

Chapter 16

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses administrative policies and practices that are relevant to the activities covered in this plan. The policies are discussed in seven parts as described below:

Part I: Administrative Fee Reserve. This part describes ECC/HANH's policies with regard to oversight of expenditures from its administrative fee reserve.

Part II: Setting Program Standards and Schedules. This part describes what payment standards are, and how they are updated, as well as how utility allowances are established and revised.

Part III: Informal Reviews and Hearings. This part outlines the requirements and procedures for informal reviews and hearings, and for informal hearings regarding citizenship status.

Part IV: Owner or Family Debts to ECC/HANH. This part describes policies for recovery of monies that ECC/HANH has overpaid on behalf of families, or to owners, and describes the circumstances under which ECC/HANH will offer repayment agreements to owners and families. Also discussed are the consequences for failure to make payments in accordance with a repayment agreement.

Part V: Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP). This part describes what the SEMAP scores represent, how they are established, and how those scores affect ECC/HANH

Part VI: Record-Keeping. All aspects of the program involve certain types of record-keeping. This part outlines the privacy rights of applicants and participants and record retention policies ECC/HANH will follow.

Part VII: Reporting and Record Keeping for Children with Environmental Intervention Blood Lead Level. This part describes ECC/HANH's responsibilities for reporting, data collection, and record keeping relative to children with environmental intervention blood lead levels that are less than six years of age, and are receiving HCV assistance.

Part VIII: Determination of Insufficient Funding. This part describes ECC/HANH'S policies for determining if there is sufficient funding to issue vouchers, to approve moves to higher cost units or areas, and to continue assistance for all participant families.

Part IX: Violence against Women Act (VAWA): Notification, Documentation, Confidentiality. This part contains key terms used in VAWA and describes requirements related to notifying families and owners about their rights and responsibilities under VAWA; requesting documentation from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained from victims.

PART I: ADMINISTRATIVE FEE RESERVE [24 CFR 982.155]

ECC/HANH will maintain administrative fee reserves, or unrestricted net assets (UNA) for the program to pay program administrative expenses in excess of administrative fees paid by HUD for the ECC/HANH fiscal year. HUD appropriations acts beginning with FFY 2004 have specified that administrative fee funding may be used only for activities related to the provision of HCV assistance, including related development activities. Notice PIH 2012-9 cites two examples of related development activities: unit modification for accessibility purposes and development of project-based voucher units. The notice makes clear that other activities may also qualify as related development activities. Administrative fees that remain in the UNA account from funding provided prior to 2004 may be used for “other housing purposes permitted by state and local law,” in accordance with 24 CFR 982.155(b)(1).

If ECC/HANH has not adequately administered its HCV program, HUD may prohibit use of funds in the UNA Account and may direct ECC/HANH to use funds in that account to improve administration of the program, for HCV HAP expenses, or to reimburse ineligible expenses in accordance with the regulation at 24 CFR 982.155(b)(3).

HUD requires the ECC/HANH Board of Commissioners or other authorized officials to establish the maximum amount that may be charged against the UNA account without specific approval.

ECC/HANH Policy

Expenditures from the UNA account will be made in accordance with all applicable federal requirements. Expenditures will not exceed \$50,000 per occurrence nor more than \$50,000 in the aggregate for each fiscal year without the prior approval of the ECC/HANH’s Board of Commissioners.

PART II: SETTING PROGRAM STANDARDS AND SCHEDULES

16-II.A. OVERVIEW

Although many of the program's requirements are established centrally by HUD, the HCV program's regulations recognize that some flexibility is required to allow ECC/HANH to adapt the program to local conditions. This part discusses how ECC/HANH establishes and updates certain schedules and standards that are used to administer the program locally. Details about how these schedules are applied to individual families are provided in other chapters. The schedules and standards discussed here include:

- *Payment Standards*, which dictate the maximum subsidy a family can receive (application of the payment standards is discussed in Chapter 6); and
- *Utility Allowances*, which specify how a family's payment should be adjusted to account for tenant-paid utilities (application of utility allowances is discussed in Chapter 6).

ECC/HANH Policy

Copies of the payment standard and utility allowance schedules are available for review in ECC/HANH's offices during normal business hours.

Families, owners, and members of the public may submit written comments on the schedules discussed in this part, at any time, for consideration during the next revision cycle.

ECC/HANH will maintain documentation to support its annual review of payment standards and utility allowance schedules. This documentation will be retained for at least 3 years.

Establishing and updating the ECC/HANH passbook rate, which is used to calculate imputed income from assets, is covered in Chapter 6 (see Section 6-I.G.).

16-II.B. PAYMENT STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.503; HCV GB, Chapter 7]

The payment standard sets the maximum subsidy payment a family can receive from ECC/HANH each month [24 CFR 982.505(a)]. Payment standards are based on fair market rents (FMRs) published annually by HUD. FMRs are set at a percentile within the rent distribution of standard quality rental housing units in each FMR area. For most jurisdictions FMRs are set at the 40th percentile of rents in the market area.

ECC/HANH must establish a payment standard schedule that establishes payment standard amounts for each FMR area within ECC/HANH's jurisdiction, and for each unit size within each of the FMR areas. For each unit size, ECC/HANH may establish a single payment standard amount for the whole FMR area, or may set different payment standards for different parts of the FMR area. Unless HUD grants an exception, ECC/HANH is required to establish a payment standard within a "basic range" established by HUD – between 90 and 110 percent of the published FMR for each unit size.

Updating Payment Standards

When HUD updates its FMRs, ECC/HANH must update its payment standards if the standards are no longer within the basic range [24 CFR 982.503(b)]. HUD may require ECC/HANH to make further adjustments if it determines that rent burdens for assisted families in ECC/HANH's jurisdiction are unacceptably high [24 CFR 982.503(g)].

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will review the appropriateness of the payment standards on an annual basis when the new FMR is published, and at other times as determined necessary. In addition to ensuring the payment standards are always within the "basic range" ECC/HANH will consider the following factors when determining whether an adjustment should be made to the payment standard schedule:

Funding Availability: ECC/HANH will review the budget to determine the impact projected subsidy adjustments will have on funding available for the program and the number of families served. ECC/HANH will compare the number of families who could be served under revised payment standard amounts with the number assisted under current payment standard amounts.

Rent Burden of Participating Families: Rent burden will be determined by identifying the percentage of families, for each unit size, that are paying more than 30 percent of their monthly adjusted income as the family share. When 40 percent or more of families, for any given unit size, are paying more than 30 percent of adjusted monthly income as the family share, ECC/HANH will consider increasing the payment standard. In evaluating rent burdens, ECC/HANH will not include families renting a larger unit than their family unit size.

Quality of Units Selected: ECC/HANH will review the quality of units selected by participant families when making the determination of the percent of income families are paying for housing, to ensure that payment standard increases are only made when needed to reach the mid-range of the market.

Changes in Rent to Owner: ECC/HANH may review a sample of the units to determine how often owners are increasing or decreasing rents and the average percent of increases/decreases by bedroom size.

Unit Availability: ECC/HANH will review the availability of units for each unit size, particularly in areas with low concentrations of poor and minority families.

Lease-up Time and Success Rate: ECC/HANH will consider the percentage of families that are unable to locate suitable housing before the voucher expires and whether families are leaving the jurisdiction to find affordable housing.

Changes to payment standard amounts will be effective on ~~October 1st~~ January 1st of every year. ECC/HANH may change its payments more often than annually if warranted based on the above factors.

Exception Payment Standards [982.503(c)]

ECC/HANH must request HUD approval to establish payment standards that are higher than the basic range. At HUD's sole discretion, HUD may approve a payment standard amount that is higher than the basic range for a designated part of the FMR area. HUD may approve an exception payment standard amount (in accordance with program requirements) for all units, or for all units of a given size, leased by program families in the exception area. Any PHA with jurisdiction in the exception area may use the HUD-approved exception payment standard amount. The total population of all HUD-approved exception areas in an FMR area may not include more than 50 percent of the population of the FMR area.

ECC/HANH Policy

Under its MTW Agreement with HUD, ECC/HANH implemented MTW Rent Standards that allowed ECC/HANH to approve exception rents up to 150% of the Voucher Payment Standard (VPS) to allow families to access housing in the following cases:

1. Wheelchair accessible units.
2. Large bedroom-size units, (4 bedrooms or larger).
3. Expanded housing opportunities in neighborhoods with low concentrations of poverty.
4. Housing opportunities in new development projects that include significant public investment to promote revitalization of neighborhoods; and
5. Mixed-income housing opportunities that promote expanded housing opportunities and de-concentration of poverty.
6. ECC/HANH approved budget-based rent increases for landlords who make major capital improvements in their property, including accessibility modifications.

Exception Payment Standards [24 CFR 982.503(c)(5), Notice PIH 2018-01, FR Notice 9/27/21]

A non-SAFMR PHA may establish an exception payment standard for a zip code area of up to and including 110 percent of the SAFMR determined by HUD for that zip code area. Regardless of the level of the exception payment standard compared to the metropolitan area FMRs (MAFMRs), the PHA must send an email to SAFMRs@hud.gov to notify HUD that it has adopted an exception payment standard based on the SAFMR. A PHA that adopts an exception payment standard pursuant to this authority must apply it to the entire ZIP code area, for both its HCV, and if applicable, its PBV program. For the PBV program, this means that the rent to owner may not exceed the new exception payment standard amount, provided the rent is still reasonable. A PHA that adopts an exception payment standard area must revise its briefing materials to make families aware of the exception payment standard and the area that it covers.

