

CHAPTER 6
VOUCHER ISSUANCE AND BRIEFINGS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes Housing Authority policies when a family is issued a voucher. The policies in this chapter pertain to Moving to Work and non-Moving to Work families.

6.1 TERM OF VOUCHER

24 CFR 982.303 (a): “Initial term. The initial term of a voucher must be at least 60 calendar days.”

Policy:

The initial term of a voucher—the period of time during which the voucher is valid and the family may search for a unit to lease—is 120 calendar days from the date of issuance.

6.2 VOUCHER EXTENSIONS

24 CFR 982.303 (b) (1): “At its discretion the PHA may grant a family one or more extension of the initial voucher term in accordance with PHA policy as described in the PHA administrative plan. Any extension of the term is granted by PHA notice to the family.”

Policy:

A family must submit a written request to be considered for an extension of its voucher.

All requests for extensions must be received by the HA prior to the expiration date of the voucher.

Upon receipt of extension request, the caseworker will extend the voucher an additional 60 days from the date of caseworker approval or 60 days from the voucher expiration date, whichever is later.

A final extension of 60 days (beyond the first 60-day extension) may be granted if it is determined that the family is experiencing extenuating circumstances that affect the family’s ability to find a unit, such as:

- Serious illness in the family;
- Death in the family;

- Family emergency;
- Loss of a job;
- Birth of a child;
- Other special requirements that make finding a unit difficult. (example: unit size, wheelchair access)

If there are documented extenuating circumstances, the caseworker will extend the voucher an additional 60 days from the date of caseworker approval or 60 days from the voucher expiration date, whichever is later. No further extensions will be granted.

An informal review or hearing will not be provided for extension denials.

If the voucher has expired and has not been extended by the HA, or the voucher has expired after an extension, the family's assistance will be denied or terminated.

6.3 SUSPENSION OF VOUCHER TERM

24 CFR 982.303 2(c): “The PHA policy may or may not provide suspension of the initial or any extended term of the voucher. At its discretion, and in accordance with PHA policy as described in the PHA administrative plan, the PHA may grant a family a suspension of the voucher term if the family has submitted a request for approval of the tenancy during the term of the voucher.”

Policy:

If a family submits a Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) during the term of the voucher, the HA will suspend the voucher term. If the RFTA is subsequently disapproved, the days remaining on the voucher at the time the RFTA was submitted will be applied to the voucher term after the RFTA is disapproved.

6.4 DETERMINING FAMILY SUBSIDY SIZE

24 CFR 982.402 (a) (2): “For each family, the PHA determines the appropriate number of bedrooms under the PHA subsidy standards (family unit size).”

MTW Plan: “...if a household's voucher size changes due to a change in the agency's subsidy standard policy, the new voucher size would not take effect for households in a unit under a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract until (1) the family moves; or (2) the rental market vacancy rate remains 5 percent or higher for at least six months, whichever occurs first.” “If vacancy rates rise to 5 percent or higher for two quarters (six months) in a row, SCCHA will provide a generous minimum notice period to the family before applying the reduced voucher size in the rent calculation.”

Policy:

The below subsidy standards are intended to maximize the Housing Authority's use of

vouchers and to provide guidance in determining the number of bedrooms needed to house assisted families without overcrowding, and is not intended to assign bedrooms or otherwise establish where any family member should sleep within the home.

- The HA provides one bedroom for every two persons.
- A live-in aide will be provided a separate bedroom from other household members.
- The family of a live-in aide will not be provided any additional bedrooms.
- Single person families shall be allocated one bedroom.
- Space may be provided for a student who is away at school but who lives with the family during school recesses.
- Space may be provided for a family member who will be absent from the unit due to active military service.
- Space will be provided for a child in foster care (including a non-minor dependent under the Extended Foster Care Program), unless it has been verified that the child has been removed from the home permanently.
- Space will be provided for a foster child (or a non-minor dependent under the Extended Foster Care Program) five years or older who cannot share a room with a child of the opposite sex or for a foster child two years or older who cannot share a room with an adult when there is no other room available to meet the legal requirements.
- When considering an adjustment to the subsidy size for a reasonable accommodation request for an extra bedroom or a bedroom separate from other household members, SCCHA will not consider the living room as a bedroom.

6.5 **BRIEFING**

24 CFR 982.301 (a) (1): “When the PHA selects a family to participate in a tenant-based program, the PHA must give the family an oral briefing. The briefing must include information on the following subjects:

- (i) A description of how the program works;
- (ii) Family and owner responsibilities; and
- (iii) Where the family may lease a unit, including renting a dwelling unit inside or outside the PHA jurisdiction.”

Policy:

Applicants who are eligible for assistance are required to attend a briefing.

Applicants who fail to attend a briefing after two scheduled attempts may be denied admission to the program.

Participants who are moving under portability to SCCHA's jurisdiction are required to attend a briefing.

Participants who are moving with continued tenant-based assistance are not required to attend a briefing.

6.6 **FAMILY BREAK UP - RETENTION OF VOUCHER**

24 CFR 982.315 (a): "The PHA has discretion to determine which members of an assisted family continue to receive assistance in the program if the family breaks up."

Policy:

The following factors will be considered in the decision making process when determining which of the family members will continue to be assisted:

- Which of the two new family units have custody of dependent children;
- Which family member was the HOH when the voucher was initially issued (listed on the initial application);
- Which family unit contains elderly or disabled members, and the composition of the new family units;
- Whether domestic violence was involved in the break up;
- Which family members remain in the unit;
- The recommendations of social service professionals;
- Court-awarded determination of who will receive the voucher.

To be considered a remaining member of the family, the person must have been previously approved by the HA.

A live-in aide, foster child and foster adult, by definition, is not a member of the family and will not be considered a remaining member of the family.

In order for a minor child to continue to receive assistance as a remaining family member:

- The court must have awarded emancipated minor status; or

- The HA must have received verification from Social Services and/or the Dependency Court verifying that another adult is to move into the assisted unit to care for any minor children for an indefinite period of time.