as follows:

- A. The Housing Choice Voucher Payment Standards may be reviewed in light of the funding situation. If payment standards are reduced, the lower payment standard shall go into effect immediately for new admissions, participants moving from one unit to another, and people staying in place who require a new HAP contract because they are signing a new lease. In extraordinary circumstances, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may be forced to ask HUD for a waiver so that even those participants staying in place without a new lease shall have their payment standard decreased immediately instead of the normal second regular reexamination after the lowering of the payment standard.
- B. Since Housing Authorities do not have to wait until the HAP contract anniversary date to review owner rents and reduce them if warranted, the Housing Authority will ensure that owner rents do not exceed amounts charged for unassisted units in the same project or complex. The initial rent and all rent increases must comply with any State or local rent control limits. Further, any owner leasing promotions for unassisted tenants (e.g., the initial two months of occupancy are "rent free") must be taken into consideration in determining rent reasonableness.

In accordance with the HAP contract, the Housing Authority will provide written notice to owners before reducing unreasonable rents. Rents may be reduced as early as the first of the following month. If the rent to owner is not reasonable as most recently determined by the Housing Authority, the owner must reduce the rent to the reasonable amount or the HAP contract must be terminated. In such cases, the family will be issued a HCV to find a new unit. (Movers, like new participants, are subject to the Housing Authority's current payment and occupancy standards.)

Even if an owner's rent is reasonable, Rensselaer Housing Authority may request owners to voluntarily agree to a temporary rent reduction or defer rent increases

to help avoid the termination of HAP contracts due to shortfalls in HCV funding. It is the owner's option to agree to such measures. However, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will not "freeze" rents due to insufficient funding when an owner requests an increase, if the agency determines the increased rent to be reasonable, and the owner does not agree to defer a rent increase.

- C. Housing Choice Voucher Payment Standards must be established according to HUD regulation so that no more than 40% of the participants are paying more than 30% of their monthly adjusted income for rent. If circumstances dictate it, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may be forced to ask for a waiver of this prohibition in order to sufficiently lower its payment standard.
- D. The utility allowance schedule may be reviewed to determine if the utility allowances are too high. If they are too high that means that the participants are being subsidized in an excess manner. The new utility allowance schedule may be placed into after a thirty day notice or at a participant's next reexamination depending on the financial circumstances the Rensselaer Housing Authority finds itself in.

As stated in Section 11.6, utility allowances are supposed to be adjusted annually or sooner if there is a utility rate increase of 10% or more. If circumstances warrant, the Rensselaer Housing Authority reserves the right to seek a HUD waiver of this regulatory requirement.

- E. An initial PHA may request that a receiving PHA absorb portable families for which the initial PHA is being billed. This may include the receiving PHA retroactively absorbing families for which the initial PHA was already billed and made payments. In these cases, the receiving PHA reimburses the initial PHA for payments made back to the effective date of the absorption, but only for the current calendar year. Both the receiving PHA and initial PHAs must agree to this arrangement. This provision provides an exception to section 10 of Notice PIH 2011-3 on HCV Portability and Corrective Actions. (Section 10 provides that the receiving PHA may not retroactively absorb families for which the receiving PHA was previously billing for any time period that commences before 10 working days from the time the receiving PHA notifies the initial PHA of the absorption.) The Housing Authority will attempt to get receiving PHAs to absorb whenever possible.

If the Rensselaer Housing Authority is the receiving PHA, it will not "absorb" a family into its HCV program until it executes a HAP contract on behalf of the family that moves to a new unit. The Rensselaer Housing Authority will not engage in sham or fake portability paperwork exercises in an attempt to address their utilization or leasing problems. If the family is not placed under a HAP contract for a new unit in the receiving PHA's jurisdiction, the receiving PHA cannot absorb the family.