In addition, HUD allows PHAs to establish a HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) exception payment standard. PHAs may go up to but no higher than 120 percent of the FMR or SAFMR specifically for VASH families. PHAs who want to establish a VASH exception payment standard over 120 percent must still request a waiver from HUD (See Section 19-III.E.).

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC HANH will establish an exception payment standard for zip code up to and including 120% of the SAFMR using MTW flexibilities. SAFMR's will be applied to zip codes in High Opportunity areas.

Unit-by-Unit Exceptions [24 CFR 982.503(c)(2)(ii), 24 CFR 982.505(d), Notice PIH 2010-26]

Unit-by-unit exceptions to ECC/HANH's payment standards generally are not permitted. However, an exception may be made as a reasonable accommodation for a family that includes a person with disabilities. (See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodations.) This type of exception does not affect ECC/HANH's payment standard schedule.

When needed as a reasonable accommodation, ECC/HANH may make an exception to the payment standard without HUD approval if the exception amount does not exceed 110 percent of the applicable FMR for the unit size [HCV GB 7-9]. ECC/HANH may request HUD approval for an exception to the payment standard for a particular family if the required amount falls between 110 and 120 percent of the FMR.

ECC/HANH Policy

Under its MTW Agreement with HUD, ECC/HANH may set its payment standards up to 150% of the FMR for purposes of reasonable accommodation or hard-to-house.

Requests for MTW rent standards are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Under no circumstances may ECC/HANH approve an MTW rent standard above 150% of Fair Market Rent without prior HUD approval.

A family that requires a reasonable accommodation or is moving to a unit with 4 or more bedrooms, may request a higher payment standard at the time the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) is submitted. The family must document the need for the exception. In order to approve an exception, or request an exception from HUD, ECC/HANH must determine that:

- There is a shortage of affordable units that would be appropriate for the family;
- The family's TTP would otherwise exceed 40 percent of monthly income; and
- The rent for the unit is reasonable.

"Success Rate" Payment Standard Amounts [24 CFR 982.503(e)]

If a substantial percentage of families have difficulty finding a suitable unit, ECC/HANH may request a "success rate payment standard" that applies to the entire jurisdiction. If approved by HUD, a success rate payment standard allows ECC/HANH to set its payment standards at 90-110 percent of a higher FMR (the 50th, rather than the 40th percentile FMR). To support the request, ECC/HANH must demonstrate that during the most recent 6-month period for which information is available:

- Fewer than 75 percent of families who were issued vouchers became participants;

- The ECC/HANH had established payment standards for all unit sizes, and for the entire jurisdiction, at 110 percent of the published FMR; and
- ECC/HANH had a policy of allowing voucher holders who made sustained efforts to locate units at least 90 days to search for a unit.

Although HUD approves the success rate payment standard for all unit sizes in the FMR area, ECC/HANH may choose to adjust the payment standard for only some unit sizes in all, or a designated part, of ECC/HANH's jurisdiction within the FMR area.

Decreases in the Payment Standard below the Basic Range [24 CFR 982.503(d)]

ECC/HANH must request HUD approval to establish a payment standard amount that is lower than the basic range. At HUD's sole discretion, HUD may approve establishment of a payment standard lower than the basic range. HUD will not approve a lower payment standard if the family share for more than 40 percent of program participants exceeds 30 percent of adjusted monthly income.

16-II.C. UTILITY ALLOWANCES [24 CFR 982.517]

AECC/HANH-established utility allowance schedule is used in determining family share and ECC/HANH subsidy. ECC/HANH must maintain a utility allowance schedule for (1) all tenant-paid utilities, (2) the cost of tenant-supplied refrigerators and ranges, and (3) other tenant-paid housing services such as trash collection.

The utility allowance schedule must be 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, ECC/HANH must use normal patterns of consumption for the community as a whole, and current utility rates.

The utility allowance must include the utilities and services that are necessary in the locality to provide housing that complies with housing quality standards. Costs for telephone, cable/satellite television, and internet services are not included in the utility allowance schedule.

In the utility allowance schedule, ECC/HANH must classify utilities and other housing services according to the following general categories: space heating; air conditioning; cooking; water heating; water; sewer; trash collection; other electric; cost of tenant-supplied refrigerator; cost of tenant-supplied range; and other specified housing services.

The cost of each utility and housing service must be stated separately by unit size and type. Chapter 18 of the *HCV Guidebook* provides detailed guidance to ECC/HANH about establishing utility allowance schedules.

Air Conditioning

An allowance for air-conditioning must be provided when the majority of housing units in the market have central air-conditioning or are wired for tenant-installed air conditioners.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH has included an allowance for air-conditioning in its schedule. Central air-conditioning or a portable air conditioner must be present in a unit before ECC/HANH will apply this allowance to a family's rent and subsidy calculations.

Reasonable Accommodation

HCV program regulations require ECC/HANH to approve a utility allowance amount higher than shown on ECC/HANH's schedule if a higher allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. For example, if a family member with a disability requires such an accommodation, ECC/HANH will approve an allowance for air-conditioning, even if ECC/HANH has determined that an allowance for air-conditioning generally is not needed (See Chapter 2 for policies regarding the request and approval of reasonable accommodations).

Utility Allowance Revisions

ECC/HANH must review its schedule of utility allowances each year, and must revise the schedule if there has been a change of 10 percent or more in any utility rate since the last time the allowance for that utility was revised.

ECC/HANH must maintain information supporting its annual review of utility allowance and any revisions made in its utility allowance schedule.

Changes to the utility allowance schedule will be effective on January 1st of every year.

PART III: INFORMAL REVIEWS AND HEARINGS

16-III.A. OVERVIEW

Both applicants and participants have the right to disagree with, and appeal, certain decisions of ECC/HANH that may adversely affect them. ECC/HANH decisions that may be appealed by applicants and participants are discussed in this section.

The process for applicant appeals of ECC/HANH decisions is called the “informal review.” For participants (or applicants denied admission because of citizenship issues), the appeal process is called an “informal hearing.” ECC/HANH is required to include informal review procedures for applicants and informal hearing procedures for participants in their administrative plans [24 CFR 982.54(d)(12) and (13)].

16-III.B. INFORMAL REVIEWS

Informal reviews are provided for program applicants. An applicant is someone who has applied for admission to the program, but is not yet a participant in the program. Informal reviews are intended to provide a “minimum hearing requirement” [24 CFR 982.554] and need not be as elaborate as the informal hearing requirements [*Federal Register* 60, no. 127 (3 July 1995): 34690].

Decisions Subject to Informal Review

must give an applicant the opportunity for an informal review of a decision denying assistance [24 CFR 982.554(a)]. Denial of assistance may include any or all of the following [24 CFR 982.552(a)(2)]:

- Denying listing on the ECC/HANH waiting list
- Denying or withdrawing a voucher
- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Informal reviews are *not* required for the following reasons [24 CFR 982.554(c)]:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by ECC/HANH
- General policy issues or class grievances
- A determination of the family unit size under ECC/HANH subsidy standards
- ECC/HANH determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term
- ECC/HANH determination not to grant approval of the tenancy
- ECC/HANH determination that the unit is not in compliance with the HQS
- ECC/HANH determination that the unit is not in accordance with the HQS due to family size or composition

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will only offer an informal review to applicants for whom assistance is being denied. Denial of assistance includes: denying listing on the ECC/HANH waiting list; denying or withdrawing a voucher; refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease; refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures.

Notice to the Applicant [24 CFR 982.554(a)]

ECC/HANH must give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying assistance. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the ECC/HANH decision, and must also state that the applicant may request an informal review of the decision. The notice must describe how to obtain the informal review.

Scheduling an Informal Review

ECC/HANH Policy

A request for an informal review must be made in writing and delivered to ECC/HANH either in person or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 10 business days from the date of ECC/HANH's denial of assistance.

ECC/HANH must schedule and send written notice of the informal review within 10 business days of the family's request.

Informal Review Procedures [24 CFR 982.554(b)]

The informal review must be conducted by a person other than the one who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of this person.

The applicant must be provided an opportunity to present written or oral objections to the decision of ECC/HANH.

Informal Review Decision [24 CFR 982.554(b)]

ECC/HANH must notify the applicant of the ECC/HANH'S final decision, including a brief statement of the reasons for the final decision.

ECC/HANH Policy

In rendering a decision, ECC/HANH will evaluate the following matters:

Whether or not the grounds for denial were stated factually in the notice to the family.

The validity of the grounds for denial of assistance. If the grounds for denial are not specified in the regulations, then the decision to deny assistance will be overturned.

The validity of the evidence. ECC/HANH will evaluate whether the facts presented prove the grounds for denial of assistance. If the facts prove that there are grounds for denial, and the denial is required by HUD, ECC/HANH will uphold the decision to deny assistance.

If the facts prove the grounds for denial, and the denial is discretionary, ECC/HANH will consider the recommendation of the person conducting the informal review in making the final decision whether to deny assistance.

ECC/HANH will notify the applicant of the final decision, including a statement explaining the reason(s) for the decision. The notice will be mailed within 10 business days of the informal review, to the applicant and his or her representative, if any, along with proof of mailing.

If the decision to deny is overturned as a result of the informal review, processing for admission will resume.

If the family fails to appear for their informal review, the denial of admission will stand and the family will be so notified.

16-III.C. INFORMAL HEARINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS [24 CFR 982.555]

ECC/HANH must offer an informal hearing for certain ECC/HANH determinations relating to the individual circumstances of a participant family. A participant is defined as a family that has been admitted to the ECC/HANH's HCV program and is currently assisted in the program. The purpose of the informal hearing is to consider whether ECC/HANH'S decisions related to the family's circumstances are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations and ECC/HANH policies.

