

Chapter 13

LEASE TERMINATIONS

HUD regulations specify mandatory and optional grounds for which a PHA can terminate a family's lease. This chapter describes the policies that govern mandatory and optional terminations of assistance, and termination of the lease by the PHA. It is presented in four parts:

Part I: Termination by Tenant. This part discusses the PHA requirements for voluntary termination of the lease by the family.

Part II: Termination by PHA - Mandatory. This part circumstances when termination of the lease by the PHA is mandatory. This part also explains nonrenewal of the lease for noncompliance with community service requirements.

Part III: Termination by PHA – Other Authorized Reasons. This part describes the PHA's options for lease termination that are not mandated by HUD regulation but for which HUD authorizes PHAs to terminate. For some of these options HUD requires the PHA to establish policies and lease provisions for termination, but termination is not mandatory. For other options the PHA has full discretion whether to consider the options as just cause to terminate as long as the PHA policies are reasonable, nondiscriminatory, and do not violate state or local landlord-tenant law. This part also discusses the alternatives that the PHA may consider in lieu of termination, and the criteria the PHA will use when deciding what actions to take.

Part IV: Notification Requirements. This part presents the federal requirements for disclosure of criminal records to the family prior to termination, the HUD requirements and PHA policies regarding the timing and content of written notices for lease termination and eviction, and notification of the post office when eviction is due to criminal activity. This part also discusses record keeping related to lease termination.

PART I: TERMINATION BY TENANT

13-I.A. TENANT CHOOSES TO TERMINATE THE LEASE [24 CFR 966.4(k)(1)(ii) and 24 CFR 966.4(1)(1)]

The family may terminate the lease at any time, for any reason, by following the notification procedures as outlined in the lease. Such notice must be in writing and delivered to the property site office or the PHA central office or sent by pre-paid first-class mail, properly addressed.

WHA Policy

If a family desires to move and terminate their tenancy with the PHA, they must give at least 30 calendar days advance written notice to the PHA of their intent to vacate. When a family must give less than 30 days' notice due to circumstances beyond their control the PHA, at its discretion, may waive the 30 day requirement.

The notice of lease termination must be signed by all adult family members.

PART II: TERMINATION BY PHA - MANDATORY

13-II.A. OVERVIEW

HUD requires the PHA to terminate assistance in the following circumstances.

13-II.B. Failure to Provide Consent [24 CFR 960.259(a) and (b)]

The PHA must terminate assistance if any family member fails to sign and submit any consent form they are required to sign for a regular or interim reexamination. See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of consent requirements.

13-II.C. Failure to Document Citizenship [24 CFR 5.514(c) and (d) and 24 CFR 960.259(a)]

The PHA must terminate assistance if (1) a family fails to submit required documentation within the required timeframe concerning any family member's citizenship or immigration status; (2) a family submits evidence of citizenship and eligible immigration status in a timely manner, but United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) primary and secondary verification does not verify eligible immigration status of the family; or (3) a family member, as determined by the PHA, has knowingly permitted another individual who is not eligible for assistance to reside (on a permanent basis) in the unit. For (3) above, such termination must be for a period of at least 24 months. This does not apply to ineligible noncitizens already in the household where the family's assistance has been prorated.

See Chapter 7 for a complete discussion of documentation requirements.

13-II.D. Failure to Disclose and Document Social Security Numbers [24 CFR 5.218(c), 24 CFR 960.259(a)(3), Notice PIH 2018-24]

The PHA must terminate assistance if a participant family fails to disclose the complete and accurate social security numbers of each household member and the documentation necessary to verify each social security number.

However, if the family is otherwise eligible for continued program assistance, and the PHA determines that the family's failure to meet the SSN disclosure and documentation requirements was due to circumstances that could not have been foreseen and were outside of the family's control, the PHA may defer the family's termination and provide the opportunity to comply with the requirement within a period not to exceed 90 calendar days from the date the PHA determined the family to be noncompliant.

WHA Policy

The PHA will defer the family's termination and provide the family with the opportunity to comply with the requirement for a period of 90 calendar days for circumstances beyond the participant's control such as delayed processing of the SSN application by the

SSA, natural disaster, fire, death in the family, or other emergency, if there is a reasonable likelihood that the participant will be able to disclose an SSN by the deadline.