- F. If financial circumstances dictate, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may deny portability moves to a higher cost area for its Housing Choice Voucher participants and/or shoppers if the Rensselaer Housing Authority has insufficient funds to pay the higher subsidy amounts and the receiving housing authority declines to absorb the family. While the Board of Commissioners must establish this policy after an examination of the fiscal affairs of the organization, individual denials of portability shall only occur after the Rensselaer Housing Authority has determined that the receiving housing authority will not absorb the family. The denial of absorption shall be documented in that person's file.

This can only occur if the portability action would cause the Rensselaer Housing Authority to be unable to avoid terminating the vouchers of current voucher participants during the affected calendar year. If a family is denied its portability request, no subsequent families will be admitted to the program until the Rensselaer Housing Authority has determined that sufficient funding exists to approve the move and has notified the family that the family may now exercise its move to the higher cost area.

The Rensselaer Housing Authority will notify the HUD Field Office in writing within ten business days of determining that this is necessary before taking this action that it is denying a portability move. The notification will include:

1. A financial analysis that demonstrates insufficient funds are projected to meet the current calendar year projection of expenses. The projection must not include vouchers that have been issued but are not yet under contract.

In projecting whether there is sufficient funding available for the remainder of the CY, the Housing Authority may use reasonable estimates to factor in conditions such as pending rent increases and attrition rates for families leaving the program.

If this insufficient funding condition exists, the Housing Authority does not need a regulatory waiver from HUD to deny a request to move.

2. A statement certifying the Rensselaer Housing Authority has ceased issuing vouchers and will not admit families from their waiting list while the limitation on moves to a higher cost unit is in place.
3. A copy of this Section 8 Administrative Plan stating how the Rensselaer Housing Authority will address families who have been denied moves.

If a family is denied a portability request due to lack of funding, it shall be so notified in writing when the denial is made. The letter shall include the period the family's request to move shall remain active (**three (3) months**) and how they will be notified when funds become available.

- G. If financial circumstances dictate, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may deny the right of a participant to move within the jurisdiction of the Rensselaer Housing Authority to a portion of the jurisdiction that has a higher payment standard than the portion of the jurisdiction the participant currently lives in if the Rensselaer Housing Authority has insufficient funds to pay the higher subsidy amounts.
- H. In order to ensure that rent reasonableness requirements are being complied with, the Rensselaer Housing Authority may engage in special rent reasonableness reexaminations. This may be performed on all of the units in the program, a sample of the units in the program, or specifically targeted units that the Rensselaer Housing Authority believes may not be meeting the required rent reasonableness test. If a unit fails the rent reasonable test, the owner must reduce the rent to the reasonable amount after receiving appropriate notice or the HAP contract must be terminated. If the HAP contract is terminated for this reason, the family will be issued a new voucher to find a new abode.
- I. Housing Choice Vouchers issued to families on the waiting list that have not resulted in HAP contracts may be cancelled.
- J. The Rensselaer Housing Authority may be forced to not reissue vouchers surrendered by current participants immediately upon their return to the Housing Authority. Instead, the vouchers may be held in the Authority's inventory in order to avoid dire financial consequences. The amount of time they will be held shall be determined based upon the financial situation of the Housing Authority.
- K. The subsidy standards set forth in Section 6.0 may be reexamined. The Rensselaer Housing Authority may revise subsidy standards that exceed minimum HUD requirements to reduce bedroom size eligibility in accordance with 24 CFR § 982.402. Subsidy standards must be consistent with the HQS space requirements in 24 CFR § 982.401(d) which includes a dwelling unit must have at least one bedroom or living sleeping area for each two persons. Children of the opposite sex, other than the very young, may not be required to occupy the same bedroom or living/sleeping room.

If a family leases a unit larger than the unit size on the voucher, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will ensure that the payment standard used to calculate the tenant share is based on the lower of the voucher unit size for which the family is eligible or the actual unit size leased. If the family size is reduced after admission, the Rensselaer Housing Authority will ensure that the correct payment standard is used in calculating the family rent portion. An "empty nester" single individual (or any household with similarly reduced member size) living in a 3-bedroom unit should have a 0- or 1-bedroom payment standard, not a 3-bedroom payment standard. If the unit size for which the family is eligible changes during the term of the HAP contract, the new unit size is applicable at the first regular reexamination following the change in accordance with 24 CFR § 982.505(c)(5).