ECC/HANH is not permitted to terminate a family's assistance until the time allowed for the family to request an informal hearing has elapsed, and any requested hearing has been completed. Termination of assistance for a participant may include any or all of the following:

- Refusing to enter into a HAP contract or approve a lease
- Terminating housing assistance payments under an outstanding HAP contract
- Refusing to process or provide assistance under portability procedures

Decisions Subject to Informal Hearing

Circumstances for which ECC/HANH must give a participant family an opportunity for an informal hearing are as follows:

- A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment
- A determination of the appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from the ECC/HANH utility allowance schedule
- A determination of the family unit size under the ECC/HANH subsidy standards
- A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's actions or failure to act
- A determination to terminate assistance because the participant has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under ECC/HANH policy and HUD rules

- A determination to terminate a family’s Family Self Sufficiency contract, withhold supportive services, or propose forfeiture of the family’s escrow account [24 CFR 984.303(i)]

Circumstances for which an informal hearing is not required are as follows:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by ECC/HANH
- General policy issues or class grievances
- Establishment of the ECC/HANH schedule of utility allowances for families in the program
- ECC/HANH determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term
- ECC/HANH determination not to approve a unit or tenancy
- ECC/HANH determination that a unit selected by the applicant is not in compliance with the HQS
- ECC/HANH determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of family size
- A determination by ECC/HANH to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against an owner under a HAP contract

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will only offer participants the opportunity for an informal hearing when required to by the regulations.

Informal Hearing Procedures

Notice to the Family [24 CFR 982.555(c)]

When ECC/HANH makes a decision that is subject to informal hearing procedures, ECC/HANH must inform the family of its right to an informal hearing at the same time that it informs the family of the decision.

For decisions related to the family’s annual or adjusted income, the determination of the appropriate utility allowance, and the determination of the family unit size, ECC/HANH must notify the family that they may ask for an explanation of the basis of the determination, and that if they do not agree with the decision, they may request an informal hearing on the decision.

For decisions related to the termination of the family’s assistance, or the denial of a family’s request for an exception to ECC/HANH’s subsidy standards, the notice must contain a brief statement of the reasons for the decision, a statement that if the family does not agree with the decision, the family may request an informal hearing on the decision, and a statement of the deadline for the family to request an informal hearing.

ECC/HANH Policy

In cases where ECC/HANH makes a decision for which an informal hearing must be offered, the notice to the family will include all of the following:

The proposed action or decision of ECC/HANH.

A brief statement of the reasons for the decision, including the regulatory reference.

The date the proposed action will take place.

A statement of the family's right to an explanation of the basis for ECC/HANH's decision for decisions related to the family's annual or adjusted income, the determination of the appropriate utility allowance, and the determination of the family unit size,

A statement that if the family does not agree with the decision the family may request an informal hearing of the decision.

A deadline for the family to request the informal hearing.

To whom the hearing request should be addressed.

Scheduling an Informal Hearing [24 CFR 982.555(d)]

When an informal hearing is required, ECC/HANH must proceed with the hearing in a reasonably expeditious manner upon the request of the family.

ECC/HANH Policy

A request for an informal hearing must be made in writing and delivered to ECC/HANH either in person or by first class mail, by the close of the business day, no later than 10 business days from the date of ECC/HANH's decision or notice to terminate assistance.

ECC/HANH must schedule and send written notice of the informal hearing to the family within 10 business days of the family's request. The informal hearing scheduling notice will provide the family with an overview of the hearing process, including explaining the family's right to discovery, and explaining ECC/HANH's right to discovery and that ECC/HANH is exerting its right to discovery.

The family may request to reschedule a hearing for good cause, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities. Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict which seriously affects the health, safety or welfare of the family. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date. At its discretion, ECC/HANH may request documentation of the "good cause" prior to rescheduling the hearing.

If the family does not appear at the scheduled time, and was unable to reschedule the hearing in advance due to the nature of the conflict, the family must contact ECC/HANH within 24 hours of the scheduled hearing date, excluding weekends and holidays. ECC/HANH will reschedule the hearing only if the family can show good cause for the failure to appear, or if it is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.

The family will be considered as a "no-show" up to 15 minutes after the scheduled time of the informal hearing.

Pre-Hearing Right to Discovery [24 CFR 982.555(e)]

Participants and ECC/HANH are permitted pre-hearing discovery rights. The family must be given the opportunity to examine before the hearing any ECC/HANH documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The family must be allowed to copy any such documents at their own expense. If ECC/HANH does not make the document available for examination on request of the family, ECC/HANH may not rely on the document at the hearing.

The ECC/HANH hearing procedures may provide that ECC/HANH must be given the opportunity to examine at the ECC/HANH offices before the hearing, any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. ECC/HANH must be allowed to copy any such document at ECC/HANH's expense. If the family does not make the document available for examination on request of ECC/HANH, the family may not rely on the document at the hearing.

For the purpose of informal hearings, *documents* include records and regulations.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will copy requested documents relate to the hearing in ECC/HANH's offices at no charge to the family. The family must request discovery of ECC/HANH documents no later than 12:00 p.m., three business days prior to the scheduled hearing date

ECC/HANH must be given an opportunity to examine at ECC/HANH offices before the hearing any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. Whenever a participant requests an informal hearing, ECC/HANH will automatically mail a letter to the participant requesting a copy of all documents that the participant intends to present or utilize at the hearing. The participants are to make the documents available no later than 12:00 pm on the business day prior to the scheduled hearing date. However, ECC/HANH will allow documents/evidence to be presented at informal hearing even if the family did not meet the above deadline to provide to ECC/HANH.

Participant's Right to Bring Counsel [24 CFR 982.555(e)(3)]

At its own expense, the family may be represented by a lawyer or other representative at the informal hearing.

Informal Hearing Officer [24 CFR 982.555(e)(4)]

Informal hearings will be conducted by a person or persons approved by ECC/HANH, other than the person who made or approved the decision or a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision.

Attendance at the Informal Hearing

ECC/HANH Policy

Hearings may be attended by a hearing officer and the following applicable persons:

An ECC/HANH representative(s) and any witnesses for ECC/HANH

The participant and any witnesses for the participant

The participant's counsel or other representative

Any other person approved by ECC/HANH as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability

Language interpreter, if requested

Conduct at Hearings

The person who conducts the hearing may regulate the conduct of the hearing in accordance with ECC/HANH's hearing procedures [24 CFR 982.555(4)(ii)].

ECC/HANH Policy

The hearing officer is responsible to manage the order of business and to ensure that hearings are conducted in a professional and businesslike manner. Attendees are expected to comply with all hearing procedures established by the hearing officer and guidelines for conduct. Any person demonstrating disruptive, abusive or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be excused from the hearing at the discretion of the hearing officer.

Evidence [24 CFR 982.555(e)(5)]

ECC/HANH and the family must be given the opportunity to present evidence and question any witnesses. In general, all evidence is admissible at an informal hearing. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

ECC/HANH Policy

Any evidence to be considered by the hearing officer must be presented at the time of the hearing. There are four categories of evidence.

Oral evidence: the testimony of witnesses

Documentary evidence: a writing which is relevant to the case, for example, a letter written to ECC/HANH. Writings include all forms of recorded communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds, videotapes or symbols or combinations thereof.

Demonstrative evidence: Evidence created specifically for the hearing and presented as an illustrative aid to assist the hearing officer, such as a model, a chart or other diagram.

Real evidence: A tangible item relating directly to the case.

Hearsay Evidence is evidence of a statement that was made outside of the hearing that is offered to prove the truth of the matter asserted. Efforts should be taken to ensure that hearsay evidence is not the only evidence presented at a hearing. However, in the event hearsay evidence is the only evidence presented, the hearing officer may have no choice but to formulate a decision based upon the credibility of the witnesses presenting such hearsay evidence.

If ECC/HANH fails to comply with the discovery requirements (providing the tenant with the opportunity to examine ECC/HANH documents prior to the hearing), the hearing officer will refuse to admit such evidence.

Other than the failure of a party to comply with discovery, the hearing officer has the authority to overrule any objections to evidence.

Hearing Officer's Decision [24 CFR 982.555(e)(6)]

The person who conducts the hearing must issue a written decision, stating briefly the reasons for the decision. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family must be based on a preponderance of evidence presented at the hearing. A copy of the hearing must be furnished promptly to the family.

ECC/HANH Policy

In rendering a decision, the hearing officer will consider the following matters:

ECC/HANH Notice to the Family: The hearing officer will determine if the reasons for ECC/HANH's decision are factually stated in the Notice.

Discovery: The hearing officer will determine if ECC/HANH and the family were given the opportunity to examine any relevant documents in accordance with ECC/HANH policy.

ECC/HANH Evidence to Support the ECC/HANH Decision: The evidence consists of the facts presented. Evidence is not conclusion and it is not argument. The hearing officer will evaluate the facts to determine if they support ECC/HANH's conclusion.

Validity of Grounds for Termination of Assistance (when applicable): The hearing officer will determine if the termination of assistance is for one of the grounds specified in the HUD regulations and ECC/HANH policies. If the grounds for termination are not specified in the regulations or in compliance with ECC/HANH policies, then the decision of ECC/HANH will be overturned.

The hearing officer will issue a written decision to the family and ECC/HANH no later than 10 business days after the hearing. The report will contain the following information:

Hearing information:

- Name of the participant;
- Date, time and place of the hearing;
- Name of the hearing officer;
- Name of the ECC/HANH representative; and
- Name of family representative (if any).

Background: A brief, impartial statement of the reason for the hearing.

Summary of the Evidence: The hearing officer will summarize the testimony of each witness and identify any documents that a witness produced in support of his/her testimony and that are admitted into evidence.