13-II.E. Failure to Accept the PHA's Offer of a Lease Revision [24 CFR 966.4(1)(2)(ii)(E)]

The PHA must terminate the lease if the family fails to accept the PHA's offer of a lease revision to an existing lease, provided the PHA had done the following:

- The revision is on a form adopted by the PHA in accordance with 24 CFR 966.3 pertaining to requirements for notice to tenants and resident organizations and their opportunity to present comments.
- The PHA has made written notice of the offer of the revision at least 60 calendar days before the lease revision is scheduled to take effect.
- The PHA has specified in the offer a reasonable time limit within that period for acceptance by the family.

13-II.F. Methamphetamine Manufacture or Production [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(i)(A)]

The PHA must terminate assistance if any household member has ever been convicted of the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

13-II.G. Lifetime Registered Sex Offenders [Notice PIH 2012-28]

Should a PHA discover that a member of an assisted household was subject to a lifetime registration requirement at admission and was erroneously admitted after June 25, 2001, the PHA must immediately terminate assistance for the household member.

In this situation, the PHA must offer the family the opportunity to remove the ineligible family member from the household. If the family is unwilling to remove that individual from the household, the PHA must terminate assistance for the household.

13-II.H. Noncompliance with Community Service Requirements [24 CFR 966.4(1)(2)(ii)(D), 24 CFR 960.603(b), and 24 CFR 960.607(b)(2)(ii) and (c)]

The PHA is prohibited from renewing the lease at the end of the 12 month lease term when the family fails to comply with the community service requirements as described in Chapter 11.

13-II.I. Death of the Sole Family Member [24 CFR 982.311(d) and Notice PIH 2012-10]

The PHA must immediately terminate program assistance for deceased single member households.

PART III: TERMINATION BY PHA – OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS

13-III.A. OVERVIEW

Besides requiring PHAs to terminate the lease under the circumstances described in Part II, HUD requires the PHA to establish provisions in the lease for termination pertaining to certain criminal activity, alcohol abuse, and certain household obligations stated in the regulations. While these provisions for lease termination must be in the lease agreement, HUD does not require PHAs to terminate for such violations in all cases. The PHA has the discretion to consider circumstances surrounding the violation or, in applicable situations, whether the offending household member has entered into or completed rehabilitation, and the PHA may, as an alternative to termination, require the exclusion of the culpable household member. The PHA must adopt policies concerning the use of these options.

In addition, HUD authorizes PHAs to terminate the lease for other grounds, but for only those grounds that constitute serious or repeated violations of material terms of the lease or for other good cause. The PHA must develop policies pertaining to what constitutes serious or repeated lease violations, and other good cause based upon the content of the PHA lease.

13-III.B. MANDATORY LEASE PROVISIONS [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)]

Mandatory Policies

HUD requires the PHA to establish policies that permit the PHA to terminate assistance if the PHA determines that:

- Any household member is currently engaged in any illegal use of a drug, or has a pattern of illegal drug use that interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- Any household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- Any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in any drug-related criminal activity
- Any household member has violated the family's obligation not to engage in violent criminal activity

Drug Crime On or Off the Premises [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(i)(B)]

The lease must provide that drug-related criminal activity engaged in on or off the premises by any tenant, member of tenant's household or guest, or any such activity engaged in on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control is grounds for termination.

WHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease for drug related criminal activity engaged in on or off the premises by any tenant, member of the tenant's household or guest, and any such activity engaged in on the premises by any other person under the tenant's control.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of covered persons related to the drug related criminal activity.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole bases for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Use of Illegal Drugs and Alcohol Abuse [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(i)(B)]

WHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease if any household member is currently engaged in any illegal use of a drug, or has a pattern of illegal drug use that interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

The PHA will terminate the lease if any household member's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

Currently engaged in is defined as any use of illegal drugs during the previous twelve months.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests, convictions, or eviction of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole bases for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate assistance, the PHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Threat to Other Residents [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(ii)(A)]

The lease must provide that any criminal activity by a covered person that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (including PHA management staff residing on the premises) or by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises are grounds for termination of tenancy.

WHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease when a covered person engages in any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents (including PHA management staff residing on the premises) or by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

Immediate vicinity means within a three block radius of the premises.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of covered persons related to the criminal activity.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole bases for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Alcohol Abuse [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(vi)(A)]

PHAs must establish standards that allow termination of tenancy if the PHA determines that a household member has engaged in abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

WHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease if the PHA determines that a household member has engaged in abuse or a pattern of abuse of alcohol that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.

