

XIII. VETERANS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM (VASH)

OVERVIEW

The HUD-VASH Program is a collaborative effort between the US Dept of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs. It's a national initiative that provides permanent housing and supportive services to homeless veterans. The CDC will administer the HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers ("HUD-VASH") in accordance with this Administrative Plan, 24 CFR part 982, and subsequent HUD notices, guidance, or regulations that amends or supersedes Docket No. FR-5213-N-01 (located in the back of this Chapter). CDC partners with the local Veteran's Medical Clinic. The goal of the Program is to combine Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs at its medical centers to enable homeless veterans to re-integrate in the community to lead healthy, productive lives.

All provisions of the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan apply to HUD/VASH participants, unless otherwise specified, or exempted by regulation or by this VASH chapter.

A. ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

The local Veteran's Clinic will screen homeless veterans for eligibility for the HUD-VASH Program, in accordance with its screening criteria, except for income eligibility and sex offender status. Eligible homeless veterans who agree to participate in case management will be referred to CDC for final eligibility determination.

CDC will provide the Veteran's Clinic with a blank application which will include a PHA-designated application, an Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice (HUD 9886), as well as a request for supporting documentation related to the family's income, expenses, and family composition.

The VA social worker will provide CDC with a completed referral form, a completed application signed by the applicant, including all required supporting documentation. All initial required documents are the same as for the Housing Choice Voucher program. CDC decision to admit the applicant will be based on the following criteria;

- The applicant is income eligible for the program in accordance with 24 CFR 982.201, CDC may deny admission if the applicant is not income eligible.
- The CDC will screen for sex offender status and will also deny admission if the homeless veteran is a sex-offender with a lifetime registration requirement. If another family member in the household is the lifetime registrant – the family may be eligible for the voucher if the family member subject to the registration requirement is removed from the household.

RESOLUTION # 1030-13 (12/19/2013)

- The VA social worker will verify the applicant has complied with VA case management requirements.

No other eligibility priorities or preferences are applicable and the CDC shall not deny HUD-VASH applicants admission for any other grounds.

Should a VASH applicant owe CDC or any other Housing Authority money from a previous tenancy or participation in a rental assistance program, CDC will inform the applicant. If the money is owed to CDC, a repayment agreement will be executed in accordance to Chapter XXIV. of this Administrative Plan. If the debt has been referred to Ukiah Credit Bureau the applicant will be referred to the Credit Bureau to establish a payment schedule. If monies are owed to another Housing Authority the applicant will be referred to that Authority to pay that debt.

B. ISSUANCE OF VOUCHER

Once an applicant is determined eligible CDC will promptly contact the family and VA social worker via phone to schedule a briefing appointment. If CDC is unable to contact the family or VA Social Worker by phone to confirm, a notice of the briefing session will be mailed to the family. This notice will be sent at least **ten (10)** calendar days prior to the scheduled briefing. The notice will be sent to the VA social worker as well. During the briefing appointment the applicant will receive a HUD/VASH Voucher and a briefing packet. The briefing packet will be the same as those provided to Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) applicants in accordance with Chapter IV- of this Administrative Plan

Applicants must be given an initial 120 calendar days to seek a unit in Mendocino County. Should the household wish to exercise portability, the VA social worker must indicate this is approved by the VA on the application submitted, or on the referral form. If the family has not found housing within 60 days of the voucher issuance CDC will request the family and/or social worker to provide an updated application as well as updated income verifications.

Upon expiration of the initial 120 day term CDC may grant one final 60 day extension. Extensions are permissible primarily for these reasons;

- Extenuating circumstances such as hospitalization or a family emergency for an extended period of time, which has affected the family's ability to find a unit within the initial 120 day period. Verification is required.
- The CDC is satisfied that the family has made a reasonable effort to locate a unit, which may include seeking the assistance of the CDC, throughout the initial sixty-day period. A completed search record is required.
- The family was prevented from finding a unit due to disability accessibility requirements or large size (4 bedroom or larger) unit requirement. The Search Record is part of the required verification.

- If the vacancy rate for rental housing in the jurisdiction is less than 5 percent another extension will be granted automatically on request up to a total of 60 days.

If the term of the voucher is extended beyond the initial 120 days CDC requires the family and/or social worker to provide an updated application as well as updated income verifications at the time of the extension request.

If the term of the voucher expires the VA Social Worker may re-refer the applicant. A new application and referral form must be completed and updated supporting documentation related to the family's income, expenses, and family composition must be supplied to CDC.

C. INITIAL LEASE TERM

Initial lease terms may be less than one year for HUD/VASH Participants.

D. ELIGIBLE HOUSING

In addition to private market rental units, HUD/VASH Families will be permitted to live on the grounds of a VAMC (Veterans Administration Medical Center) facility.