Findings of Fact: The hearing officer will include all findings of fact, based on a preponderance of the evidence. *Preponderance of the evidence* is defined as

evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not. Preponderance of the evidence may not be determined by the number of witnesses, but by the greater weight of all evidence.

Conclusions: The hearing officer will render a conclusion derived from the facts that were found to be true by a preponderance of the evidence. The conclusion will result in a determination of whether these facts uphold ECC/HANH's decision.

Order: The hearing report will include a statement of whether ECC/HANH's decision is upheld or overturned. If it is overturned, the hearing officer will instruct ECC/HANH to change the decision in accordance with the hearing officer's determination. In the case of termination of assistance, the hearing officer will instruct ECC/HANH to restore the participant's program status.

Procedures for Rehearing or Further Hearing

ECC/HANH Policy

The hearing officer may ask the family for additional information and/or might adjourn the hearing in order to reconvene at a later date, before reaching a decision. If the family misses an appointment or deadline ordered by the hearing officer, the action of ECC/HANH will take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

ECC/HANH Notice of Final Decision [24 CFR 982.555(f)]

ECC/HANH is not bound by the decision of the hearing officer for matters in which ECC/HANH is not required to provide an opportunity for a hearing, decisions that exceed the authority of the hearing officer, decisions that conflict with or contradict HUD regulations, requirements, or are otherwise contrary to federal, state, or local laws.

If ECC/HANH determines it is not bound by the hearing officer's decision in accordance with HUD regulations, ECC/HANH must promptly notify the family of the determination and the reason for the determination.

ECC/HANH Policy

Only the Executive Director/President or their designee may make the determination that ECC/HANH is not bound by the hearing officer's decision.

Should the decision be made that ECC/HANH is not bound by the hearing officer's decision, ECC/HANH will mail a "Notice of Final Decision" including the hearing officer's report to the participant and their representative. This notice will be sent by first-class mail, postage pre-paid, with an affidavit of mailing enclosed. The participant will be mailed the original "Notice of Final Decision" and a copy of the proof of mailing. A copy of the "Notice of Final Decision" along with the original proof of mailing will be maintained in ECC/HANH's file.

16-III.D. HEARING AND APPEAL PROVISIONS FOR NONCITIZENS [24 CFR 5.514]

Denial or termination of assistance based on immigration status is subject to special hearing and notice rules. Applicants who are denied assistance due to immigration status are entitled to an informal hearing, not an informal review.

Assistance to a family may not be delayed, denied, or terminated on the basis of immigration status at any time prior to a decision under the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (formerly INS) appeal process. Assistance to a family may not be terminated or denied while the ECC/HANH hearing is pending, but assistance to an applicant may be delayed pending the completion of the informal hearing.

A decision against a family member, issued in accordance with the USCIS appeal process or the ECC/HANH informal hearing process, does not preclude the family from exercising the right, that may otherwise be available, to seek redress directly through judicial procedures.

Notice of Denial or Termination of Assistance [24 CFR 5.514(d)]

The notice of denial or termination of assistance for noncitizens must advise the family:

- That financial assistance will be denied or terminated, and provide a brief explanation of the reasons for the proposed denial or termination of assistance.
- The family may be eligible for proration of assistance.
- In the case of a participant, the criteria and procedures for obtaining relief under the provisions for preservation of families [24 CFR 5.514 and 5.518].
- That the family has a right to request an appeal to the USCIS of the results of secondary verification of immigration status and to submit additional documentation or explanation in support of the appeal.
- That the family has a right to request an informal hearing with ECC/HANH either upon completion of the USCIS appeal or in lieu of the USCIS appeal.
- For applicants, assistance may not be delayed until the conclusion of the USCIS appeal process, but assistance may be delayed during the period of the informal hearing process.

USCIS Appeal Process [24 CFR 5.514(e)]

When ECC/HANH receives notification that the USCIS secondary verification failed to confirm eligible immigration status, ECC/HANH must notify the family of the results of the USCIS verification. The family will have 30 days from the date of the notification to request an appeal of the USCIS results. The request for appeal must be made by the family in writing directly to the USCIS. The family must provide ECC/HANH with a copy of the written request for appeal and the proof of mailing.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will notify the family in writing of the results of the USCIS secondary verification within 10 business days of receiving the results.

The family must provide ECC/HANH with a copy of the written request for appeal and proof of mailing within 10 business days of sending the request to the USCIS.

The family must forward to the designated USCIS office any additional documentation or written explanation in support of the appeal. This material must include a copy of the USCIS document verification request (used to process the secondary request) or such other form specified by the USCIS, and a letter indicating that the family is requesting an appeal of the USCIS immigration status verification results.

The USCIS will notify the family, with a copy to ECC/HANH, of its decision. When the USCIS notifies ECC/HANH of the decision, ECC/HANH must notify the family of its right to request an informal hearing.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will send written notice to the family of its right to request an informal hearing within 10 business days of receiving notice of the USCIS decision regarding the family's immigration status.

Informal Hearing Procedures for Applicants [24 CFR 5.514(f)]

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, the family may request that ECC/HANH provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the ECC/HANH notice of denial, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

The informal hearing procedures for applicant families are described below.

Informal Hearing Officer

ECC/HANH must provide an informal hearing before an impartial individual, other than a person who made or approved the decision under review, and other than a person who is a subordinate of the person who made or approved the decision. See Section 16-III.C. for a listing of positions that serve as informal hearing officers.

Evidence

The family must be provided the opportunity to examine and copy at the family's expense, at a reasonable time in advance of the hearing, any documents in the possession of ECC/HANH pertaining to the family's eligibility status, or in the possession of the USCIS (as permitted by USCIS requirements), including any records and regulations that may be relevant to the hearing.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will copy requested documents relate to the hearing in ECC/HANH's offices at no charge to the family. The family must request discovery of ECC/HANH documents no later than 12:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the scheduled hearing date

ECC/HANH must be given an opportunity to examine at ECC/HANH offices before the hearing any family documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. Whenever a participant requests an informal hearing, ECC/HANH will automatically mail a letter to the participant requesting a copy of all documents that the participant intends to present or utilize at the hearing. The participant ~~are to~~ will make the documents available no later than 12:00 pm on the business day prior to the scheduled hearing date. However,

ECC/HANH will allow documents/evidence to be presented at informal hearing even if the family did not meet the above deadline to provide to ECC/HANH.

The family must be provided the opportunity to present evidence and arguments in support of eligible status. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

The family must also be provided the opportunity to refute evidence relied upon by ECC/HANH, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information ECC/HANH relies.

Representation and Interpretive Services

The family is entitled to be represented by an attorney or other designee, at the family's expense, and to have such person make statements on the family's behalf.

The family is entitled to request an interpreter free of charge.

Recording of the Hearing

The family is entitled to have the hearing recorded by audiotape. ECC/HANH may, but is not required to provide a transcript of the hearing.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will not provide a transcript of an audio taped hearing.

Hearing Decision

ECC/HANH must provide the family with a written final decision, based solely on the facts presented at the hearing, within 14 calendar days of the date of the informal hearing. The decision must state the basis for the decision.

Informal Hearing Procedures for Residents [24 CFR 5.514(f)]

After notification of the USCIS decision on appeal, or in lieu of an appeal to the USCIS, the family may request that ECC/HANH provide a hearing. The request for a hearing must be made either within 30 days of receipt of the EC/HANH notice of termination, or within 30 days of receipt of the USCIS appeal decision.

For the informal hearing procedures that apply to participant families whose assistance is being terminated based on immigration status, see Section 16-III.C.

Retention of Documents [24 CFR 5.514(h)]

ECC/HANH must retain for a minimum of 5 years the following documents that may have been submitted to ECC/HANH by the family, or provided to ECC/HANH as part of the USCIS appeal or the ECC/HANH informal hearing process:

- The application for assistance
- The form completed by the family for income reexamination
- Photocopies of any original documents, including original USCIS documents
- The signed verification consent form
- The USCIS verification results

- The request for a USCIS appeal
- The final USCIS determination
- The request for an informal hearing
- The final informal hearing decision

PART IV: OWNER OR FAMILY DEBTS TO ECC/HANH

16-IV.A. OVERVIEW

ECC/HANH is required to include in the administrative plan, policies concerning repayment by a family of amounts owed to ECC/HANH [24 CFR 982.54]. This part describes ECC/HANH'S policies for recovery of monies owed to ECC/HANH by families or owners.

ECC/HANH Policy

When an action or inaction of an owner or participant results in the overpayment of housing assistance, ECC/HANH holds the owner or participant liable to return any overpayments to ECC/HANH.

ECC/HANH will enter into repayment agreements in accordance with the policies contained in this part as a means to recover overpayments.

When an owner or participant refuses to repay monies owed to ECC/HANH, ECC/HANH will utilize other available collection alternatives including, but not limited to, the following:

Collection agencies

Small claims court

Civil lawsuit

16-IV.B. REPAYMENT POLICY

Owner Debts to ECC/HANH

ECC/HANH Policy

Any amount due to ECC/HANH by an owner must be repaid by the owner within 14 days of ECC/HANH determination of the debt.

If the owner fails to repay the debt within the required time frame and is entitled to future HAP payments, ECC/HANH will reduce the future HAP payments by the amount owed until the debt is paid in full.

If the owner is not entitled to future HAP payments ECC/HANH may, in its sole discretion, offer to enter into a repayment agreement on terms prescribed by ECC/HANH.

If the owner refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, ECC/HANH will ban the owner from future participation in the program and pursue other modes of collection.