A pattern of such alcohol abuse means more than one incident of any such abuse of alcohol during the previous twelve months.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of household members related to the abuse of alcohol.

A record of arrest(s) will not be used as the sole bases for the termination or proof that the participant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA will consider the alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Furnishing False or Misleading Information Concerning Illegal Drug Use or Alcohol Abuse or Rehabilitation [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(vi)(B)]

PHAs must establish standards that allow termination of tenancy if the PHA determines that a household member has furnished false or misleading information concerning illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, or rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

WHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease if the PHA determines that a household member has furnished false or misleading information concerning illegal drug use, alcohol abuse, or rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

The PHA will consider all credible evidence, including but not limited to, any record of arrests or convictions of household members related to the use of illegal drugs or the abuse of alcohol, and any records or other documentation (or lack of records or documentation) supporting claims or rehabilitation of illegal drug users or alcohol abusers.

In making its decision to terminate the lease, the PHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors as described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Other Serious or Repeated Violations of Material Terms of the Lease – Mandatory Lease Provisions [24 CFR 966.4(1)(2)(i) and 24 CFR 966.4(f)]

HUD regulations require certain tenant obligations to be incorporated into the lease. Violations of such regulatory obligations are considered to be serious or repeated violations of the lease and grounds for termination. Incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking may not be construed as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of such violence or stalking [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

WHA Policy

The PHA will terminate the lease for the following violations of tenant obligations under the lease:

- Failure to make payments due under the lease, including nonpayment of rent.
- Repeated late payment of rent or other charges. Three late payments within a 12 month period shall constitute habitual late payments. Resident will be served with a cease notice upon the third late payment and upon the fourth late payment the PHA will begin eviction proceedings.
- Failure to fulfill the following household obligations:
 - Not to assign the lease or to sublease the dwelling unit. Subleasing includes receiving payments to cover rent and utility costs by a person living in the unit who is not listed as a family member
 - Not to provide accommodations for boarders or lodgers
 - To use the dwelling unit solely as a private primary dwelling for the tenant and the tenant's household as identified in the lease, and not to use or permit its use for any other purpose
 - To abide by necessary and reasonable regulations promulgated by the PHA for the benefit and well-being of the housing project and the tenants, which shall be posted in the project office and incorporated by reference in the lease
 - To comply with all obligations imposed upon tenants by applicable provisions of building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety
 - To keep the dwelling unit and such other areas as may be assigned to the tenant for the tenant's exclusive use in a clean and safe condition
 - To dispose of all ashes, garbage, rubbish, and other waste from the dwelling unit in a sanitary and safe manner

13-III.C. OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS FOR TERMINATION [24 CFR 966.4(1)(2) and (5)(ii)(B)]

HUD authorizes PHAs to terminate the lease for reasons other than those described in the previous sections. These reasons are referred to as "other good cause" [24 CFR 966.4(1)(2)(ii)(B) and (C)]. The regulations provide a few examples of other good cause, but do not limit the PHA to only those examples. The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 explicitly prohibits PHAs from considering incidents of, or criminal activity directly related to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking as "other good cause" for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1)].

WHA Policy

The PHA **will** terminate the lease for the following reasons:

Fugitive Felon or Parole Violator. If a tenant is fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, or that, in the case of the State of New Jersey, is a high misdemeanor; or violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law.

Persons subject to sex offender registration requirement. If any member of the household has, during their current public housing tenancy, become subject to a registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

Discovery of facts after admission to the program that would have made the tenant ineligible

Discovery of materially false statements or fraud by the tenant in connection with an application for assistance or with a reexamination of income

Failure to furnish such information and certifications regarding family composition and income as may be necessary for the PHA to make determinations with respect to rent, eligibility, and the appropriateness of the dwelling unit size

Failure to transfer to an appropriate size dwelling unit based on family composition, upon appropriate notice by the PHA that such a dwelling unit is available

Failure to permit access to the unit by the PHA after proper advance notification for the purpose of performing routine inspections and maintenance, for making improvements or repairs, for pest control or to show the dwelling unit for re-leasing, or without advance notice if there is reasonable cause to believe that an emergency exists

Failure to promptly inform the PHA of the birth, adoption or court awarded custody of a child. In such a case, promptly means within 10 business days of the event

Failure to abide by the provisions of the PHA pet policy

If the family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with the PHA

If a family member has violated federal, state, or local law that imposes obligations in connection with the occupancy or use of the premises

A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward PHA personnel.