- L. A program-wide study may be conducted to ensure that families are utilizing the proper size Housing Choice Voucher for their current family size.
- M. If the minimum rent is increased under Section 11.5 (B), it can be made the first of the month following the month families are notified of the increase (provided there has been at least a 30-day notice) instead of at the next reexamination.
- N. The requirement of when families have to report changes of their income as set forth in Section 14.2 may be modified due to the financial pressure facing the Rensselaer Housing Authority. Also, the new rent payment may become effective at the start of the next month provided there has been a thirty day notice.
- O. If the Rensselaer Housing Authority is forced to stop issuing all of its Housing Choice Vouchers due to a funding shortfall and has any special purpose vouchers for non-elderly disabled persons (NED), Family Unification Program (FUP), or HUD_Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) then when it resumes issuing Housing Choice Vouchers it will re-issue the NED, FUP and/or VASH Vouchers in the same proportion as they exist in relation to the overall program.
- P. Owners participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program may be asked to voluntarily reduce the rents they are charging participants in order to assist in the financial solvency of the program. This must be a truly voluntary program.

The absolutely last step the Rensselaer Housing Authority will take to resolve its Housing Choice Voucher financial problems will be to terminate the vouchers of families already receiving assistance. If this becomes necessary, the following sequence shall be used to determine which individual Housing Choice Vouchers are terminated first. If it becomes necessary for the Rensselaer Housing Authority to terminate Housing Choice Vouchers, the families terminated shall be reinstated onto the program as soon as fiscally and practically feasible. The following readmission sequence shall be utilized.

30.0 PRIVACY

The Housing Authority is strongly committed to protecting the privacy of people dealing with the agency to the greatest degree practical. There are numerous federal privacy laws, regulations, notices, and other requirements that the Housing Authority follows to the greatest degree practical. Details about these requirements are set forth in PIH Notice 2015-06 and any ensuing publications. The Housing Authority will educate all of its employees who have access to personally identifiable information (PII) and/or Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information about these requirements and expect them to appropriately manage and safeguard the information. Employees will also be trained on the proper disposition of said information.

GLOSSARY

50058 Form: The HUD form that housing authorities are required to complete and electronically submit to HUD 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 authority, for interim reexaminations. Housing Authorities must retain at a minimum the last three years of the form 50058, and supporting documentation, during the term of each assisted lease, and for a period of at least three years from the end of participation date. Electronic retention of form HUD 50058 and HUD 50058-FSS and supporting documentation fulfills the record retention requirement. The 50058s must be submitted to HUD no later than 60 calendar days from the effective date of actions recorded in Line 2b.

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 authority starts making assistance payments with funding under its consolidated ACC, rather than billing, the initial housing authority. [24 CFR 982.4(b)]

Actual and imminent threat: a physical danger that is real, would occur within an immediate time frame, and could result in death or serious bodily harm. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include: The duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the length of time before the potential harm would occur.

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

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

Administrative Plan: The plan that describes housing authority 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. An emancipated minor is also considered an adult. An adult must have the legal capacity to enter a lease under State and local law. In the anti-drug portions of this policy, it also refers to a minor who has been convicted of a crime as an adult under any Federal, State or tribal law.

Affiliated individual: with respect to an individual, means: (1) A spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or a person to whom that individual stands in the place of a parent or

guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is a person in the care, custody, or control of that individual); or (2) Any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual.

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 and disabled families, disability expenses, and child care expenses for children under 13 years of age. Other allowances can be given at the discretion of the housing authority.

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 authority under which HUD agrees to provide funding for a program under the 1937 Act, and the housing authority 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 authority.

Bifurcate: means to divide a lease as a matter of law, subject to the permissibility of such process under the requirements of the applicable HUD covered program and State or local law, such that certain tenants or lawful occupants can be evicted or removed and the remaining tenants or lawful occupants can continue to reside in the unit under the same lease requirements or as may be revised depending upon the eligibility for continued occupancy of the remaining tenants and lawful occupants.

