

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION OF MENDOCINO COUNTY
HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

**I. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF APPROACH AND OBJECTIVES TO
ADMINISTER THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS**

A. BACKGROUND

The Community Development Commission of Mendocino County (CDC) was established in 1978 and empowered with the responsibility and authority to maintain the Public Housing Program for the County of Mendocino, Ukiah, CA. The Housing Choice Voucher Program was created by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and amended by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1981 and the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. In 1978 the Section 8 Program (now called Housing Choice Voucher Program) was established by Community Development Commission of Mendocino County (hereinafter referred to as CDC or Housing Authority), when it received the first Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) under the Housing Choice Voucher Existing Housing Assistance Payments Program.

Administration of the Housing Choice Voucher Housing Programs and the function and the responsibilities of the CDC staff shall be in compliance with the Personnel Policy of the CDC, the Fair Housing regulations, the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan, and applicable Standard Operating Procedures. All Federal, State and local housing laws will be followed and the CDC will comply with the County of Mendocino Consolidated Plan and their own Agency Plan.

**B. HOUSING AUTHORITY MISSION STATEMENT AND HOUSING CHOICE
VOUCHER PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

1. The mission statement of the CDC is:

Provide opportunities for decent, safe, affordable housing and suitable living environment to low and moderate income, special needs, households and communities in an effective, efficient and respectful manner.

2. The following objectives of the Housing Choice Voucher Programs support the above mission statement:

- a. To provide decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions;
- b. To provide improved living conditions for very low-income families while maintaining their rent payments at an affordable level;

- c. To promote personal, economic and social upward mobility to assist residents to make the transition from subsidized to non-subsidized housing; and
- d. To provide an incentive to private property owners/landlords to rent to low-income families by offering timely assistance payments and excellent service.

C. LEGAL JURISDICTION

The area of operation of the CDC is geographically defined as the County of Mendocino.

D. PURPOSE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

The purpose of the Administrative Plan is to establish local policies for administering the program in a manner that is consistent with HUD requirements and the local goals and objectives as set forth in the CDC's Agency Plan.

The Administrative Plan, hereinafter referred to as the Plan, covers both the admission and continued participation in the above-mentioned program. The CDC is responsible for complying with all changes in HUD regulations pertaining to this programs. Revisions to the Plan will be made as needed to comply with new HUD requirements or changes. If such changes conflict with this Plan, HUD regulations will have precedence.

The Plan is a supporting document to the CDC's Agency Plan and shall be available for review as required by 24 CFR 903. Pursuant to 24 CFR Part 982.54 the Plan and any revisions shall be presented to the CDC Board of Commissioners for formal adoption and a copy provided to HUD.

E. NONDISCRIMINATION

The CDC shall not discriminate because of race, color, gender, religion/creed, national origin, age, familial status, disability/handicap, or sexual orientation, in the performance of its obligations in any program under its jurisdiction covered by a contract for annual contributions under the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended.

The CDC shall not deny admission to an applicant or participant who is or has been a victim of domestic violence, or stalking, if the applicant otherwise qualifies for admission or assistance.

To further the commitment to full compliance with applicable Civil Rights laws, the CDC will provide information to Housing Choice Voucher applicants and

participants with regard to housing discrimination. Information and Discrimination Complaint Forms will be made part of the briefing packet.

Posters and housing information with the Equal Opportunity Housing logo may be displayed in locations through the CDC office in such a manner as to be easily readable from a wheelchair.

The CDC's Housing Choice Voucher office space is accessible to persons with disabilities. The TDD/TDY telephone number will provide accessibility for the hearing impaired.

F. SERVICE POLICY/ACCOMMODATIONS

It is the policy of the CDC to be service-directed in the administration of its housing programs, and to exercise and demonstrate a high level of professionalism while providing housing services.

Policies and practices are designed to provide assurances that all persons with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodation so that they may fully access and utilize the housing program and related services. The availability of specific accommodations may be made known by including notices on forms and letters to all families, and all requests may be verified so that these needs can be properly accommodated. All mailings may be made available in an accessible format upon request, as a reasonable accommodation. Organizations that provide assistance for hearing-impaired and sight-impaired persons may be utilized.

G. TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS

The Housing Authority has resources within the community to provide assistance with non-English speaking families who speak Spanish and translates some documents into Spanish.