Abusive or violent behavior towards PHA personnel includes verbal as well as physical abuse or violence. Use of racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to intimidate may be considered abusive or violent behavior.

Threatening refers to oral or written threats or physical gestures that communicate intent to abuse or commit violence.

In making its decision to terminate assistance, the PHA will consider alternatives as described in Section 13-III.D and other factors described in Sections 13-III.E and 13-III.F. Upon consideration of such alternatives and factors, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to terminate the lease.

Family Absence from the Unit [24 CFR 982.551(i)]

The family may be absent from the unit for brief periods. The PHA must establish a policy on how long the family may be absent from the assisted unit.

WHA Policy

The family must supply any information or certification requested by the PHA to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any PHA requested information or certification on the purposes of family absences. The family must cooperate with the PHA for this purpose.

The family must promptly notify the PHA when all family members will be absent from the unit for an extended period. An extended period is defined as any period greater than 30 calendar days. In such a case promptly means within 10 business days of the start of the extended absence.

If a family is absent from the public housing unit for more than 45 consecutive days, and the family does not adequately verify that they are living in the unit; the PHA will terminate the lease for other good cause.

Abandonment of the unit. If the family appears to have vacated the unit without giving proper notice, the PHA will follow state and local landlord tenant law pertaining to abandonment before taking possession of the unit. If necessary, the PHA will secure the unit immediately to prevent vandalism and other criminal activity.

Over Income Families [24 CFR 960.261 and FR 7/26/18, Notice PIH 2019-11]

The Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) of 2016 placed an income

limitation on public housing tenancies. The over income requirement states that after a family's adjusted income has exceeded 120 percent of area median income (AMI) (or a different limitation established by the secretary) for two consecutive years, the PHA must either terminate the family's tenancy within six months of the determination, or charge the family a month rent that is the higher of the applicable fair market rent (FMR) or the amount of the monthly subsidy for the unit, including amounts from the operating and capital funds, as determined by regulations.

Notice PIH 2019-11 also requires that PHAs publish over income limits in their ACOP and update them no later than 60 days after HUD publishes new income limits each year. The over income limit is calculated by multiplying the very low-income limit (VLI) by 2.4, as adjusted for family size.

PHAs also have discretion, under 24 CFR 960.261, to adopt policies allowing termination of tenancy for families whose income exceeds the limit for program eligibility. Such policies would exempt families participating in the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program or currently receiving the Earned Income Disallowance (EID).

WHA Policy

At annual or interim reexamination, if a family's adjusted income exceeds the applicable over income limit, the PHA will document the family file and begin tracking the family's over income status.

If one year after the applicable annual or interim reexamination the family's income continues to exceed the applicable over income limit, the PHA will notify the family in writing that their income has exceeded the over income limit for one year, and that if the family continues to be over income for 12 consecutive months, the family will be subject to the over income policies.

If two years after the applicable annual or interim reexamination the family's income continues to exceed the applicable over income limit, the PHA will charge the family a rent that is the higher of the applicable fair market rent (FMR) or the amount of the monthly subsidy for the unit. The PHA will notify the family in writing of their new rent amount. The new rent amount will be effective 30 days after the PHA's written notice to the family.

If at any time an over income family experiences a decrease in income, the family may request an interim redetermination of rent in accordance with PHA policy. If as a result the previously over income is now below the over income limit, the family is no longer subject to over income provisions as of the effective date of the recertification. The PHA

will notify the family in writing that over income policies no longer apply to them. If the family's income later exceeds the over income limit again, the family is entitled to a new two-year grace period.

The PHA will begin tracking over income families once these policies have been adopted, but not later than March 24, 2019.

The PHA will rely on the following over income limits. These numbers will be updated within 60 days of HUD publishing new income limits each year and will be effective for all annual and interim reexaminations once these policies have been adopted.

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
VL Income Limit	\$29,300	\$33,450	\$37,650	\$ 41,800	\$ 45,150	\$ 48,500	\$ 51,850	\$ 55,200
Over Income Limit	\$70,320	\$80,280	\$90,360	\$100,320	\$108,360	\$116,400	\$124,440	\$132,480

For families larger than 8 persons, the over income limit will be calculated by multiplying the applicable very low-income limit by 2.4.

