



## **THA Is Considering Changes to Its College Housing Assistance Program: It Seeks Advice**

*(last revised: May 14, 2019)*

Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) seeks advice about its College Housing Assistance Program (CHAP). This program houses or pays to house homeless or near homeless college students. THA provides the housing dollar. The post-secondary<sup>1</sup> partner operates the program, provides resource navigation for participants, may provide help with security deposits/move in fees, monitors for compliance and shares data with THA. Tacoma's rents are rising. The number of households who need help is growing. More schools have expressed interest in participating. THA faces some decisions. We need help to make them.

- THA is considering an expansion of CHAP to other public post-secondary institutions. This may include Tacoma Community College (TCC) students who seek to transfer to UW Tacoma. This may mean extending the time limit.
- THA seeks to serve people that have exited (or will exit) Corrections.
- THA is considering changes to try to increase the successful lease up rates of students who receive a voucher.

THA has written a report on the program changes that we are considering. See the report at [www.tacomahousing.net/programchanges](http://www.tacomahousing.net/programchanges). We welcome your advice. If you have some for us, we need it by **June 15, 2019**. Please send your advice to [athompson@tacomahousing.org](mailto:athompson@tacomahousing.org) or call 253.274.5587. A summary of the proposals is below.

Here is a key that explains the effects we expect of each proposal:

Yellow	This proposal will decrease the number of households served but the assistance will be more or last longer
Blue	This proposal will maintain the number of households served and the assistance will be the same
White	This proposal does not have an effect on the number of households served or the assistance

### **1. Expand CHAP To Other Public Post-Secondary Institutions**

Presently, CHAP serves homeless or near homeless students at TCC and the University of Washington Tacoma (UW Tacoma). CHAP may expand to other post-secondary institutions. Possible new colleges may include Bates Technical College, Evergreen State College Tacoma and others. Should THA expand CHAP?

Yes	Expand CHAP to other public post-secondary institutions
No	Do not expand CHAP beyond TCC and UW Tacoma

### **2. Allow Students to Transfer Between Participating Institutions**

Students may seek to transfer between participating institutions. For example, a TCC student may seek to transfer to UW Tacoma. When this happens, should THA continue its housing assistance?

Yes	Continue assistance between participating institutions
No	Do not continue assistance between participating institutions

<sup>1</sup> After high school

### 3. Extend the Time Limit To Promote Completion of a Bachelor's Degree

Should THA change the time limit from up to 3 years to up to 5 years of rental assistance? The rental assistance would continue until the earliest of any of the following:

1. end of eligibility;
2. end of enrollment at the post-secondary institution;
3. sixty (60) months of rental assistance.

Yes	Extend the time limit to up to five years
No	Maintain the time limit of up to three years

### 4. Extend the Time Limit For Graduates

At the end of enrollment graduates presently have 30 days before the rental assistance ends. THA is considering extending the time limit for participants who graduate with an Associates or Bachelor's degree. This extra time would allow households to secure a living wage job and/or build their income. Graduates would receive additional months of rental assistance post-graduation or 60 total months (whichever occurs first). Should THA extend the time limit for graduates?

6 Months Post-graduation	Extend the time limit for graduates to 6 months post-graduation
12 Months Post-graduation	Extend the time limit for graduates to 12 months post-graduation
No Additional Time Beyond 30 Days	Do not extend the time limit for graduates

### 5. Expand the Definition of Homeless & At Serious Risk of Homelessness to Include Returning Citizens

Expand the definition of "homeless" to include people who have exited, or will exit, the Department of Corrections (DOC) without a housing plan. Expand the definition of "at serious risk of homelessness" to include people who have exited, or will exit, the DOC with a short term<sup>2</sup> housing plan.

Yes	Expand the definition of homeless and at serious risk of homelessness
No	Do not expand the definition of homeless and at serious risk of homelessness

### 6. Change the Rental Assistance Subsidy

Currently, CHAP participants receive a fixed amount of rental assistance based on their household size. This assistance is 50% of THA's payment standards. Payment standards approximate average rents. This generally means that participants receive assistance with 50% of the rent for their assigned voucher size.<sup>3</sup> THA could change this subsidy to give households more assistance. This subsidy could be fixed or it could vary based on the household's income. If THA increases the subsidy amount, THA will serve fewer households

60% of Payment Standard <sup>4</sup> Fixed Subsidy	Average rental assistance is \$670 per household
65% of Payment Standard Fixed Subsidy	Average rental assistance is \$726 per household
70% of Payment Standard Fixed Subsidy	Average rental assistance is \$782 per household
Income-based Subsidy	Average rental assistance is \$733 per household The assistance would vary based on the household's income. Some households would receive more assistance, others would receive less assistance. The amount of assistance would change based on the household's income. An income-based subsidy would cost THA more to operate because there is more paperwork.
No Change (50%)	Average rental assistance is \$533 per household (the assistance amount is fixed)

<sup>2</sup> Less than 6 months.

<sup>3</sup> Voucher size is assigned based on household size. 2 people are assigned 1 bedroom. A four person household receives a 2BR voucher.

<sup>4</sup> THA's payment standard for a 1BR is \$966, 2BR is \$1265 & 3BR is \$1829