Family Debts to ECC/HANH

ECC/HANH Policy

Any amount owed to ECC/HANH by an HCV family must be repaid by the family. If the family is unable to repay the debt within 30 days, ECC/HANH will offer to enter into a repayment agreement in accordance with the policies below.

If the family refuses to repay the debt, does not enter into a repayment agreement, or breaches a repayment agreement, ECC/HANH will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12 and pursue other modes of collection.

Repayment Agreement [24 CFR 792.103]

The term *repayment agreement* refers to a formal written document signed by a tenant or owner and provided to ECC/HANH in which a tenant or owner acknowledges a debt in a specific amount and agrees to repay the amount due at specific time periods.

General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families

Down Payment Requirement

ECC/HANH Policy

Before executing a repayment agreement with a family, ECC/HANH will generally require a down payment based on the amount owed as reflected below:

<u>Amount Owed</u>	<u>% of Total Amount Owed</u>
20%	\$0 - \$500
15%	\$501 - \$1,000
10%	\$1,001 - \$2,500
5%	\$2,501 - \$5,000

If the family can provide evidence satisfactory to ECC/HANH that a down payment of 10 percent would impose an undue hardship, ECC/HANH may, in its sole discretion, require a lesser percentage or waive the requirement.

Payment Thresholds

Notice PIH 2010-19 recommends that the total amount that a family must pay each month—the family’s monthly share of rent plus the monthly debt repayment amount—should not exceed 40 percent of the family’s monthly adjusted income. However, a family may already be paying 40 per cent or more of its monthly adjusted income in rent. Moreover, Notice PIH 2010-19 acknowledges that ECC/HANH have the discretion to establish “thresholds and policies” for repayment agreements with families [24 CFR 982.552(c)(1)(vii)].

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH has established the following thresholds for repayment of debts:

- Amounts from \$2,500 to \$5,000 must be repaid within 18 months
- Amounts from \$1,000 to \$2,499 must be repaid within 14 months
- Amounts from \$500 to \$999 must be repaid within 10 months
- Amounts under \$500 must be repaid within 6 months

Amounts above \$5,000 will be referred to ECC/HANH’s legal department.

If a family can provide evidence satisfactory to ECC/HANH that the threshold applicable to the family’s debt would impose an undue hardship, ECC/HANH may, in its sole discretion, determine that a lower monthly payment amount is reasonable. In making its

determination, ECC/HANH will consider all relevant information, including the following:

The amount owed by the family to ECC/HANH

The reason for the debt

The family's current and potential income and expenses

The family's current family share, as calculated under 24 CFR 982.515

The family's history of meeting its financial responsibilities

Execution of the Agreement

ECC/HANH Policy

Any repayment agreement between ECC/HANH and a family must be signed and dated by ECC/HANH and by the head of household and spouse/cohead (if applicable).

Due Dates

ECC/HANH Policy

All payments are due by the close of business on the 1st day of the month. If the 1st does not fall on a business day, the due date is the close of business on the first business day after the 1st.

Late or Missed Payments

ECC/HANH Policy

If a payment is not received by the end of the 10th business day of the month, it will be considered a breach of the agreement and ECC/HANH will terminate assistance in accordance with the policies in Chapter 12.

No Offer of Repayment Agreement

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH generally will not enter into a repayment agreement with a family if there is already a repayment agreement in place with the family.

Repayment Agreements Involving Improper Payments

Notice PIH 2010-19 requires certain provisions to be included in any repayment agreement involving amounts owed by a family because it underreported or failed to report income:

- A reference to the items in the family briefing packet that state the family's obligation to provide true and complete information at every reexamination and the grounds on which ECC/HANH may terminate assistance because of a family's action or failure to act
- A statement clarifying that each month the family not only must pay to ECC/HANH the monthly payment amount specified in the agreement but must also pay to the owner the family's monthly share of the rent to owner
- A statement that the terms of the repayment agreement may be renegotiated if the family's income decreases or increases

- A statement that late or missed payments constitute default of the repayment agreement and may result in termination of assistance

PART V: SECTION 8 MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (SEMAP)

16-V.A. OVERVIEW

The Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) is a tool that allows HUD to measure ECC/HANH performance in key areas to ensure program integrity and accountability. SEMAP scores translate into a rating for ECC/HANH as high performing, standard, or troubled. Scores on individual SEMAP indicators, as well as overall SEMAP ratings, can affect ECC/HANH in several ways.

- High-performing - can be given a competitive advantage under notices of funding availability [24 CFR 985.103].
- Standard - if there are deficiencies on one or more indicators are required to correct the deficiencies and report to HUD [24 CFR 985.106].
- Troubled - subject to additional HUD oversight, including on-site reviews by HUD staff, a requirement to develop a corrective action plan, and monitoring to ensure the successful implementation of the corrective action plan. In addition, may not use any part of the administrative fee reserve for other housing purposes [24 CFR 985.107].
- HUD may determine that a failure to correct identified SEMAP deficiencies or to prepare and implement a corrective action plan required by HUD constitutes a default under the ACC [24 CFR 985.109].

ECC/HANH Policy

NOTE: As a Moving-to-Work agency, ECC/HANH is not required to certify to HUD under SEMAP, relevant SEMAP indicators have been incorporated in ECC/HANH's Quality Control Plan and the SEMAP Certification process is outlined below.

16-V.B. SEMAP CERTIFICATION [24 CFR 985.101]

PHAs must submit the HUD-required SEMAP certification form within 60 calendar days after the end of its fiscal year. The certification must be approved by PHA board resolution and signed by the PHA executive director. If the PHA is a unit of local government or a state, a resolution approving the certification is not required, and the certification must be executed by the Section 8 program director.

PHAs with less than 250 voucher units are only required to be assessed every other PHA fiscal year. HUD will assess such PHAs annually if the PHA elects to have its performance assessed on an annual basis; or is designated as "troubled" [24 CFR 985.105].

Failure of a PHA to submit its SEMAP certification within the required time frame will result in an overall performance rating of "troubled."

A PHA's SEMAP certification is subject to HUD verification by an on-site confirmatory review at any time.

Upon receipt of the PHA's SEMAP certification, HUD will rate the PHA's performance under each SEMAP indicator in accordance with program requirements.

HUD Verification Method

Several of the SEMAP indicators are scored based on a review of a quality control sample selected for this purpose. The PHA or the Independent Auditor must select an unbiased sample that provides an adequate representation of the types of information to be assessed, in accordance with SEMAP requirements [24 CFR 985.2].

If the HUD verification method for the indicator relies on data in the Form-50058 module (formerly known as MTCS) in the PIH Information Center (PIC), and HUD determines that those data are insufficient to verify the PHA's certification on the indicator due to the PHA's failure to adequately report family data, HUD will assign a zero rating for the indicator [24 CFR 985.3].

16-V.C. SEMAP INDICATORS [24 CFR 985.3 and form HUD-52648]

The table below lists each of the SEMAP indicators, contains a description of each indicator, and explains the basis for points awarded under each indicator.

A PHA that expends less than \$300,000 in Federal awards and whose Section 8 programs are not audited by an independent auditor, is not be rated under SEMAP indicators 1-7.

SEMAP Indicators
<p>Indicator 1: Selection from the waiting list Maximum Score: 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This indicator shows whether the PHA has written policies in its administrative plan for selecting applicants from the waiting list and whether the PHA follows these policies when selecting applicants for admission from the waiting list.• Points are based on the percent of families that are selected from the waiting list in accordance with the PHA's written policies, according to the PHA's quality control sample.
<p>Indicator 2: Rent reasonableness Maximum Score: 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This indicator shows whether the PHA has and implements a reasonable written method to determine and document for each unit leased that the rent to owner is reasonable based on current rents for comparable unassisted units• Points are based on the percent of units for which the PHA follows its written method to determine reasonable rent and has documented its determination that the rent to owner is reasonable, according to the PHA's quality control sample.
<p>Indicator 3: Determination of adjusted income Maximum Score: 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This indicator measures whether the PHA verifies and correctly determines adjusted income for each assisted family, and where applicable, uses the appropriate utility allowances for the unit leased in determining the gross rent.• Points are based on the percent of files that are calculated and verified correctly, according to the PHA's quality control sample.

Indicator 4: Utility allowance schedule

Maximum Score: 5

- This indicator shows whether the PHA maintains an up-to-date utility allowance schedule.
- Points are based on whether the PHA has reviewed the utility allowance schedule and adjusted it when required, according to the PHA’s certification.

Indicator 5: HQS quality control inspections

Maximum Score: 5

- This indicator shows whether a PHA supervisor reinspects a sample of units under contract during the PHA fiscal year, which meets the minimum sample size requirements for quality control of HQS inspections.
- Points are based on whether the required quality control reinspections were completed, according to the PHA’s certification.

Indicator 6: HQS enforcement

Maximum Score: 10

- This indicator shows whether, following each HQS inspection of a unit under contract where the unit fails to meet HQS, any cited life-threatening deficiencies are corrected within 24 hours from the inspection and all other deficiencies are corrected within no more than 30 calendar days from the inspection or any PHA-approved extension.
- Points are based on whether the PHA corrects all HQS deficiencies in accordance with required time frames, according to the PHA’s certification.

Indicator 7: Expanding housing opportunities

Maximum Points: 5

- Only applies to PHAs with jurisdiction in metropolitan FMR areas.
- This indicator shows whether the PHA has adopted and implemented a written policy to encourage participation by owners of units located outside areas of poverty or minority concentration; informs voucher holders of the full range of areas where they may lease units both inside and outside the PHA’s jurisdiction; and supplies a list of landlords or other parties who are willing to lease units or help families find units, including units outside areas of poverty or minority concentration.
- Points are based on whether the PHA has adopted and implemented written policies in accordance with SEMAP requirements, according to the PHA’s certification.