13-III.D. ALTERNATIVES TO TERMINATION OF TENANCY

Exclusion of Culpable Household Member [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(vii)(C)]

As a condition of continued tenancy, the PHA may require that any household member who participated in or was responsible for an offense no longer resides in the unit

Additionally, under the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, the PHA may bifurcate a lease in order to terminate the tenancy of an individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant of a unit and engages in criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

WHA Policy

As a condition of continued tenancy, the head of household must certify that the culpable family member has vacated the unit and will not be permitted to visit or to stay as a guest in the assisted unit. The family must present evidence of the former family member's current address upon PHA request.

Repayment of Family Debts

WHA Policy

If a family owes amounts to the PHA, as a condition of continued occupancy, the PHA will require the family to repay the full amount or to enter into a repayment agreement, within 30 days of receiving notice from the PHA of the amount owed. See Chapter 16 for policies on repayment agreements.

13-III.E. CRITERIA FOR DECIDING TO TERMINATE TENANCY

Evidence [24 CFR 982.533(c)]

For criminal activity, HUD permits the PHA to terminate assistance if a preponderance of the evidence indicates that a household member has engaged in the activity, regardless of whether the household member has been arrested or convicted.

WHA Policy

The PHA will use the concept of the preponderance of the evidence as the standard for making all termination decisions.

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

Consideration of Circumstances [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(vii)(B)]

The PHA is permitted, but not required, to consider all relevant circumstances when determining whether a family's lease should be terminated.

WHA Policy

The PHA will consider the following factors when making its decision to terminate the lease:

The seriousness of the case, especially with respect to how it would affect other residents

The effects the eviction may have on other members of the family who were not involved in the action or failure to act

The effect on the community of the termination, or of the PHA's failure to terminate the tenancy

The effect of the PHA's decision on the integrity of the public housing program

The demand for housing by eligible families who will adhere to lease responsibilities

The extent to which the leaseholder has shown personal responsibility and whether they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action

The extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, including whether the culpable family member is a minor or a person with disabilities or (as discussed further in section 13-III.F) a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking

The length of time since the violation occurred, including the age of the individual at the time of the conduct, as well as the family's recent history, and the likelihood of favorable conduct in the future

While a record of arrest(s) will not be used as the basis for termination, an arrest may, however, trigger an investigation to determine whether the participant actually engaged in disqualifying criminal activity. As part of its investigation, the PHA may obtain the police report associated with the arrest and consider the reported circumstances of the arrest. The PHA may also consider:

- Any statements made by witnesses or the participant not included in the police report
- Whether criminal charges were filed
- Whether, if filed, criminal charges were abandoned, dismissed, not prosecuted, or ultimately resulted in acquittal
- Any other evidence relevant to determining whether or not the participant engaged in disqualifying activity

Evidence of criminal conduct will be considered if it indicates a demonstratable risk to safety and/or property

In the case of program abuse, the dollar amount of the underpaid rent and whether or not a false certification was signed by the family

Consideration of Rehabilitation [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(vii)(D)]

HUD authorizes PHAs to take into consideration whether a household member who had used illegal drugs or abused alcohol and is no longer engaging in such use or abuse is participating in or has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.

WHA Policy

In determining whether to terminate the lease for illegal drug use or a pattern of illegal drug use, or for abuse or a pattern of abuse of alcohol, by a household member who is no longer engaging in such use or abuse, the PHA will consider whether the such household member has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.

Reasonable Accommodation [24 CFR 966.7]

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the PHA's decision to terminate the family's lease is subject to consideration of reasonable accommodation in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

WHA Policy

If a family indicates that the behavior of a family member with a disability is the reason for a proposed lease termination, the PHA will determine whether the behavior is related to the disability. If so, upon the family's request, the PHA will determine whether alternative measures are appropriate as a reasonable accommodation. The PHA will only consider accommodations that can reasonably be expected to address the behavior that is the basis of the proposed lease termination. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of reasonable accommodation.

Nondiscrimination Limitation [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(vii)(F)]

The PHA's eviction actions must be consistent with fair housing and equal opportunity provisions of 24 CFR 5.105.

13-III.F. TERMINATIONS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, OR STALKING

This section describes the protections against termination of assistance that the Violence against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA) provides for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. For general VAWA requirements, key VAWA definitions, and PHA policies pertaining to notification, documentation, and confidentiality, see section 16-VII of this ACOP.

VAWA Protections against Termination [24 CFR 5.2005(c)]

VAWA provides that no person may deny assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights to public housing to a tenant on the basis or as a direct result of criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that is engaged in by a member of the household of the tenant or any guest or other person under the control of the tenant, if the tenant or affiliated individual is the victim or threatened victim of such domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking [FR Notice 8/6/13].