E. CASE MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

A condition of eligibility for the HUD/VASH voucher is that the VASH participant must participate in case management services provided by the VAMC and verified by the CDC. The local Veterans Clinic screens homeless Veterans to determine eligibility for the HUD-VASH program as established by Veteran's Affairs national office; identifies the social service and medical need of the homeless veteran; ensures that the veteran receives ongoing case management, health services, and other supportive services as identified; and maintains records as required by HUD and Veterans Affairs. A HUD/VASH family's rental assistance must be terminated if the family refuses, without good cause, to participate in required case management as determined by the VAMC.

F. PORTABILITY OF HUD-VASH VOUCHERS

The HUD-VASH Family may initially lease up, or move under portability provisions. If the Local Veterans Clinic will still be able to provide the needed case management services because of the proximity, the receiving PHA must process the move in accordance with the Portability policies of 24 CFR 982.355. However, the receiving PHA must bill the initial PHA; the receiving PHA does not have the option to absorb the HUD-VASH Family under this situation.

If a VASH Family wants to move where it will not be possible for CDC's partnering local Veterans Clinic to provide case management services, the Local Veteran Clinic must

first determine whether the HUDVASH Family could be served by another VAMC that is participating in the program, and the receiving PHA must have a HUD/VASH voucher available for this Family. If the above conditions are met, the VASH Family must be absorbed by the receiving PHA. Upon absorption, the CDC's HUD/VASH voucher will be available to lease to a new HUD/VASH eligible Family referred by the partnering local Veterans Clinic.

If a Family chooses to exercise its rights to portability the family must submit the request in writing to CDC. The local Veterans Clinic must provide CDC with a written recommendation supporting the participants request to move out of Mendocino County.

G. TRANSFER FROM HUD-VASH TO TENANT BASED VOUCHER ASSISTANCE.

If the local Veterans Clinic determines the VASH Family no longer requires case management or the Veteran will no longer reside with the Family, the CDC may offer the Family a regular tenant-based voucher in the tenant based program to free up the HUD-VASH voucher for another homeless veteran family
VASH Participants may be recommended by the HUD-VASH Social Worker for graduation from HUD-VASH program. CDC may issue a Housing Choice Voucher provided ALL criteria below is met;

- Participant has complied with rules and regulations of the HUD-VASH program for the past 12 consecutive months.
- Participant has remained housed for the past 12 consecutive months.
- Participant does not owe the CDC for any Repayment Agreements or other charges.
- Participant has not violated their lease agreement within the past 12 consecutive months

The offer of tenant-based assistance is contingent on funding availability.

The total number of HUD/VASH participants that will be offered a regular voucher will not exceed 10 participants in a 12 month period. The HUD/VASH Social worker must submit the request for the participant to graduate in writing to the CDC along with a completed initial application for the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

H. TERMINATION OF RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Rental Assistance may be terminated if the participant violates conditions of occupancy in accordance with Chapter XIV- of this Administrative Plan. However, prior to terminating HUD/VASH participants, CDC will exercise their discretion under 24 CFR 982.552(c)(2) and consider all relevant circumstances of the specific case, including granting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in accordance with 24 CFR part 8, as well as including the role of the case manager and the impact that

ongoing case management services can have on mitigating the conditions that led to the potential termination.

The following guidelines will be used when considering each case where drug-related or criminal activity is involved.

- For drug-related offenses, the local Veterans Clinic may provide CDC with verification that the participant is actively seeking or enrolled in recovery services. Once enrolled, the local Veterans Clinic must provide CDC with the participants progress with recovery and, as long as the participant is actively pursuing recovery (to be outlined by the rehabilitation facility), their assistance may continue uninterrupted. For those families not seeking treatment termination will occur.
- For criminal activity the CDC, participant, and HUD/VASH Social Worker will work together to view the offenses on a case by case basis to determine what further action is necessary.

CDC must terminate a participant's rental assistance if the CDC has not made a payment on behalf of the participant for a period of 180 calendar days, or if the family has been evicted in a court of law for a serious or repeated lease violation.

Additionally, the family must be receiving case management from the Local Veterans Clinic, unless it is determined by the clinic that the family no longer requires case management. Failure to participate in the case management portion of the program without good cause will result in termination of rental assistance by the CDC.

Applicants and participants of HUD/VASH will be afforded the same rights as regular HCV applicants and participants to appeal any negative action taken against the family by CDC.

I. OTHER PROGRAM POLICIES

The minimum rent for VASH participants is set at 0. This is intended to assist homeless veterans who have no income in securing housing as quickly as possible. All other provisions of the minimum rent regulations for the Housing Choice Voucher Program apply; including provisions specified in this Administrative Plan regarding minimum rent.

J. SEMAP, VMS REPORTING

HUD/VASH vouchers are administered in accordance with HUD/VASH notices. The VASH Vouchers are monitored in VMS separately from all other tenant based vouchers. HUD/VASH vouchers will not be included in the SEMAP leasing indicator denominator as they are dependent upon referrals from VAMC. The code "VASH" will be recorded in

RESOLUTION # 1030-13 (12/19/2013)

section 2n of the HUD-50058 form to indicate in PIC that the Family is a HUD-VASH Participant.