Indicator 8: FMR limit and payment standards

Maximum Points: 5 points

- This indicator shows whether the PHA has adopted a payment standard schedule that establishes payment standard amounts by unit size for each FMR area in the PHA’s jurisdiction, that are within the basic range of 90 to 110 percent of the published FMR.
- Points are based on whether the PHA has appropriately adopted a payment standard schedule(s), according to the PHA’s certification.

Indicator 9: Annual reexaminations**Maximum Points: 10**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA completes a reexamination for each participating family at least every 12 months.
- Points are based on the percent of reexaminations that are more than 2 months overdue, according to data from PIC.

Indicator 10: Correct tenant rent calculations**Maximum Points: 5**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA correctly calculates the family's share of the rent to owner.
- Points are based on the percent of correct calculations of family share of the rent, according to data from PIC.

Indicator 11: Pre-contract HQS inspections**Maximum Points: 5**

- This indicator shows whether newly leased units pass HQS inspection on or before the effective date of the assisted lease and HAP contract.
- Points are based on the percent of newly leased units that passed HQS inspection prior to the effective date of the lease and HAP contract, according to data from PIC.

Indicator 12: Annual HQS inspections**Maximum Points: 10**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA inspects each unit under contract at least annually.
- Points are based on the percent of annual HQS inspections of units under contract that are more than 2 months overdue, according to data from PIC.

Indicator 13: Lease-up**Maximum Points: 20 points**

- This indicator shows whether the PHA enters HAP contracts for the number of units or funding reserved under ACC for at least one year.
- Points are based on the percent of units leased during the last completed PHA fiscal year, or the percent of allocated budget authority that has been expended by the PHA, according to data from the PHA's last year-end operating statement that is recorded in HUD's accounting system.

Indicator 14: Family self-sufficiency (FSS) enrollment and escrow account balances**Maximum Points: 10**

- Only applies to PHAs with mandatory FSS programs.
- This indicator shows whether the PHA has enrolled families in the FSS program as required, and measures the percent of current FSS participants that have had increases in earned income which resulted in escrow account balances.
- Points are based on the percent of mandatory FSS slots that are filled and the percent of families with escrow account balances, according to data from PIC.

Success Rate of Voucher Holders**Maximum Points: 5**

- Only applies to PHAs that have received approval to establish success rate payment standard amounts, and isn't effective until the second full PHA fiscal year following the date of HUD approval of success rate payment standard amounts.
- This indicator shows whether voucher holders were successful in leasing units with voucher assistance.
- Points are based on the percent of families that were issued vouchers, and that became participants in the voucher program.

Deconcentration Bonus Indicator**Maximum Points: 5**

- Submission of data for this indicator is mandatory for a PHA using one or more payment standard amount(s) that exceed(s) 100 percent of the published FMR set at the 50 percentile rent, starting with the second full PHA fiscal year following initial use of payment standard amounts based on the FMRs set at the 50th percentile.
- Additional points are available to PHAs that have jurisdiction in metropolitan FMR areas and that choose to submit the required data.
- Points are based on whether the data that is submitted meets the requirements for bonus points.

PART VI: RECORD KEEPING

16-VI.A. OVERVIEW

ECC/HANH must maintain complete and accurate accounts and other records for the program in accordance with HUD requirements, in a manner that permits a speedy and effective audit. All such records must be made available to HUD or the Comptroller General of the United States upon request.

In addition, ECC/HANH must ensure that all applicant and participant files are maintained in a way that protects an individual's privacy rights.

16-VI.B. RECORD RETENTION [24 CFR 982.158]

During the term of each assisted lease, and for at least three years thereafter, ECC/HANH must keep:

- A copy of the executed lease;
- The HAP contract; and
- The application from the family.

In addition, ECC/HANH must keep the following records for at least three years:

- Records that provide income, racial, ethnic, gender, and disability status data on program applicants and participants;
- An application from each ineligible family and notice that the applicant is not eligible;
- HUD-required reports;
- Unit inspection reports;
- Lead-based paint records as required by 24 CFR 35, Subpart B.
- Accounts and other records supporting ECC/HANH budget and financial statements for the program;
- Records to document the basis for ECC/HANH determination that rent to owner is a reasonable rent (initially and during the term of a HAP contract); and
- Other records specified by HUD.
- Notice PIH 2014-20 requires ECC/HANH to keep records of all complaints, investigations, notices, and corrective actions related to violations of the Fair Housing Act or the equal access final rule.

If an informal hearing to establish a family's citizenship status is held, longer retention requirements apply for some types of documents. For specific requirements, see Section 16-III.D., Retention of Documents.

16-VI.C. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

ECC/HANH must maintain applicant and participant files and information in accordance with the regulatory requirements described below.

ECC/HANH Policy

All applicant and participant information will be kept in a secure location and access will be limited to authorized ECC/HANH staff.

ECC/HANH staff will not discuss personal family information unless there is a business reason to do so. Inappropriate discussion of family information or improper disclosure of family information by staff will result in disciplinary action.

Privacy Act Requirements [24 CFR 5.212 and Form-9886]

The collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of social security numbers (SSN), employer identification numbers (EIN), any information derived from these numbers, and income information of applicants and participants must be conducted, to the extent applicable, in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and all other provisions of Federal, State, and local law.

Applicants and participants, including all adults in the household, are required to sign a consent form, HUD-9886, Authorization for Release of Information. This form incorporates the Federal Privacy Act Statement and describes how the information collected using the form may be used, and under what conditions HUD or ECC/HANH may release the information collected.

Upfront Income Verification (UIV) Records

PHAs (ECC/HANH) that access UIV data through HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system are required to adopt and follow specific security procedures to ensure that all EIV data is protected in accordance with federal laws, regardless of the media on which the data is recorded (e.g. electronic, paper). These requirements are contained in the HUD-issued document, *Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System, Security Procedures for Upfront Income Verification data*.

ECC/HANH Policy

Prior to utilizing HUD's EIV system, ECC/HANH will adopt and implement EIV security procedures required by HUD.

Criminal Records

ECC/HANH may only disclose the criminal conviction records which ECC/HANH receives from a law enforcement agency to officers or employees of ECC/HANH, or to authorized representatives of ECC/HANH who have a job-related need to have access to the information [24 CFR 5.903(e)].

ECC/HANH must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any criminal record received by ECC/HANH from a law enforcement agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to the ECC/HANH action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation [24 CFR 5.903(g)].

ECC/HANH must establish and implement a system of records management that ensures that any sex offender registration information received by ECC/HANH from a State or local agency is maintained confidentially, not misused or improperly disseminated, and destroyed, once the

purpose for which the record was requested has been accomplished, including expiration of the period for filing a challenge to the ECC/HANH action without institution of a challenge or final disposition of any such litigation. However, a record of the screening, including the type of screening and the date performed must be retained [Notice PIH 2012-28]. This requirement does not apply to information that is public information, or is obtained by ECC/HANH other than under 24 CFR 5.905.

Medical/Disability Records

ECC/HANH is not permitted to inquire about the nature or extent of a person's disability. ECC/HANH may not inquire about a person's diagnosis or details of treatment for a disability or medical condition. If ECC/HANH receives a verification document that provides such information, ECC/HANH should not place this information in the tenant file. ECC/HANH should destroy the document.

Documentation of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

For requirements and ECC/HANH policies related to management of documentation obtained from victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, see section 16-IX.E.

PART VII: REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING FOR CHILDREN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTION BLOOD LEAD LEVEL

16-VII.A. OVERVIEW

ECC/HANH has certain responsibilities relative to children with environmental intervention blood lead levels that are receiving HCV assistance. The notification, verification, and hazard reduction requirements are discussed in Chapter 8. This part deals with the reporting requirements, and data collection and record keeping responsibilities that ECC/HANH is subject to.

16-VII.B. REPORTING REQUIREMENT [24 CFR 35.1225(e)]]; PIH 2017-13 (HA); OHHLHC 2017-01; HUD Lead Safe Housing Rule; ECC/HANH Lead Safe Housing Policy and Procedure

ECC/HANH has certain responsibilities relative to children with environmental intervention blood lead levels that are living in housing choice voucher units.

ECC/HANH must report the name and address of a child of less than 6 years of age, identified as having an **environmental intervention elevated**-blood lead level (**EBLL**) to the public health department within 5 business days of being so notified by any other medical health care professional. ECC/HANH must also report each known case of a child with an **environmental elevated intervention**-blood lead level to the HUD field office and HUD's Office of Lead Control.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will provide the public health department written notice of the name and address of any child of less than 6 years of age, identified as having an **environmental intervention elevated** blood lead level (**EBLL**).

ECC/HANH will provide written notice of each known case of a child with an **environmental intervention elevated** blood **lead** level to the HUD field office, HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control, the CT State Health Dept. and the New Haven Health Dept., within 5 business days of receiving the information.

ECC/HANH will ensure that an environmental investigation of the child's unit and the common areas servicing that unit occurs within **15 calendar days** in accordance with Chapter 16 of the HUD Guidelines. If the unit is in a multi-unit development, an assessment must be performed in all other covered units with children under the age of 6 and the common areas servicing those units.

ECC/HANH shall notify the HUD Field Office of the results of the environmental investigation within **10 business days** of receiving the results.

ECC/HANH must notify the family of the results of the environmental review within **15 calendar days** after receiving the results.

ECC/HANH will direct that any lead-based hazards identified by the investigation are controlled within **30 calendar days** by a certified lead-based paint abatement firm or certified lead renovation firm.

In a multi-unit development, ECC/HANH shall ensure that all residents are notified of the lead evaluation and hazard control activities.

