

Chapter 5

SUBSIDY STANDARDS

[24 CFR 982.54(d)(9)]

(Revised April 2009)

(Revised August 2013)

INTRODUCTION

HUD guidelines require that PHA's establish subsidy standards for the determination of family unit size, and that such standards provide for a minimum commitment of subsidy while avoiding overcrowding. The standards used for the unit size selected by the family must be within the minimum unit size requirements of HUD's Housing Quality Standards. This Chapter explains the subsidy standards which will be used to determine the voucher size (family unit size) for various sized families when they are selected from the waiting list, as well as the PHA's procedures when a family's size changes, or a family selects a unit size that is different from the Voucher.

A. DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT (VOUCHER) SIZE [24 CFR 982.402]

The PHA does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room, but there must be at least one person per bedroom on the Voucher. The PHA's subsidy standards for determining voucher size shall be applied in a manner consistent with Fair Housing guidelines.

*** For subsidy standards, an adult is a person 18 years old or older.**

All standards in this section relate to the number of bedrooms on the Voucher, not the family's actual living arrangements.

The unit size on the Voucher remains the same as long as the family composition remains the same, regardless of the actual unit size rented.

*** One bedroom will be generally be assigned for each two family members. The PHA will consider factors such as family characteristics including sex, age, or relationship. Consideration will also be given for medical reasons and the presence of a live-in aide.**

Generally, the PHA assigns one bedroom to two people within the following guidelines:

- Persons of different generations (18-year gap), persons of opposite sex (other than spouses) and unrelated adults should be allocated a separate bedroom.

- Separate bedrooms should be allocated for persons of the opposite sex (other than adults who have a spousal relationship and children under age 6).
- Foster children will be included in determining unit size.
- Live-in attendant will generally be provided a separate bedroom.
- Space may be provided for a child who is away at school but who lives with the family during school recesses.
- Space will not be provided for a family member, other than a spouse who will be absent most of the time, such as a member who is away in the military.
- A single pregnant woman with no other family members must be treated as a two-person family.
- Units will be assigned so that a minimum of one person will occupy each bedroom.
- Families will not be required to use rooms other than bedrooms for sleeping purposes.
- Persons with verifiable medical needs or other extenuating circumstances may be provided with a larger unit.
- A single person family shall be allocated one bedroom.
- Space may be provided for a child who the head of household has joint custody of for at least 50% of the time.

**GUIDELINES FOR DETERMING VOUCHER SIZE
Persons In Household**

Voucher Size	(Minimum #)	(Maximum #)
0 Bedroom	1	2
1 Bedroom	1	2
2 Bedrooms	2	4
3 Bedrooms	3	6
4 Bedrooms	4	8
5 Bedrooms	6	10
6 Bedrooms	8	12

B. EXCEPTIONS TO SUBSIDY STANDARDS [24 CFR 982.403(a) & (b)]

The PHA may grant an exception from the subsidy standards if the family requests and the PHA determines the exception is justified by the relationship, age, sex, health or disability of family members, or other individual circumstances.

The PHA will grant an exception upon request as an accommodation for persons with disabilities. Circumstances may dictate a larger size than the subsidy standards permit when persons cannot share a bedroom (not a sleeping room) because of a need, such as a:

- Verified medical or health reason; or
- Elderly persons or persons with disabilities who may require a live-in attendant.

The family may request a larger sized voucher than indicated by the PHA's subsidy standards. Such request must be made in writing. The request must explain the need or justification for a larger voucher. Documentation verifying the need or justification will be required as appropriate.

*The PHA will not issue a larger voucher due to additions of family members other than by birth, adoption, marriage, or court-awarded custody.

Requests based on health related reasons must be verified by a medical professional.

At the PHAs discretion, in an effort to manage the PHA's annual budget, vouchers may be issued to accommodate the number of persons in the household at 2 persons per bedroom/living area, regardless of age. (Updated 8/2013)

PHA Error

If the PHA errs in the bedroom size designation, the family will be issued a Voucher of the appropriate size.

Changes for Applicants

The voucher size is determined prior to the briefing by comparing the family composition to the PHA subsidy standards. If an applicant requires a change in the voucher size, based on the requirements of the PHA subsidy standards, the above references guidelines will apply.

Changes for Participants

The members of the family residing in the unit must be approved by the PHA. The family must obtain approval of any additional family member before the new member occupies the unit

except for additions by birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, in which case the family must inform the PHA within thirty (30) days. The guidelines referenced in Section A will apply.

Underhoused Families

If a unit does not meet HQS space standards due to an increase in family size, (unit too small), the PHA will issue a new voucher of the appropriate size and assist the family in locating a suitable unit.

The PHA will also notify the family of the circumstances under which an exception will be granted such as:

- If a family with a disability is under-housed in an accessible unit.
- If a family requires the additional bedroom because of a health problem that has been verified by PHA.

Transfer Waiting List

When a change in family composition requires the issuance of a larger Voucher size, and funds are not available, the family will be placed on a Transfer List.

Families will be selected from the Transfer List by date and time before families are selected from the applicant waiting list. This assures that families who are already on the program are in the appropriate sized units.

C. UNIT SIZE SELECTED[24 CFR 982.402(c)]

The family may select a different size dwelling than that listed on the Voucher. There are three criteria to consider:

1. Subsidy Limitation: The family unit size as determined for a family under the PHA subsidy standard for a family assisted in the voucher program is based on the PHA's adopted payment standards. The payment standard for a family shall be the lower of:
 - The payment standard amount for the family unit size; or
 - The payment standard amount for the unit size rented by the family.

2. Utility Allowance: The utility allowance used to calculate the gross rent is based on the actual size of the unit family selects, regardless of the size authorized on the family's Voucher.
3. Housing Quality Standards: The standards allow two persons per living/sleeping room and permit maximum occupancy levels (assuming a living room is used as a living/sleeping area) as shown in the table below. The levels may be exceeded if a room in addition to bedrooms and living room is used for sleeping.

HQS GUIDELINES FOR UNIT SIZE SELECTED

Maximum # of Persons in Household

0 Bedroom	1
1 Bedroom	4
2 Bedrooms	6
3 Bedrooms	8
4 Bedrooms	10
5 Bedrooms	12
6 Bedrooms	14