VAWA further provides that incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking may not be construed either as serious or repeated violations of the lease by the victim or threatened victim of such violence or as good cause for terminating the tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of such violence [24 CFR 5.2005(c)(1), FR Notice 8/6/13].

Limitations on VAWA Protections [24 CFR 5.2005(d) and (e), FR Notice 8/6/13]

VAWA does not limit the authority of a PHA to terminate the lease of a victim of abuse for reasons unrelated to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking so long as the PHA does not subject the victim to a more demanding standard than it applies to other program participants [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(1)].

Likewise, VAWA does not limit the authority of a PHA to terminate the lease of a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking if the PHA can demonstrate an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to the assisted property if the victim is not terminated from assistance [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2)].

HUD regulations define actual and imminent threat to mean words, gestures, actions, or other indicators of a physical threat that (a) is real, (b) would occur within an immediate time frame, and (c) could result in death or serious bodily harm [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(2) and (e)]. In determining whether an individual would pose an actual and imminent threat, the factors to be considered include:

- The duration of the risk
- The nature and severity of the potential harm
- The likelihood that the potential harm will occur
- The length of time before the potential harm would occur [24 CFR 5.2005(e)]

In order to demonstrate an actual and imminent threat, the PHA must have objective evidence of words, gestures, actions, or other indicators. Even when a victim poses an actual and imminent threat, however, HUD regulations authorize a PHA to terminate

the victim's assistance "only when there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat, including but not limited to transferring the victim to a different unit, barring the perpetrator from the property, contacting law enforcement to increase police presence or develop other plans to keep the property safe, or seeking other legal remedies to prevent the perpetrator from acting on a threat" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)]. Additionally, HUD regulations state that restrictions "predicated on public safety cannot be based on stereotypes but must be tailored to particularized concerns about individual residents" [24 CFR 5.2005(d)(3)].

WHA Policy

In determining whether a public housing tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or those employed at or providing service to a property, the PHA will consider the following, and any other relevant, factors:

Whether the threat is toward an employee or tenant other than the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking

Whether the threat is a physical danger beyond a speculative threat

Whether the threat is likely to happen within a short period of time

Whether the threat to other tenants or employees can be eliminated in some other way, such as by helping the victim relocate to a confidential location or seeking a legal remedy to prevent the perpetrator from acting on the threat

If the tenant wishes to contest the PHA's determination that he or she is an actual and imminent threat to other tenants or employees, the tenant may do so as part of the grievance hearing or court proceeding.

Documentation of Abuse [24 CFR 5.2007]

WHA Policy

When an individual facing termination of tenancy for reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking claims protection under VAWA, the PHA will request that the individual provide documentation supporting the claim in accordance with the policies in section 16-VII.D of this ACOP.

The PHA reserves the right to waive the documentation requirement if it determines that a statement or other corroborating evidence from the individual will suffice. In such cases the PHA will document the waiver in the individual's file.

Terminating or Evicting a Domestic Violence Perpetrator

Although VAWA provides protection against termination of assistance for victims of domestic violence, it does not provide such protection for perpetrators. VAWA gives the PHA the explicit authority to bifurcate the lease, or remove a household member from a lease, “in order to evict, remove, terminate occupancy rights, or terminate assistance to any tenant or lawful occupant who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others, without evicting, removing, terminating assistance to, or otherwise penalizing the victim of such violence who is a tenant or lawful occupant” [24 CFR 5.2009(a)]. Moreover, HUD regulations impose on the PHA the obligation to consider lease bifurcation in any circumstances involving domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking [24 CFR 966.4(e)(9)].

Specific lease language affirming the PHA’s authority to bifurcate a lease is not necessary. Further, this authority supersedes any local, state, or other federal law to the contrary. However, if the PHA chooses to exercise this authority, it must follow any procedures prescribed by HUD or by applicable local, state, or federal law regarding termination of assistance. This means that the PHA must follow the same rules when terminating assistance to an individual as it would when terminating the assistance of an entire family [FR Notice 3/16/07]. However, perpetrators should be given no more than 30 days’ notice of termination in most cases. [Notice PIH 2017-08].

WHA Policy

The PHA will bifurcate a family’s lease and terminate the tenancy of a family member if the PHA determines that the family member has committed criminal acts of physical violence against other family members or others. This action will not affect the assistance of the remaining, non-culpable family members.

