

LOCAL PREFERENCE SECTION 8 HOUSING ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

HUD regulations (24 CFR Part 982) allow Housing Authorities to establish local preferences for the Section 8 Program that are separate from the federal preferences. These local preferences apply to 10% of the units that become available each year. Since January 1995, the Bucks County Housing Authority, with its Board's approval, instituted a local preference for Bucks County residents.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Candidates for this program must be residents of a Bucks County shelter for the homeless or clients of a Bucks County transitional housing assistance program and must be sponsored by one of these agencies. Families cannot apply for this program on their own behalf
2. Candidates must have documentation of established residency in Bucks County for at least 90 days prior to shelter/transitional program entry.
3. Candidates for this program must be families composed of at least one adult and at least one child under the age of eighteen (18) who is residing with that parent or caretaker. Verification of legal custody shall be produced if requested.
4. Candidates must be otherwise eligible for the Section 8 Program.
5. Prior to nominating candidates for this program, the sponsoring agency must determine that the candidates have utilized all reasonable means to increase their income and to obtain affordable housing. The candidates shall have participated in any available and appropriate job training or educational programs. The candidates shall also have sought out and exhausted other affordable housing opportunities. For example, a person who had to leave a home due to abuse by a spouse must use legal means to seek possession of the home before applying for this program.
6. Admission to the program shall be based on a finding that a permanent rental subsidy that is both necessary and sufficient to resolve the candidate's homelessness on a long-term basis.
7. Candidates who may be able to afford housing through other means shall not be accepted.
8. Candidates who have/had a mental illness or a drug or alcohol addiction shall not be accepted unless these problems are fully stabilized for a reasonable period of time prior to acceptance.
9. Candidates for this program shall not be excluded on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, familial status or disability, except that candidates must be a family as defined in paragraph 3.
10. Under exceptional circumstances, the Local Preference Selection Committee reserves the right to waive selected eligibility criteria.

SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Sponsoring agency must demonstrate that the applicant family will have adequate income to meet its basic needs and pay monthly bills such as food, shelter, utilities, and household expenses with the assistance of a Section 8 voucher.
2. Sponsoring agency must demonstrate that the candidate has exhausted available resources to meet its housing needs. A description of candidate's efforts to identify and obtain housing is required with the application.
3. If the Bucks County Housing Authority Section 8 waiting list is open the sponsoring agency case manager must confirm that the candidate has already applied to the Section 8 Program. If the Section 8 waiting list is closed this verification is not required.
4. Sponsoring agency must identify the past barriers that caused the candidate to become homeless, and the resolution of these presenting problems. The agency should provide an explanation as to current limitations that prevent candidate's self-sufficiency.
5. Sponsoring agency should present candidate's plan to utilize support services, if any, to prevent future homelessness upon receipt of the Section 8 voucher.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. Candidates shall be reviewed by the Local Preference Selection Committee, which shall meet periodically when vouchers are available.
2. The members of the Selection Committee shall be selected from the Bucks County Housing Link supporting agencies and approved by the Housing Continuum of Care-Bucks County, Executive Committee. The agencies shall be those agencies that work directly with homeless families.
3. Candidates shall be submitted through a standardized application prepared by the respective case manager with supporting documentation. Applications will be initially screened with the assistance of the Bucks County Housing Authority for past infractions that render the family ineligible for further consideration for a Section 8 housing voucher.
4. The sponsoring agency will be notified, in writing, of its candidate's approval for Local Preference by the Selection Committee.
5. Approved candidates shall receive a Local Preference Section 8 voucher from the Bucks County Housing Authority after meeting that agency's eligibility criteria and process.
6. Final determination for Section 8 housing is made by the Bucks County Housing Authority.