Business Days: Days the housing authority is open for business.

Certificate: A document formerly issued by a housing authority to a family selected for admission to the Certificate Program. The certificate describes the program and the procedures for housing authority 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 participants 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 authority 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 Housing Choice Voucher Program or is temporarily residing in a shelter for a legitimate reason.

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

Cooperative member: A family of which one or more members owns membership shares in a cooperative.

Covered Families: Families who receive welfare assistance or other public assistance benefits ("welfare benefits") from a State or other public agency ("welfare agency") under a program for which Federal, State, or local law requires that a member of the family must participate in an economic self-sufficiency program as a condition for such assistance.

Covered Person: For purposes of the anti-drug provisions of this policy, a covered person is a resident, any member of the resident's household, a guest or another person under the resident's control.

Currently engaging in: With respect to behavior such as illegal use of a drug, other drug-related criminal activity, or other criminal activity, currently engaging in means that the individual has engaged in the behavior recently enough to justify a reasonable belief that the individual's behavior is current. Arrests alone are not sufficient evidence of criminal activity.

Dating Violence: Violence committed by a person: (A) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and (B) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: (i) the length of the relationship; (ii) the type of relationship; and (iii) the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

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 (including co-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.

Domestic Violence: Includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse of the victim, by a person with whom the victim share a child in common, by a person who is cohabitated with or has cohabited with the victim as a spouse, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that persons acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction. The term "spouse or intimate partner of the victim" includes a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of the relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

Drug: means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802).

Drug-related criminal activity: The illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, or use of a drug, or the possession of a drug with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute or use the drug.

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

Economic self-sufficiency program: Any program designed to encourage, assist, train or facilitate the economic independence of HUD-assisted families or to provide work for such families. These programs include programs for job training, employment counseling, work placement, basic skills training, education, English proficiency, workfare, financial or household

management, apprenticeship, and any program necessary to ready a participant for work (including a substance abuse or mental health treatment program), or other work activities.

Elderly family: A family whose head (including co-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: A very low income family whose income does not exceed the higher of 30% of the median income for the area (as determined by HUD with adjustments for smaller and larger families) or the Federal poverty level, except that HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30% of the median income for the area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

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, the following, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status:

1. A single person, who may be an elderly person, displaced person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person; or
2. A group of persons residing together, and such group includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. A family with or without children (a child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family);
 - b. An elderly family (including co-head);
 - c. A near-elderly family (including co-head);
 - d. A disabled family (including co-head);

- e. A displaced family;
- f. The remaining member of a resident 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 resident 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 form.

Family Rent to Owner: In the housing choice voucher program, the portion of rent to owner paid by the family.

Family self-sufficiency program (FSS program): The program established by a housing authority 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 authority under the housing authority's subsidy standards.

First-time homeowner: In the homeownership option, a family of which no member owned any present ownership interest in a residence of any family member during the three years before commencement of homeownership assistance for the family. The term "first-time homeowner" includes a single parent or displaced homemaker (as those terms are defined in 12 U.S.C. 12713) who, while married, owned a home with his or her spouse, or resided in a home owned by his or her spouse.

50058 Form: The HUD form that housing authorities 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 authority, 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 Housing Choice Voucher Program, the housing authority may adopt a payment standard up to the FMR/exception rent limit.

Full-time employment: Employment that averages at least 30 hours per week. This can include self-employment as long as the employee earns at least the average of the federal minimum wage over a 30 hour period.

Full-time student: A person who is attending school or vocational training on a full-time basis as defined by the institution.

Gender identity: Actual or perceived gender-related characteristics.

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).

Guest: Means a person temporarily staying in the unit with the consent of a resident or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the resident.

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

Home: In the homeownership option: A dwelling unit for which the Rensselaer Housing Authority pays homeownership assistance.

Homeless (as defined for 50058 reporting purposes): An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- a. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; or
- b. An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
- c. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;

or

Any individual or family who:

- a. Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence; and
- b. Has no other residence; and

Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g. family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

Homeowner: In the homeownership option, a family of which one or more members owns title

to the home.