In determining whether it is feasible to translate documents written in English into other languages the CDC will consider the following factors:

1. The number of applicants and participants who do not speak English and speak another language and who may require oral translation services for accessing CDC's programs.
2. The cost per client of translating the documents into another language.
3. The availability of translation and/or interpreter services in the CDC's jurisdiction.
4. Availability of bilingual staff to provide translation for non-English

speaking families.

At a minimum, the CDC will prepare the following information in a clearly written format:

- Marketing and informational material;
- Application process information;
- The application;
- All form letters and notices to the applicant/participant;
- The CDC's general policy regarding reasonable accommodation;
- New participant orientation materials;
- The voucher and any applicable program rules;
- Guidance/instructions on Housing Quality Standards;
- Information on opening, closing and up-dating the waiting list; and
- All information related to applicant/ participant rights (informal/formal hearings, 504 grievance procedures, etc.).

Documents intended for use by applicants and participants will be simply and clearly written to enable applicants with learning or cognitive disabilities to understand as much as possible. Sign language interpreters may be provided for hearing-impaired applicants/participants if requested as a reasonable accommodation. For applicants/ participants unable to read, intake/occupancy staff will read and explain orally anything they would normally hand to an applicant/ participant to be read or filled out. Staff will assist in completing forms and other required documents for persons unable to write.

H. PRIVACY RIGHTS

Applicants and participants, including all adults in the household, at time of application, admission, annual or interim reexamination, will be required to sign the form HUD 9886, Authorization for Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice, which is valid for fifteen (15) months from the date of signature.

The CDC shall notify applicants and participants assisted under Housing Choice Voucher of the U. S. Housing Act of 1937 of their rights under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), including their right to confidentiality and the limits thereof, and to owners and managers of their rights and obligations under the VAWA.

The CDC policy regarding release of information is:

1. The CDC will not release information to other persons or entities unless the applicant/participant has signed a release of information authorizing the CDC to release specific information to the person(s) or entity.

2. However, the CDC may release information on amounts owed for claims paid and not reimbursed by the client.
3. Upon receiving a written request from a prospective owner/landlord, the CDC must release the Voucher holder's current and prior address, if known. The CDC must also release the names and addresses of the current and prior owner/landlord, if known.
4. The CDC may release information as required by law to a federal or state agency, law enforcement personnel, or if the CDC has received a court subpoena.
5. The CDC must limit use and disclosure of family information obtained through release and consent to purposes directly connected with the program administration. (i.e. an adult's EIV data will be released only to that adult. A minor's EIV data may be released to his/her parent).
6. The CDC shall retain in confidence all information pursuant to Violence Against Women Act including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking.

The information shall neither be entered into any shared database nor be provided to any related entity, except:

- To the extent that disclosure is requested or consented to in writing by the individual; or
- Required for use in an eviction proceeding of an abuser, stalker or perpetrator of domestic violence; or
- Is otherwise required by applicable law

The CDC's practices and procedures are designed to safeguard the privacy of applicants and program participants. All applicant and participant files will be stored in a secure location and accessible only by authorized staff.

CDC staff will not discuss family information contained in files 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.

I. RULES AND REGULATIONS

All issues not addressed in this document related to tenants, participants and owners/ landlords are governed by the Code of Federal Regulations (24 CFR), HUD Guidebook 7420.10G, HUD Memos, Notices and Guidelines or other applicable law, and the Housing Choice Voucher Programs and Agency procedures.

J. LIST OF RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The following is a list of Rental Assistance Programs offered by the CDC:
Housing Choice Voucher Program
Shelter Plus Care (Tenant-Based and Sponsor-Based)

K. STAFFING POSITIONS

The following are the positions/titles of staff members who are responsible for the implementation of the Housing Choice Voucher Programs:

- Housing Program Manager
- Housing Program Specialist (3)
- Inspector (1)
- Front office staff provide additional support as needed

L. CUSTOMER RELATIONS

The CDC considers all families and owners as its customers. The goal of the CDC is to respond promptly to the needs of its customers. All contact with the customer and the general public will be handled in a professional and courteous manner. The CDC requires complaints to be submitted in writing, except for concerns about emergency HQS deficiencies.

M. CODE OF CONDUCT

In accordance with the Annual Contributions Contract, Section 19, Conflict of Interest and 24CFR 982.161, the CDC has established a written code of conduct for conducting business in accordance with core values and ethical standards. (See also CDC's Conduct Standards Policy.)

The CDC shall adhere to its Code of Conduct and shall sanction and/or terminate any officer, employee, or agent for violations consistent with applicable state or local law.

The conflict of interest prohibition under this section may be waived by the HUD field office for good cause.