In making its decision, the PHA will consider all credible evidence, including, but not limited to, a signed certification (form HUD-50066) or other documentation of abuse submitted to the PHA by the victim in accordance with this section and section 16-VII.D. The PHA will also consider the factors in section 13-III.E. Upon such consideration, the PHA may, on a case-by-case basis, choose not to bifurcate a family’s lease and terminate the tenancy of the culpable family member.

If the PHA does bifurcate a family’s lease and terminate the tenancy of the culpable family member, it will do so in accordance with applicable law, HUD regulations, and the policies in this plan. If the person removed from the lease was the only tenant eligible to receive assistance, the PHA must provide any remaining tenant a chance to establish eligibility for the unit. If the remaining tenant cannot do so, the PHA must provide the tenant reasonable time to find new housing or to establish eligibility for another housing program covered by VAWA 2013.

PART IV: NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS, EVICTION PROCEDURES

13-IV.A. OVERVIEW

HUD regulations specify the requirements for the notice that must be provided prior to lease termination. This part discusses those requirements and the specific requirements that precede and follow termination for certain criminal activities which are addressed in the regulations. This part also discusses specific requirements pertaining to the actual eviction of families and record keeping.

13-IV.B. CONDUCTING CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS [24 CFR 5.903(e)(ii) and 24 CFR 960.259]

HUD authorizes PHAs to conduct criminal records checks on public housing residents for lease enforcement and eviction. PHA policy determines when the PHA will conduct such checks.

WHA Policy

The PHA will conduct criminal records checks when it has come to the attention of the PHA, either from local law enforcement or by other means that an individual has engaged in the destruction of property, engaged in violent activity against another person, or has interfered with the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents. Such checks will also include sex offender registration information. In order to obtain such information, all adult household members must sign consent forms for release of criminal conviction and sex offender registration records on an annual basis.

The PHA may not pass along to the tenant the costs of a criminal records check.

13-IV.C. DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS TO FAMILY [24 CFR 5.903(f), 24 CFR 5.905(d) and 24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(iv)]

In conducting criminal records checks, if the PHA uses the authority of 24 CFR 5.903 and 50905 to obtain such information, certain protections must be afforded the tenant before any adverse action is taken. In such cases if the PHA obtains criminal records information from a state or local agency showing that a household member has been convicted of a crime, or is subject to a sex offender registration requirement, relevant to lease enforcement or eviction, the PHA must notify the household of the proposed action and must provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy of such information, and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before an eviction or lease enforcement action is taken.

WHA Policy

In all cases where criminal record or sex offender registration information would result in lease enforcement or eviction, the PHA will notify the household in writing of the proposed adverse action and will provide the subject of the record and the tenant a copy

of such information, and an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information before an eviction or lease enforcement action is taken.

The family will be given 10 business days from the date of the PHA notice to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the information. If the family does not contact the PHA to dispute the information within that 10 business day period, the PHA will proceed with the termination action.

Should the tenant not exercise their right to dispute prior to any adverse action, the tenant still has the right to dispute in the grievance hearing or court trial.

13-IV.D. LEASE TERMINATION NOTICE [24 CFR 966.4(1)(3)]

Form, Delivery, and Content of the Notice

Notices of lease termination must be in writing. The notice must state the specific grounds for termination, the date the termination will take place, the resident's right to reply to the termination notice, and their right to examine PHA documents directly relevant to the termination or eviction. If the PHA does not make the documents available for examination upon request by the tenant, the PHA may not proceed with the eviction [24 CFR 996.4(m)].

When the PHA is required to offer the resident an opportunity for a grievance hearing, the notice must also inform the resident of their right to request a hearing in accordance with the PHA's grievance procedure. In these cases, the tenancy shall not terminate until the time for the tenant to request a grievance hearing has expired and the grievance procedure has been completed.

When the PHA is not required to offer the resident an opportunity for a grievance hearing because HUD has made a due process determination and the lease termination is for criminal activity that threatens health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment or for drug related criminal activity, the notice of lease termination must state that the tenant is not entitled to a grievance hearing on the termination. It must specify the judicial eviction procedure to be used by the PHA for eviction of the tenant, and state that HUD has determined that the eviction procedure provides the opportunity for a hearing in court that contains the basic elements of due process as defined in HUD regulations. The notice must also state whether the eviction is for a criminal activity that threatens health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees of the PHA, or for a drug related criminal activity on or off the premises.