Homeownership assistance: In the homeownership option, monthly homeownership assistance payments by the Rensselaer Housing Authority. Homeownership assistance payment may be paid to the family, or to a mortgage lender on behalf of the family.

Homeownership expenses: In the homeownership option, a family's allowable monthly expenses for the home, as determined by the Rensselaer Housing Authority in accordance with HUD requirements.

Homeownership option: Assistance for a homeowner or cooperative member under Sec. 982.625 to Sec. 982.641. A special housing type.

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 authority, 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 authority to a family selected for admission to the Housing Choice Voucher Program. This document describes the program and the procedures for housing authority approval of a unit selected by the family. The housing choice voucher also states the obligations of the family under the program.

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

Immediate Family Member: a spouse, parent, brother or sister, or child of the person, or an individual to whom that person stands in loco parentis (in place of a parent); or any other person living in the household of that person and related to that person by blood or marriage.

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.

Imputed welfare income: The amount of annual income not actually received by a family, as a result of a welfare benefit reduction for welfare fraud or the failure to comply with economic self-sufficiency requirements, that is nonetheless included in the family's annual income for purposes of determining rent.

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

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.

Interest in the home: In the homeownership option:

- a. In the case of assistance for a homeowner, “interest in the home” includes title to the home, any lease or other right to occupy the home, or any other present interest in the home.
- b. In the case of assistance for a cooperative member, “interest in the home” includes ownership of membership shares in the cooperative, any lease or other right to occupy the home, or any other present interest in the home.

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

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

Law enforcement agency: The National Crime Information Center (NCIC), police departments and other law enforcement agencies that hold criminal conviction records.

Lease: A written agreement between an owner and participant for the leasing of a dwelling unit to the resident. 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 authority.

Legal capacity: The participant is bound by the terms of the lease and may enforce the terms of the lease against the owner.

Life-threatening: (1) Gas (natural or liquid petroleum) leak or fumes. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) A fuel storage vessel, fluid line, valve, or connection that supplies fuel to a HVAC unit is leaking; or (b) a strong gas odor detected with potential for explosion or fire, or that results in health risk if inhaled.

(2) Electrical hazards that could result in shock or fire. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) A light fixture is readily accessible, is not securely mounted to the ceiling or wall, and electrical connections or wires are exposed; (b) a light fixture is hanging by its wires; (c) a light fixture has a missing or broken bulb, and the open socket is readily accessible to the tenant during the day to day use of the unit; (d) a receptacle (outlet) or switch is missing or broken and electrical connections or wires are exposed; (e) a receptacle (outlet) or switch has a missing or damaged cover plate and electrical connections or wires are exposed; (f) an open circuit breaker position is not appropriately blanked off in a panel board, main panel board, or other electrical box that contains circuit breakers or fuses; (g) a cover is missing from any electrical device box, panel box, switch gear box, control panel, etc., and there are exposed electrical connections; (h) any nicks, abrasions, or fraying of the insulation that expose conducting wire; (i) exposed bare wires or electrical connections; (j) any condition that results in openings in electrical panels or electrical control device enclosures; (k) water leaking or ponding near any electrical device; or (l) any condition that poses a serious risk of electrocution or fire and poses an immediate life-threatening condition.

(3) Inoperable or missing smoke detector. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) the smoke detector is missing; or (b) the smoke detector does not function as it should.

(4) Interior air quality. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) the carbon monoxide detector is missing; or (b) the carbon monoxide detector does not function as it should.

(5) Gas/oil fired water heater or heating, ventilation, or cooling system with missing, damaged, improper, or misaligned chimney or venting. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) The chimney or venting system on a fuel fired water heater is misaligned, negatively pitched, or damaged, which may cause improper or dangerous venting of gases; (b) a gas dryer vent is missing, damaged, or is visually determined to be inoperable, or the dryer exhaust is not vented to the outside; (c) a fuel fired space heater is not properly vented or lacks available combustion air; (d) a non-vented space heater is present; (e) safety devices on a fuel fired space heater are missing or damaged; or (f) the chimney or venting system on a fuel fired heating, ventilation, or cooling system is misaligned, negatively pitched, or damaged which may cause improper or dangerous venting of gases.

