



RESOLUTION 2023-11-08 (3)

Date: November 8, 2023

To: THA Board of Commissioners

From: April Black
Executive Director

Re: Approval of Revision to THA's Administrative Plan: Update to Local Waitlist Preferences

This resolution would authorize Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) to revise its Administrative Plan waitlist preference policy so it may receive referrals from supportive service providers to fill next-available units within THA's portfolio and for its voucher programs.

BACKGROUND

Tacoma Housing Authority primarily provides subsidized housing assistance to those who apply and are selected off its consolidated waitlist. THA's waitlist includes preferences for specific populations, which allows select households to bypass the consolidated waitlist. Per Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations at [24 CFR 982.207](#) and [HUD PIH Notice-23-13](#), Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) are permitted to establish local preferences, including referrals from partner agencies, and to give priority to serving households that meet those criteria.

Over the last year and a half, in alignment with THA's goals to increase and maintain housing access and stability for low-income Tacomans, the THA Board of Commissioners have approved changes to THA's local preferences that allow for direct referrals from our community partners to serve households with the highest barriers and who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability. In February 2023, THA passed a revision to our Local Preferences to allow a preference for Foundational Community Supports (FCS)-eligible households (Resolution 2023-02-23(3)). Prior to that, in April 2022, THA approved a waitlist preference policy accepting referrals from Pierce County's Coordinated Entry System for its homeless set-side units (Resolution 2022-04-27(3)).

Through this resolution, THA seeks to explore and pilot expanding its local waitlist preference policy, allowing for potential referrals from service providers that provide lease-up and housing stabilization services to households experiencing homelessness and housing instability in Tacoma. Consistent with past resolutions to expand THA's waitlist preferences and in alignment with community strategic plans to address homelessness, this would allow THA's housing resources to be targeted to households who face among the highest barriers accessing and maintaining affordable housing.¹ Additionally, THA seeks to utilize these partnerships with service providers to ensure supportive services, which are often underfunded and scarce assets in affordable housing, would be offered to households for at least six months after lease-up to ensure a household successfully stabilizes in housing. In turn, THA can offer its vouchers and vacancies in THA's portfolio units to households who have already worked with providers to establish case management, meet THA's eligibility criteria, and are receiving assistance for leasing up, all of which benefits THA's goals for meeting its utilization targets and leasing up quickly.

Over the next couple months, THA will explore and pilot entering into memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreements with prospective service providers. Upon execution of the MOUs, THA will actively monitor its utilization rates and reserves the right to halt the waitlist preference policy for referrals from service providers if utilization targets have been met or there is a sufficient number of households to pull from THA's consolidated waitlist. In doing this, THA still intends to pull from the consolidated waitlist at a regular cadence so that households would be regularly pulled between the consolidated waitlist and from referrals received from THA's waitlist preference policy. Finally, THA will monitor performance based on its MOU agreements with partners to ensure services provided to households are compliant with Fair Housing requirements, follow Housing First and Trauma-Informed Care principles, and are person-centered such that households benefitting from this waitlist preference are able to lease-up quickly and receive evidence-based services that assist them in becoming stable in housing. In early 2024, THA's Policy, Improvement, and Evaluation Department intends to complete an analysis of THA's Waitlist Preference Policy in full, considering recommendations for an equitable and comprehensive waitlist preference policy.

¹ This waitlist preference policy is in alignment with the Washington Consolidated Plan's goals to reduce homelessness and provide decent housing (<https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/cd7vm7hmmfftwzy5qrrmjgbwvvcn7i2c>) and the City of Tacoma's Affordable Housing Action Strategy to create a range of resources for households experiencing a housing crisis and reducing barriers for those who often encounter them (<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=148642>). Furthermore, this policy change addresses the strategies outlined in the Pierce County's Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness to create dedicated housing voucher interventions for households experiencing homelessness and targeting households at-risk of homelessness (<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/109977/Comprehensive-Plan-to-End-Homelessness-with-Appendices-and-Shelter-Action-Plan>).