WHA Policy

The PHA will attempt to deliver notices of lease termination directly to the tenant or an adult member of the household. If such attempt fails, the notice will be sent by first class mail the same day. All notices of lease termination will include information about the protections against termination provided by the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) for victims of domestic violence, dating violence,

sexual assault, or stalking (see section 16-VII.C). The PHA will also include a copy of the form HUD-50066 and a notice of VAWA rights to accompany the termination notice. Any tenant who claims that the cause for termination involves (a) criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others or (b) incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking of which the tenant or affiliated individual of the tenant is the victim will be given the opportunity to provide documentation in accordance with the policies in sections 13-III.F and 16-VII.D.

Timing of the Notice [24 CFR 966.4(1)(3)(i)]

The PHA must give written notice of lease termination of:

- 14 calendar days in the case of failure to pay rent
- A reasonable period of time considering the seriousness of the situation (but not to exceed 30 calendar days)
 - If the health or safety of other residents, PHA employees, or persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises is threatened
 - If any member of the household has engaged in any drug related criminal activity or violent criminal activity
- If any member of the household has been convicted of a felony

30 calendar days in any other case, except that if a state or local law allows a shorter notice period, such shorter period shall apply

WHA Policy

The PHA will give written notice of 14 calendar days for nonpayment of rent. For all other lease terminations, the PHA will give 30-days written notice or, if state or local law allows less than 30 days, such shorter notice will be given.

The Notice to Vacate that may be required under state or local law may be combined with or run concurrently with the notice of lease termination.

Notice of Nonrenewal Due to Community Service Noncompliance [24 CFR 966.4(1)(2)(ii)(D), 24 CFR 960.603(b) and 24 CFR 960.607(b)]

When the PHA finds that a family is in noncompliance with the community service requirement, the tenant and any other noncompliant resident must be notified in writing of this determination. Notices of noncompliance will be issued in accordance with the requirements and policies in Section II-I.E.

WHA Policy

If after receiving a notice of initial noncompliance the family does not request a grievance hearing, or does not take either corrective action required by the notice within the required timeframe, a termination notice will be issued in accordance with the policies above.

If a family agreed to cure initial noncompliance by signing an agreement, and is still in noncompliance after being provided the 12 month opportunity to cure, the family will be issued a notice of continued noncompliance. The notice of continued noncompliance will be sent in accordance with the policies in Section 11-I.E. and will serve also as the notice of termination of tenancy.

Notice of Termination Based on Citizenship Status [24 CFR 5.514(c) and (d)]

In cases where termination of tenancy is based on citizenship status, HUD requires the notice of termination to contain additional information. In addition to advising the family of the reasons their assistance is being terminated, the notice must also advise the family of any of the following that apply: the family's eligibility for proration of assistance, the criteria and procedures for obtaining relief under the provisions for preservation of families, the family's right to request an appeal to the USCIS of the results of secondary verification of immigration status and to submit additional documentation or a written explanation in support of the appeal, and the family's right to request an informal hearing with the PHA either upon completion of the USCIS appeal or in lieu of the USCIS appeal.

13-IV.E. EVICTION [24 CFR 966.4(1)(4) AND 966.4(m)]

Eviction notice means a notice to vacate, or a complaint or other initial pleading used under state or local law to commence an eviction action. The PHA may only evict the tenant from the unit by instituting a court action, unless the law of the jurisdiction permits eviction by administrative action, after due process administrative hearing, and without a court determination of the rights and liabilities of the parties.

WHA Policy

When a family does not vacate the unit after receipt of a termination notice, by the deadline given in the notice, the PHA will follow state and local landlord tenant law in filing an eviction action with the local court that has jurisdiction in such cases.

If the eviction action is finalized in court and the family remains in occupancy beyond the deadline to vacate given by the court, the PHA will seek the assistance of the court to remove the family from the premises as per state and local law.

The PHA may not proceed with an eviction action if the PHA has not made available the documents to be used in the case against the family, and has not afforded the family and opportunity to examine and copy such documents in accordance with the provisions of 24 CFR 966.4(1)(3) and (m).

13-IV.F. NOTIFICATION TO POST OFFICE [24 CFR 966.4(1)(5)(iii)(B)]

When the PHA evicts an individual or family for criminal activity, including drug related criminal activity; the PHA must notify the local post office serving the dwelling unit that the individual or family is no longer residing in the unit.