(6) Lack of alternative means of exit in case of fire or blocked egress. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) Any of the components that affect the function of the fire escape are missing or damaged; (b) stored items or other barriers restrict or prevent the use of the fire escape in the event of an emergency; or (c) the building's emergency exit is blocked or impeded, thus limiting the ability of occupants to exit in a fire or other emergency.

(7) Other interior hazards. A life-threatening condition under this standard is a fire extinguisher (where required) that is missing, damaged, discharged, overcharged, or expired.

(8) Deteriorated paint, as defined by 24 CFR 35.110, in a unit built before 1978 that is to be occupied by a family with a child under 6 years of age. This is a life-threatening condition only for the purpose of a condition that would prevent a family from moving into the unit. All lead hazard reduction requirements in 24 CFR part 35, including the timeline for lead hazard reduction procedures, still apply.

(9) Any other condition subsequently identified by HUD as life-threatening in a notice published in the Federal Register. HUD will notify the Rensselaer Housing Authority if such changes are made.

(10) Any other condition identified by the Rensselaer Housing Authority as life-threatening in this administrative plan prior to the HUD Notice published in the January 18, 2017 Federal Register taking effect.

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.

A live-in aide is not a party to the lease.

Low-income families: Those families whose incomes do not exceed 80% of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD with adjustments for smaller and larger families, except that HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 80% of the median for the area on the basis of HUD's findings that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

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.

Membership shares: In the homeownership option, shares in a cooperative. By owning such cooperative shares, the share-owner has the right to reside in a particular unit in the cooperative, and the right to participate in management of the housing.

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 (including co-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 disposal 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 resident 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 therefor. 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.
- d. For purposes of determining annual income under Section 8 Homeownership, the term "net family assets" does not include the value of a home currently being purchased with assistance under the Section 8 Homeownership Program. This exclusion is limited to the first 10 years after the purchase date of the home.

Non-life-threatening: Conditions that fail to meet the housing quality standards (HQS) and do not meet the definition of life-threatening as defined above.

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

Notice Of Funding Availability (NOFA): For budget authority 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 authority establishes for determining the appropriate number of bedrooms needed to house families of different sizes or composition.

Other person under the tenant's control: For the purposes of the definition of covered person it means the person, although not staying as a guest (as defined in this section) in the unit, is, or was at the time of the activity in question, on the premises (as premises is defined in this section) because of an invitation from the tenant or other member of the household who has express or implied authority to so consent on behalf of the tenant. Absent evidence to the contrary, a person temporarily and infrequently on the premises solely for legitimate commercial purposes is not under the tenant's control.

Owner: Any person or entity, including a cooperative, having the legal right to lease or sublease existing housing. In the anti-drug related Areas of this policy, it means the owner of federally assisted housing.

Participant (participant family): A family that has been admitted to the housing authority'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 authority for the family (first day of initial lease).

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

Permanently absent: A person or persons not actually residing in the unit who once lived there and does not intend to return. One becomes permanently absent when one vacates the unit.

Person with disabilities: A person who:

- A. Has a disability as defined in 42 U.S.C. 423
- B. Is determined, pursuant to HUD regulations, 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 the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions; or
- C. Has a developmental disability as defined in 42 U.S.C. 6001

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.

For purposes of qualifying for low-income housing, it does not include a person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII): Information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, biometric records, etc. alone, or when combined with other personal or identifying information which is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, etc.

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

Premises: The building or complex in which the dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds. For purposes of the anti-drug provisions of this policy it means the building or complex or development in which the public or assisted housing dwelling unit is located, including common areas and grounds.

Present ownership interest: In the homeownership option, "Present ownership option" in a residence includes title, in whole or in part, to a residence, or ownership, in whole or in part, of membership shares in a cooperative. "Present ownership interest" in a residence does not include the right to purchase title to the residence under a lease-purchase agreement.