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Resolution 2023-02-23 (3) authorizing revisions to THA's Administrative Plan (Chapter 4 Section III.C) to expand its waitlist preference policy for receiving referrals from supportive service providers to fill next-available units within THA's portfolio and for its voucher programs.

4-III.C. SELECTION METHOD

PHAs must describe the method for selecting applicant families from the waiting list, including the system of admission preferences that the PHA will use [24 CFR 982.202(d)].

Local Preferences [24 CFR 982.207; HCV p. 4-16]

PHAs are permitted to establish local preferences, and to give priority to serving families that meet those criteria. HUD specifically authorizes and places restrictions on certain types of local preferences. HUD also permits the PHA to establish other local preferences, at its discretion. Any local preferences established must be consistent with the PHA plan and the consolidated plan, and must be based on local housing needs and priorities that can be documented by generally accepted data sources.

THA Policy

THA will utilize a lottery system for selecting off its consolidated waitlist. There will only be preferences for the following:

- The Executive Director will, at their discretion, identify when, and if, to make a set number of Housing Choice Vouchers available in response to a federally-declared disaster. When these vouchers are made available, households that can document that they have been displaced by a presidentially declared Major Disaster Declaration (MDD) will be eligible for this preference. Displaced households will be able to apply, even if the waiting list is closed, and receive this emergency preference. In order to qualify the applicant must provide evidence that the family resided in the disaster area before occurrence. Eligibility will be verified by Tacoma Housing Authority. To demonstrate need the applicant may provide, as verified by FEMA, an assessment of damage to their property showing their pre-disaster residence is either uninhabitable or inaccessible. Applicant should provide documentation demonstrating a lack of, or insufficient insurance coverage to meet housing needs. Applicants must also meet PHA program eligibility requirements.
- The PHA will offer a preference to any family that has been terminated from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding.
- THA will offer a preference to eligible households experiencing homelessness or housing instability from the following referral mechanisms:
 - Households experiencing homelessness referred by Pierce County's Coordinated Entry System for its homeless set aside units.
 - Households experiencing homelessness or housing instability referred by service partners with which THA has entered into MOU agreements to

provide lease-up assistance and housing stabilization services to these households for no less than 6 months.

- THA may offer a preference to Foundational Community Supports (FCS) eligible households referred by community FCS providers. The number of successful (housed) referrals may not exceed 50 unit referrals and 50 voucher referrals per year.
- THA will also offer preferences for RAD exits, PBV exits, displacement due to disaster, and transfers.
- THA will allow those on the transfer waitlist to be served ahead of those on the regular waitlist in accordance with Chapter 12 of THA's ACOP. As of July 1, 2020 THA may offer a Housing Choice Voucher subsidy to households on the transfer waitlist for the following reasons:

Emergency Transfer
Reasonable Accommodation
Over-housed
Under-housed

Until a comprehensive transfer waitlist policy revision is completed, households that refuse a Housing Choice Voucher offer will remain on THA's transfer list.

When THA's consolidated waitlist is suspended or closed, applications from households that meet the preference criteria above will continue to be accepted and placed on the waitlist at THA's discretion.



RESOLUTION 2023-11-08 (3)

APPROVAL OF REVISION TO THA'S ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN: UPDATE TO LOCAL WAITLIST PREFERENCES

A **RESOLUTION** of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma

WHEREAS, the Administrative Plan related to administration of THA's housing programs and is required by HUD; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Administrative Plan is to establish policies for carrying out programs in a manner consistent with HUD requirements and local goals and objectives contained in THA's Moving to Work plan; and

WHEREAS, THA seeks to accept referrals from supportive service providers to fill next-available units within THA's portfolio and for its voucher programs; and

WHEREAS, Changes to the Administrative Plan must be approved by THA Board of Commissioners; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma, Washington as follows:

Authorize revisions to THA's Administrative Plan (Chapter 4 Section III.C) to expand THA's waitlist preference policy so it may begin receiving referrals from supportive service providers to fill next-available units within THA's portfolio and for its voucher programs.

Approved: November 8, 2023



Dr. Minh-Anh Hodge, Chair