ECC/HANH will ensure that any lead hazard control (including passing clearance) is complete.

ECC/HANH shall notify the HUD Field Office of the results of the lead hazard control work within **10 business days**.

After completion of the lead control work, ECC/HANH shall monitor Owner compliance through periodic Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections, not less than annually and ensure that the unit and common areas are maintained as lead safe for continued occupancy.

Re-evaluations are required every 2 years by a certified lead risk assessor. Any findings must be attended to.

The HCV Department staff is responsible for notifying all owners of their responsibility under this rule and to agree to notify ECC/HANH of EBLL cases

16-VII.C. DATA COLLECTION AND RECORD KEEPING [24 CFR 35.1225(f)]

At least quarterly, ECC/HANH must attempt to obtain from the public health department(s) with a similar area of jurisdiction, the names and/or addresses of children less than 6 years old with an identified environmental intervention blood lead level.

If ECC/HANH obtains names and addresses of environmental intervention blood lead level children from the public health department(s), ECC/HANH must match this information with the names and addresses of families receiving HCV assistance, unless the public health department performs such a procedure. If a match occurs, ECC/HANH must carry out the notification, verification, and hazard reduction requirements discussed in Chapter 8, and the reporting requirement discussed above.

At least quarterly, ECC/HANH must also report an updated list of the addresses of units receiving assistance under the HCV program to the same public health department(s), unless the public health department(s) states that it does not wish to receive such a report.

ECC/HANH Policy

~~The public health department(s) has stated they **do not** wish to receive a report of an updated list of the addresses of units receiving assistance under the HCV program, on a quarterly basis. Therefore, ECC/HANH is not providing such a report.~~

ECC/HANH has entered into a data sharing agreement with the local health department. Address information will be shared on a quarterly basis.

PART VIII: DETERMINATION OF INSUFFICIENT FUNDING

16-VIII.A. OVERVIEW

The HCV regulations allows ECC/HANH to deny families permission to move and to terminate Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contracts if funding under the consolidated ACC is insufficient to support continued assistance [24 CFR 982.314(e)(1) and 982.454]. If ECC/HANH denies a family a portability move based on insufficient funding, ECC/HANH is required to notify the local HUD office within 10 business days [24 CFR 982.354]. Insufficient funding may also impact ECC/HANH's ability to issue vouchers to families on the waiting list. This part discusses the methodology ECC/HANH will use to determine whether or not ECC/HANH has sufficient funding to issue vouchers, approve moves, and to continue subsidizing all families currently under a HAP contract.

16-VIII.B. METHODOLOGY

ECC/HANH Policy

The total HAP needs for the calendar year will be established in the ECC/HANH annual MTW plan under Section II: General Housing Authority Operating Information: Housing Choice Voucher Program approved by the ECC/HANH Board of Commissions and submitted and approved by HUD.

The plan will state the number of vouchers and the amounts of ECC/HANH budget allocated to HAP payments for the applicable fiscal year and include ECC/HANH projected HAP payments for Section 8, Project Based Voucher units, RAD vouchers, special project vouchers, SRO and VASH vouchers if either the total number of vouchers allocated or costs of the vouchers allocated exceeds the amount projected in the Annual MTW Plan, the authority shall have the right to suspend the issuance of new vouchers and suspend the absorption of vouchers from other PHAs until such time as (i) there is an approved modification or amendment to the HCV allocation table in the annual MTW plan that increases that amount of vouchers available for issuance (ii) there are turn over vouchers available to support the re-issuance of new tenant based vouchers (A turn-over voucher as defined by HUD is a voucher that becomes available when that voucher is returned to the agency, when it is vacated by a resident); and or (iii) there is an increase HAP funding to the agency from the office of HUD.

As ECC/HANH is a MTW agency it has the right to allocate a certain percentage of annual budget authority to fund activities and initiatives consistent with the agency's mission and goals. These activities and initiatives are defined in the ECC/HANH annual MTW plan and updated annually.

PART IX: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): NOTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, CONFIDENTIALITY

16-IX.A. OVERVIEW

The Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides special protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking who are applying for or receiving assistance under the housing choice voucher (HCV) program. If your state or local laws provide greater protection for such victims, those laws apply in conjunction with VAWA.

In addition to definitions of key terms used in VAWA, this part contains general VAWA requirements and ECC/HANH policies in three areas: notification, documentation, and confidentiality. Specific VAWA requirements and ECC/HANH policies are located primarily in the following sections: 3-I.C, “Family Breakup and Remaining Member of Tenant Family”; 3-III.G, “Prohibition against Denial of Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking”; 10-I.A, “Allowable Moves”; 10-I.B, “Restrictions on Moves”; 12-II.E, “Terminations Related to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking”; and 12-II.F, “Termination Notice.”

16-IX.B. DEFINITIONS [24 CFR 5.2003, 42 U.S.C 13925]

As used in VAWA:

- The term *bifurcate* means, with respect to a public housing or Section 8 lease, to divide a lease as a matter of law such that certain tenants can be evicted or removed while the remaining family members’ lease and occupancy rights are allowed to remain intact.
- The term *dating violence* means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
 - The length of the relationship
 - The type of relationship
 - The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship
- The term *domestic violence* includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, 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 person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.
- The term *affiliated individual* means, with respect to a person:
 - A spouse, parent, brother or sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in the position or place of a parent; or
 - Any other individual, tenant or lawful occupant living in the household of that the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

- The term *sexual assault* means:
 - Any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks the capacity to consent
- The term *stalking* means:
 - To engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

16-IX.C. NOTIFICATION [24 CFR 5.2005(a)]

Notification to Public

ECC/HANH adopts the following policy to help ensure that all actual and potential beneficiaries of its HCV program are aware of their rights under VAWA.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will post the following information regarding VAWA in its offices and on its Web site. It will also make the information readily available to anyone who requests it.

A summary of the rights and protections provided by VAWA to housing choice voucher program applicants and participants who are or have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (see sample notices in Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2)

The definitions of *domestic violence*, *dating violence*, *sexual assault*, and *stalking* provided in VAWA (included in Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2)

An explanation of the documentation that ECC/HANH may require from an individual who claims the protections provided by VAWA (included in Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2)

A copy of form HUD-50066, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

A statement of ECC/HANH’s obligation to keep confidential any information that it receives from a victim unless (a) ECC/HANH has the victim’s written permission to release the information, (b) it needs to use the information in an eviction proceeding, or (c) it is compelled by law to release the information (included in Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2)

The National Domestic Violence Hot Line: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) (included in Exhibits 16-1 and 16-2)

Contact information for local victim advocacy groups or service providers

Notification to Program Applicants and Participants [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(1)]

ECC/HANH is required to inform program applicants and participants of their rights under VAWA, including their right to confidentiality and the limits thereof, when they are denied assistance, when they are admitted to the program, and when they are notified of an eviction or termination of housing benefits.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will provide all applicants with information about VAWA at the time they request an application for housing assistance. ECC/HANH will also include information about VAWA in all notices of denial of assistance (see section 3-III.G).

ECC/HANH will provide all participants with information about VAWA at the time of admission (see section 5-I.B) and at bi/triennial reexamination. ECC/HANH will also include information about VAWA in notices of termination of assistance, as provided in section 12-II.F.

The VAWA information provided to applicants and participants will consist of the notice in Exhibit 16-1 and a copy of form HUD-50066, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking.

Notification to Owners and Managers [24 CFR 5.2005(a)(2)]

ECC/HANH is required to notify owners and managers participating in the HCV program of their rights and obligations under VAWA.

ECC/HANH Policy

ECC/HANH will provide owners and managers with information about their rights and obligations under VAWA when they begin their participation in the HCV program and at least annually thereafter.

The VAWA information provided to owners will consist of the notice in Exhibit 16-2 and a copy of form HUD-50066, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking.

16-IX.D. DOCUMENTATION [24 CFR 5.2007]

ECC/HANH, presented with a claim for initial or continued assistance based on status as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or criminal activity related to any of these forms of abuse may—but is not required to—request that the individual making the claim document the abuse. Any request for documentation must be in writing, and the individual must be allowed at least 14 business days after receipt of the request to submit the documentation. ECC/HANH may extend this time period at its discretion. [24 CFR 5.2007(a)]

The individual may satisfy ECC/HANH's request by providing any one of the following three forms of documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(b)]:

- (1) A completed and signed HUD-approved certification form (HUD-50066, Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking), which 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) A federal, state, tribal, territorial, or local police report or court record, or an administrative record
- (3) Documentation signed by a person who has assisted the victim in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, or the effects of such abuse. This person may be an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider; an attorney; a mental health professional; or a medical professional. The person signing the documentation must

attest under penalty of perjury to the person's belief that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse. The victim must also sign the documentation.

ECC/HANH may not require third-party documentation (forms 2 and 3) in addition to certification (form 1), except as specified below under "Conflicting Documentation," nor may it require certification in addition to third-party documentation [VAWA final rule].

ECC/HANH Policy

Any request for documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking will be in writing, will specify a deadline of 14 business days following receipt of the request, will describe the three forms of acceptable documentation, will provide explicit instructions on where and to whom the documentation must be submitted, and will state the consequences for failure to submit the documentation or request an extension in writing by the deadline.

ECC/HANH may, in its discretion, extend the deadline for 10 business days. Any extension granted by ECC/HANH will be in writing.

Conflicting Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(e)]

In cases where ECC/HANH 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, ECC/HANH may determine which is the true victim by requiring each to provide acceptable third-party documentation, as described above (forms 2 and 3). ECC/HANH must honor any court orders issued to protect the victim or to address the distribution of property.