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.

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

Processing Entity: The person or entity who is responsible for making eligibility and related determinations and an income reexamination. In the Section 8 and public housing programs the processing entity is the responsibility entity.

Project-Based Assistance Program: A Section 8 program administered by an Housing Authority pursuant to 24 CFR part 983, as amended by HUD in the Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 10 on January 16, 2001 *Revisions to PHA Project-Based Assistance Program; Initial Guidance*.

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: Housing assisted under the 1937 Act, other than under Section 8. Public housing includes dwelling units in a mixed finance project that are assisted by a PHA with capital or operating funds.

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 Authority: In portability, a housing authority that receives a family selected for participation in the tenant-based program of another housing authority. The receiving housing authority issues a housing choice 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.

Responsible Entity:

- A. For the public housing program, the Section 8 tenant-based assistance program (24 CFR 982), and the Section 8 project-based voucher program (24 CFR 983), and the Section 8 moderate rehabilitation program (24 CFR 882), responsible entity means the PHA administering the program under an ACC with HUD;
- B. For all other Section 8 programs, responsible entity means the Section 8 project owner.

Risk assessment: In the context of lead-based paint it means an on-site investigation to determine and report the existence, nature, severity, and location of lead-based paint hazards in residential dwellings, including:

- A. Information gathering regarding the age and history of the housing and occupancy by children under age 6;
- B. Visual inspection;
- C. Limited wipe sampling or other environmental sampling techniques;
- D. Other activity as may be appropriate; and
- E. Provision of a report explaining the results of the investigation.

Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information: PII that when lost, compromised or disclosed without authorization could substantially harm an individual. Examples of sensitive PII include social security or driver’s license numbers, medical records, and financial account numbers such as credit or debit card numbers.

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

Sexual assault: any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

Sexual orientation: Homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

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 authority waiting list, or admission 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).

Specified welfare benefit reduction:

- A. A reduction of welfare benefits by the welfare agency, in whole or in part, for a family member, as determined by the welfare agency, because of fraud by a family member in connection with the welfare program; or because of welfare agency sanction against a family member for noncompliance with a welfare agency requirement to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program.
- B. "Specified welfare benefit reduction" does not include a reduction or termination of welfare benefits by the welfare agency:
 - 1. at the expiration of a lifetime or other time limit on the payment of welfare benefits;
 - 2. because a family member is not able to obtain employment, even though the family member has complied with welfare agency economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirements; or
 - 3. because a family member has not complied with other welfare agency requirements.

Stalking: engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to: (1) Fear for the person's individual safety or the safety of others; or (2) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

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 authority and a family to be assisted under the Moderate Rehabilitation Program, stating the obligations and responsibilities of the family.

Statement of homeowner obligations: In the homeownership option, the family's agreement to comply with program obligations.

Subsidy standards: Standards established by a housing authority 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 housing choice voucher, for such period as determined by the housing authority, from the time when the family submits a request for housing authority approval to lease a unit, until the time when the housing authority approves or denies the request. Also referred to as tolling.

Temporarily absent: A person or persons not actually residing in a unit for a period of time while still maintaining control of the unit. If the absence exceeds **thirty** (30) calendar days, the Housing Authority must agree to the absence.

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

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 :
 - a. 30% of the family's monthly adjusted income;
 - b. 10% of the family's monthly income;
 - c. Minimum rent; or
 - d. 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.
- (2) 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.

Tuition: The amount of tuition and required fees covering a full academic year most frequently charged to students. These values represent what a typical student would be charged and may not be the same for all students at an institution. If tuition is charged on a per-credit-hour basis, the average full-time credit hour load for an entire academic year is used to estimate average tuition. Required fees include all fixed sum charges that are required of a large proportion of all students. The student who does not pay the charges is an exception. Verification of tuition and fees can be obtained from the student's bill or annual statement, by contacting the bursar's office, or from the school's website.

Examples of required fees include, but are not limited to, writing and science lab fees and fees specific to the student's major or program (i.e., nursing program).

Expenses related to attending an institution of higher education must **not** be included as tuition. Examples of these expenses include, but are not limited to, room and board, books, supplies, meal plans, transportation and parking, student health insurance plans, and other non-fixed sum charges.

For Section 8 programs, PHAs must include amounts of financial assistance an individual receives in excess of tuition and other required fees and charges when determining annual income.

Units owned by the Rensselaer Housing Authority: only if the unit is in a project that is one of the following categories: (1) Owned by a Rensselaer Housing Authority. (2) Owned by an entity wholly controlled by the Rensselaer Housing Authority. (3) Owned by a limited liability company or limited partnership in which the Rensselaer Housing Authority (or an entity wholly controlled by the Rensselaer Housing Authority) holds a controlling interest in the managing member or general partner. A “controlling interest” is— (A) holding 50 percent or more of the stock of any corporation; (B) having the power to appoint 50 percent or more of the members of the board of directors of a non-stock corporation (such as a non-profit corporation); (C) where 50 percent or more of the members of the board of directors of any corporation also serve as directors, officers or employees of the Rensselaer Housing Authority; (D) holding 50 percent or more of all managing member interests in an LLC; (E) holding 50 percent or more of all general partner interests in a partnership; or (F) equivalent levels of control in other organizational structures. Units in which Rensselaer Housing Authority has a different ownership interest are no longer considered to be owned by the Rensselaer Housing Authority. In order to be considered a “Rensselaer Housing Authority-owned” unit as described above, the Rensselaer Housing Authority must have ownership interest in the building itself, not simply the land beneath the building.

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 authority 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 portion of the housing assistance payment that exceeds the amount of the rent to owner. It is only paid when the housing assistance payment exceeds the rent to owner. 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 PHA 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.

VAWA: the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, as amended (42 U.S.C. 13925 and 42 U.S.C. 14043e et seq.).

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: Families whose incomes do not exceed 50% of the median family income for the area, as determined by HUD with adjustments for smaller and larger families, except that HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 50% of the median for the area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

Violent criminal activity: Means any criminal activity that has as one of its elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force substantial enough to cause, or be reasonably likely to cause, serious bodily injury or property damage. Arrests alone are not sufficient evidence of criminal activity.

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

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

Waiting list admission: An admission from the housing authority 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, separately or jointly, by Federal, State or local governments (including assistance provided under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, as that term is defined under the implementing regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services at 45 CFR 260.31).

45 CFR 260.31 defines the term “assistance” to include cash, payments, vouchers, and other

forms of benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs (i.e., for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses).

It includes such benefits even when they are:

- A. Provided in the form of payments by a TANF agency, or other agency on its behalf, to individual recipients; and
- B. Conditioned on participation in work experience or community service (or any other work activity under 45 CFR 261.30).

Except where excluded later in this definition, it also includes supportive services such as transportation and childcare provided to families who are not employed.

The term "assistance" excludes:

- A. Non-recurrent, short-term benefits that:
 - 1. Are designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need;
 - 2. Are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; and
 - 3. Will not extend beyond four months.
- B. Work subsidies (i.e., payments to employers or third parties to help cover the costs of employee wages, benefits, supervision, and training);
- C. Supportive services such as child care and transportation provided to families who are employed;
- D. Refundable earned income tax credits;
- E. Contributions to, and distributions from, Individual Development Accounts;
- F. Services such as counseling, case management, peer support, childcare information and referral, transitional services, job retention, job advancement, and other employment-related services that do not provide basic income support; and
- G. Transportation benefits provided under a Job Access or Reverse Commute project, pursuant to section 404(k) of the Act, to an individual who is not otherwise receiving assistance.

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

Welfare -to-Work (WTW) families: Families assisted with housing choice voucher funding awarded under the HUD welfare-to-work voucher program.

Written notification: All written notifications required in this policy shall be hand delivered with a signed receipt or mailed via first class mail unless specified otherwise.

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 Authority
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