ECC/HANH Policy

If presented with conflicting certification documents (two or more forms HUD-50066) from members of the same household, ECC/HANH will attempt to determine which is the true victim by requiring each of them to provide third-party documentation in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(c) and by following any HUD guidance on how such determinations should be made.

Discretion to Require No Formal Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(d)]

ECC/HANH has the discretion to provide benefits to an individual based solely on the individual's statement or other corroborating evidence—i.e., without requiring formal documentation of abuse in accordance with 24 CFR 5.2007(b).

ECC/HANH Policy

If ECC/HANH accepts an individual's statement or other corroborating evidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, ECC/HANH will document acceptance of the statement or evidence in the individual's file.

Failure to Provide Documentation [24 CFR 5.2007(c)]

In order to deny relief for protection under VAWA, ECC/HANH must provide the individual requesting relief with a written request for documentation of abuse. If the individual fails to

provide the documentation within 14 business days from the date of receipt, or such longer time as ECC/HANH may allow, ECC/HANH may deny relief for protection under VAWA.

16-IX.E. CONFIDENTIALITY [24 CFR 5.2007(b)(4)]

All information provided to ECC/HANH regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including the fact that an individual is a victim of such violence or stalking, must be retained in confidence. This means that ECC/HANH (1) may not enter the information into any shared database, (2) may not allow employees or others to access the information unless they are explicitly authorized to do so and have a need to know the information for purposes of their work, and (3) may not provide the information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that the disclosure is (a) requested or consented to by the individual in writing, (b) required for use in an eviction proceeding, or (c) otherwise required by applicable law.

ECC/HANH Policy

If disclosure is required for use in an eviction proceeding or is otherwise required by applicable law, ECC/HANH will inform the victim before disclosure occurs so that safety risks can be identified and addressed.

**EXHIBIT 16-1: SAMPLE NOTICE TO HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER APPLICANTS
AND PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT
(VAWA)**

This sample notice was adapted from a notice prepared by the National Housing Law Project.

A federal law that went into effect in 2013 protects individuals who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The name of the law is the Violence against Women Act, or “VAWA.” This notice explains your rights under VAWA.

Protections for Victims

If you are eligible for a Section 8 voucher, the housing authority cannot deny you rental assistance solely because you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

If you are the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, you cannot be terminated from the Section 8 program or evicted based on acts or threats of violence committed against you. Also, criminal acts directly related to the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are caused by a member of your household or a guest can’t be the reason for evicting you or terminating your rental assistance if you were the victim of the abuse.

Reasons You Can Be Evicted

You can be evicted, and your rental assistance can be terminated if the housing authority or your landlord can show there is an *actual* and *imminent* (immediate) threat to other tenants or employees at the property if you remain in your housing. Also, you can be evicted and your rental assistance can be terminated for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against you. The housing authority and your landlord cannot hold you to a more demanding set of rules than it applies to tenants who are not victims.

Removing the Abuser from the Household

Your landlord may split the lease to evict a tenant who has committed criminal acts of violence against family members or others, while allowing the victim and other household members to stay in the assisted unit. Also, the housing authority can terminate the abuser’s Section 8 rental assistance while allowing you to continue to receive assistance. If the landlord or housing authority chooses to remove the abuser, it may not take away the remaining tenants’ rights to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. In removing the abuser from the household, your landlord must follow federal, state, and local eviction procedures.

Moving to Protect Your Safety

The housing authority may permit you to move and still keep your rental assistance, even if your current lease has not yet expired. The housing authority may require that you be current on your rent or other obligations in the housing choice voucher program. The housing authority may ask you to provide proof that you are moving because of incidences of abuse.

Proving That You Are a Victim of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

The housing authority and your landlord can ask you to prove or “certify” that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The housing authority or your landlord must give you at least 14 business days (i.e., Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays do not count) to provide this proof. The housing authority and your landlord are free to extend the deadline. There are three ways you can prove that you are a victim:

- Complete the certification form given to you by the housing authority or your landlord. The form will ask for your name, the name of your abuser, the abuser’s relationship to you, the date, time, and location of the incident of violence, and a description of the violence. You are only required to provide the name of the abuser if it is safe to provide and you know their name.
- Provide a statement from a victim service provider, attorney, mental health professional, or medical professional who has helped you address incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The professional must state that he or she believes that the incidents of abuse are real. Both you and the professional must sign the statement, and both of you must state that you are signing “under penalty of perjury.”
- Provide a police or court record, such as a protective order, or an administrative record.

Additionally, at its discretion, the housing authority can accept a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

If you fail to provide one of these documents within the required time, the landlord may evict you, and the housing authority may terminate your rental assistance.

Confidentiality

The housing authority and your landlord must keep confidential any information you provide about the violence against you, unless:

- You give written permission to the housing authority or your landlord to release the information.
- Your landlord needs to use the information in an eviction proceeding, such as to evict your abuser.
- A law requires the housing authority or your landlord to release the information.

If release of the information would put your safety at risk, you should inform the housing authority and your landlord.

VAWA and Other Laws

VAWA does not limit the housing authority’s or your landlord’s duty to honor court orders about access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect a victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

VAWA does not replace any federal, state, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

For Additional Information

If you have any questions regarding VAWA, please contact ECC/HANH's Reasonable Accommodation Manager at 203-498-8800.

For help and advice on escaping an abusive relationship, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Or, contact local domestic violence service agencies, including:

- Domestic Violence Services of Greater New Haven
<http://www.dvsgnh.org>
PO Box 1329
New Haven, CT 06505
Phone: 203-865-1957
- In South Central Connecticut call the DVS hotline at 203-789-8104 or the state-wide hotline at 888-774-2900
- BHcare

<http://www.bhcare.org> Call us at either: (203) 736-2601 or (203) 483-2630

BHcare Central Administrative Office
127 Washington Avenue, Third Floor West
North Haven, CT 06473
p. (203) 446-9739 f. (203) 446-9775

BHcare Shoreline Offices
14 Sycamore Way
Branford, CT 06405
p. (203) 483-2630 f. (203) 483-2659

Definitions

For purposes of determining whether a tenant may be covered by VAWA, the following list of definitions applies:

VAWA defines *domestic violence* to include felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by any of the following:

- A current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim
- A person with whom the victim shares a child in common
- A person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner
- A person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies
- Any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction

VAWA defines *dating violence* as violence committed by a person (1) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim AND (2) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- The length of the relationship
- The type of relationship
- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

VAWA defines *sexual assault* as “any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent” (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)).

VAWA defines *stalking* as engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.

EXHIBIT 16-2: SAMPLE NOTICE TO HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER OWNERS AND MANAGERS REGARDING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

This sample notice was adapted from a notice prepared by the National Housing Law Project.

A federal law that went into effect in 2013 protects individuals who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The name of the law is the Violence against Women Act, or “VAWA.” This notice explains your obligations under VAWA.

Protections for Victims

You cannot refuse to rent to an applicant solely because he or she is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

You cannot evict a tenant who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking based on acts or threats of violence committed against the victim. Also, criminal acts directly related to the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are caused by a household member or guest cannot be cause for evicting the victim of the abuse.

Permissible Evictions

You can evict a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking if you can demonstrate that there is an *actual and imminent* (immediate) threat to other tenants or employees at the property if the victim is not evicted. Also, you may evict a victim for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You cannot hold a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding standard than you hold tenants who are not victims.

Removing the Abuser from the Household

You may bifurcate (split) the lease to evict a tenant who has committed criminal acts of violence against family members or others, while allowing the victim and other household members to stay in the unit. If you choose to remove the abuser, you may not take away the remaining tenants’ rights to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. In removing the abuser from the household, you must follow federal, state, and local eviction procedures.

Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking

If a tenant asserts VAWA’s protections, you can ask the tenant to certify that he or she is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You are not required to demand official documentation and may rely upon the victim’s statement alone. If you choose to request certification, you must do so in writing and give the tenant at least 14 business days to provide documentation. You are free to extend this deadline. A tenant can certify that he or she is a victim by providing any one of the following three documents:

- A completed, signed HUD-approved certification form. The most recent form is HUD-50066. This form is available at the housing authority or online at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/administration/hudclips/forms/hud5.
- A statement from a victim service provider, attorney, or medical professional who has helped the victim address incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The professional must state that he or she believes that the incidents of abuse are real. Both the victim and the professional must sign the statement under penalty of perjury.

- A police or court record, such as a protective order mental health professional.

If the tenant fails to provide one of these documents within 14 business days, you may evict the tenant if authorized by otherwise applicable law and lease provisions.

Confidentiality

You must keep confidential any information a tenant provides to certify that he or she is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You cannot enter the information into a shared database or reveal it to outside entities unless:

- The tenant provides written permission releasing the information.
- The information is required for use in an eviction proceeding, such as to evict the abuser.
- Release of the information is otherwise required by law.

The victim should inform you if the release of the information would put his or her safety at risk.

VAWA and Other Laws

VAWA does not limit your obligation to honor court orders regarding access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect the victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

VAWA does not replace any federal, state, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Additional Information

If you have any questions regarding VAWA, please contact ECC/HANH's Reasonable Accommodation Manager at 203-498-8800 extension 1507.

Definitions

For purposes of determining whether a tenant may be covered by VAWA, the following list of definitions applies:

VAWA defines *domestic violence* to include felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by any of the following:

- A current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim
- A person with whom the victim shares a child in common
- A person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner
- A person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies
- Any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction

VAWA defines *dating violence* as violence committed by a person (1) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim AND (2) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- The length of the relationship
- The type of relationship
- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

VAWA defines *sexual assault* as “any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent” (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)).

VAWA defines *stalking* as engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress.