



RESOLUTION 2024-09-25 (3)

Date: September 25, 2024

To: THA Board of Commissioners

From: April Black
Executive Director

Re: Revisions to THA's Waitlist Policy

This resolution would allow Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) to maintain separate and continuously open waiting lists for the Housing Choice Voucher Program and subsidized THA units. Additionally, the resolution would revise THA's waitlist preference policy.

BACKGROUND

Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) maintains a waitlist for people hoping to access housing and/or rental assistance. In the past, THA maintained separate waitlists for each of the properties and one for vouchers. In 2018, facing low voucher utilization rates and a shift to a new software system, THA's Board of Commissioners approved consolidating all the waitlists into one. The intent was to try and serve households faster by offering them the first available form of assistance - a voucher or a unit. At that time, Tacoma's rental market was becoming more competitive and THA's voucher was less desirable than a THA unit. A consolidated waitlist allowed THA to issue vouchers to families who did not originally apply for one.

However, with recent changes to THA's voucher, the demand for a voucher has grown. Additionally, when staff do waitlist pulls, about half of the people are not responding. As THA transitions to another software system, we realize now is the time to evaluate our current waitlist policies and practices to see if and how these technological changes can support a new approach to managing the waitlist. Specifically, THA wants to find a way for the waitlist to be more reflective of and responsive to the community's housing needs.

Unfortunately, the need for housing assistance is much larger than the available resources. Not everyone who applies to the THA waitlist is served. Some families apply but are not selected to join the

waitlist. Some families have not been able to apply because their household is too small. Others have found out they do not qualify for THA assistance despite waiting years on the waitlist. Though THA cannot solve all these challenges, we are striving to design a waitlist that is responsive to changes in families' circumstances, accessible to community members who face barriers to being and remaining stably housed, and efficient in getting people off of our waitlist and into homes.

For a detailed discussion of current waitlist practices and challenges, please see Appendix A.

RECOMMENDATION

THA anticipates needing to open the waitlist in the coming months. After consulting with various departments, namely Rental Assistance and Property Management, and conducting public comment (with responses from over 100 people – captured in Appendix B), PIE staff have developed the following recommendations:

Separate Waitlist for Vouchers and Units

To allow families greater choice in where they live, THA is proposing to have separate waitlists for vouchers and units. Allowing people to choose if they want to be on one or both waitlists will help ensure that when we make an offer of assistance it is one that they are willing and eager to accept.

Continuously Open

To ensure people can apply for housing assistance when they need it, THA is proposing that we allow the waitlist to stay open and accept applications at any time. If a household is unresponsive to communications or unable to accept an offer of assistance, they will be removed from the waitlist. However, they can simply reapply when they are ready to accept a voucher or unit. If a household only signs up for the THA property waitlist and later decides they want a voucher, they can apply to the voucher waitlist at that time. Point being, circumstances change, and an open waitlist would be responsive to households' changing needs and preferences.

This would also allow THA to have more reliable and real-time data to better understand the housing needs of our community. This could help advocate for increased funding and inform THA's development and acquisition plans.

Frequent Purges or Application Expiration Date

A continuously open waitlist means more people are added to the waitlist. To maintain an accurate and active waitlist, households would be required to check in regularly (monthly or quarterly). Rather than applying and waiting to be contacted by THA to confirm continued interest/need, households would be responsible for maintaining their spot on the waitlist. With the new Yardi platform, THA will have the ability to set applications to automatically expire after a specific period of time has passed. This will require interested households to renew their application if they still need assistance.

Regardless, if someone does get removed from the waitlist because they are inactive for a period, they can just reapply – no need to wait months or years for the next opening.

Random Pulls

One of the most challenging aspects of housing waitlists is that families often sit for years before moving to the top of the waitlist. Given the limited housing resources and funding, this will always be a problem for every housing authority. A policy change will not be enough to solve this problem.

However, THA's current approach of using a lottery to place people on the waitlist means that approximately 10% of people who apply are added to the waitlist to get a chance to receive housing assistance. By accepting all applicants and doing random pulls from the pool of applicants, everyone who needs housing assistance at least has an on-going chance of receiving an offer of assistance if they maintain an active application and may not have to wait years to reapply to the waitlist and not be guaranteed of selection.

This approach would also save a significant amount of administrative time that is spent on reinstating people on the waitlist. Currently, within 6 months of being withdrawn from the waitlist, a family can request to be reinstated to their original spot. These reinstatements require staff time. A continuously open waitlist with random pulls means someone can easily reapply on their own if they are removed from the waitlist. Random selection from the waitlist means no one is losing a place ahead of anyone else.

Waitlist Preferences

Waitlist preferences allow THA to serve households ahead of others on the waitlist. The majority of THA's preferences come from outside referring partners. THA is proposing the following changes:

- Allow participants on time-limited programs to be offered a voucher at the end of their program to ensure they remain stably housed (THA serves less than 100 of these households).
- Allow households exiting permanent supportive housing who currently have a voucher for single room occupancy (which cannot be used in the private rental market) to request an HCV to open space for others who need these supports.
- Offer families trying to secure housing with a voucher who are unsuccessful at finding housing a THA unit if we have an unanticipated number of units vacant. These households would allow for expedited processing in cases where a unit is has been vacant for too long and would help ensure all the work to verify the household's eligibility does not go to waste.
- To ensure we are continuously pulling from the general voucher and THA unit waitlists, making sure that we maintain an even balance of serving families referred from an outside agency and selecting households from the general (non-preference) waitlist.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION & PUBLIC COMMENT

Waitlist changes are considered a significant change to policy and require the PHA to hold a public comment period. For these proposed changes, PIE staff conducted two public forums virtually, two staff forums (one in person and one virtual), met with the Rental Assistance and Property Management departments, and posted a summary of the proposed changes to the website. The website included a

form for people to leave comments and share their support and concerns. The website and a one-pager summarizing the proposed changes was shared through social media, Continuum of Care partners, as well as the Tacoma-Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness. In total, just over 100 people submitted responses to the public comment form. The survey responses can be reviewed in Appendix B.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Over half (59%) of respondents supported the proposed changes. 36% supported some of the changes, but not all. The remainder did not support the proposed changes. Respondents were asked to identify which aspects of the recommendation they most supported and which they did not support. The most popular changes included having a continuously open waitlist and having separate waitlists for vouchers and units. The least popular recommendation was randomly selecting people from the waitlist when vouchers or units become available. Staff understand this concern. Though Yardi cannot currently allow THA to “weight the wait” in order to increase a family’s chances of being pulled the longer they are on the waitlist, staff would like to continue to explore possible ways to increase a family’s chance of receiving an offer of assistance based on how long they’ve been waiting, while also giving families an opportunity of being pulled for a unit/voucher despite how long they have been waiting. The reality is how long someone has been on the waitlist is not always an indicator of how long they have been in need of assistance.

Additionally, a common concern voiced through public comment was that frequent purges would create an additional barrier for unhoused or high barrier households. This is true. However, THA’s waitlist preferences allow for the most marginalized households to be referred directly to THA without having to maintain an active spot on the waitlist. These households are working with service providers to ensure they have additional support and priority access to housing resources.

STAFF FEEDBACK

Internal consultation with staff included rich discussions around how these changes would impact the workloads of Rental Assistance staff working in eligibility. Currently, tracking household changes and waitlist reinstatements is very time consuming and burdensome, as is collecting and tracking paperwork for applicants to complete their application. With the implementation of Yardi and Rent Café (the client portal), staff workloads will change significantly because households will be able to file changes on their own, upload paperwork on their own, and see what documents they still need to supply. However, being in the early stages of the transition to Yardi, we cannot say for certain how staff capacity will be impacted and if having more people on the waitlist will result in more time being spent working with people waiting to be selected for housing.

A related concern is the use of a new online portal and whether applicants have the skills to register in the portal and navigate the application. This is a concern regardless of whether the waitlist is open, consolidated, or has random pulls. These issues are relevant and important even if no changes were made to the waitlist policy, as any waitlist opening will result in thousands of people applying through Rent Café for housing assistance.

STAFFING & FINANCIAL IMPACT

When presented to THA’s Leadership Team, questions arose regarding how these waitlist changes would impact staffing and if they would incur additional cost to the agency.

A continuously open waitlist will likely result in the same rush to apply as we see when the waitlist is open for only two weeks. But, as the waitlist remains open, we can expect to see the number of applicants decrease and even out to a slower and more consistent/predictable cadence. This was confirmed when speaking with Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) who made their HCV waitlist continuously open in January. Their data shows that of the current 18,000 applicants, 14,000 applied in the first two weeks. SHA increased their front desk staff in anticipation of the waitlist opening but shared that they will soon be reducing the number of front desk staff as the number of people applying has slowed.

For the past few waitlist openings, THA has used an “all hands on deck” approach to staffing the lobbies and phones to assist people in completing an application. During the last opening, just over 550 hours of staff time was dedicated to covering phones and staffing the lobbies. After consulting with HR, PIE staff determined it is too difficult to assign a cost to this work as staff “volunteers” range from Community Advocates, HR staff, department Directors, and even the Executive Office. To compose a rough budget, PIE staff are using \$60/hr to represent THA staff time. This amount is slightly higher than THA’s lowest hourly rate + benefits.

Status Quo: Two Week Wait List Opening in Formsite

Prep Work	
Waitlist Workgroup (15 staff, approx. 8 one-hour meetings)	\$7,200
Website, letters, FAQ, etc. (2 staff, approx. 10 hours)	\$1,500
Staff training (30 attendees for 1 hour training)	\$1,800
Staffing	
Temporary Office Assistants (3 FTEs for 2.5 weeks @ \$47/hr bill rate)	\$14,100
THA Staff Volunteers – Lobby (300 hours @ \$60/hr)	\$18,000
THA Staff Volunteers – Back-up Phones (270 hours @ \$60/hr)	\$16,200
Marketing	
Paper advertisement	\$100
Social media	\$500
Letters/postage	\$2,300
Robocalls	\$430
TOTAL	\$62,130

Using the figures in the table above, it costs THA at least \$62,000 every two years to conduct a waitlist opening as we have in the past. While a very rough estimate, it is likely below the true cost as it does not account for work that may be delayed or impacted by staff dedicating time to support the waitlist opening. It also does not account for behind-the-scenes work carried out by IT, the Data Analyst, and Project Manager to prepare for the opening, file questions, clean up applicant data, and conduct the lottery.

With the transition to Yardi, an “all hands on deck” approach to staffing a waitlist opening will be significantly more challenging. Staff will not be able to easily fill in and submit an application for someone. Instead, applicants need to have an email account they can access, and they will need to register with Rent Café. It would be more efficient and less disruptive to agency operations to bring on temporary staff that can focus specifically on supporting clients with Rent Café registration and provide technical assistance for people applying to the waitlist. With a continuously open waitlist, this would be a one-time expense as opposed to one we would need to fund every other year.

Using the estimated costs in the table below, bringing on 6 dedicated temps to staff the first month of the waitlist opening, and 3 to continue into the following two months, the anticipated budget for a waitlist opening using Yardi’s Rent Café would be roughly \$110,000. This is just under what it would cost to open the waitlist on two separate occasions using our previous process. If the waitlist policy remained the same as it currently is, this is the cost THA would incur for each subsequent waitlist opening. With Yardi, biennial openings would be more costly for THA than a one-time, upfront cost of opening the waitlist and keeping it open.

Opening the Wait List with Rent Café Client Portal

<i>Prep Work</i>	
Waitlist Workgroup/Testers (8 staff, approx. 8 one-hour meetings)	\$3,840
Website, letters, FAQ, etc. (2 staff, approx. 10 hours)	\$1,500
Staff training (N/A - no staff volunteers)	N/A
<i>Staffing (2 weeks for pre-opening training included)</i>	
Temporary Office Assistants (3 FTEs for 3 months @ \$47/hr bill rate)	\$67,680
Temporary Office Assistants (3 FTEs for 1.5 month @ \$47/hr bill rate)	\$33,840
<i>Marketing</i>	
Social media	\$500
Letters/postage	\$2,300
Robocalls	N/A
TOTAL	\$109,660

Though we can anticipate all future waitlist openings to be more costly by requiring applicants to create a Rent Café account, there are cost (and time) savings that come with the Yardi implementation. Office Administrators (OAs) are often responsible for changing applicant's contact information and processing reinstatements. This process requires OAs to download the submission form, check the information against what is already in the system, process the updates, then upload the submission to the system. Simply put, it is not an efficient process. As of June 1, 2024, 550 waitlist update/reinstatement forms have been submitted. With Yardi, applicants will be able to login to their Rent Café account and make some updates on their own. For updates that require staff assistance, having everything in one system as opposed to three (Formsite, Email, OpenDoor), should make for a more efficient process.

A higher number of people on the waitlist will likely result in a higher volume of calls and visits to the THA main office when people have questions about their status on the waitlist. Between being able to access and review their status online and OAs no longer having to process all changes and reinstatements, currently we do not anticipate the waitlist changes to have a negative impact on OAs' capacity if temps are brought on to staff the waitlist opening.

CONCLUSION

In summary, separate and continuously open waitlists would be less administratively burdensome to manage and community members would have greater choice in the type of assistance that they receive. If a family is removed from the waitlist, they can easily reapply at any time. Lastly, THA would have a much more current and accurate measure of housing needs amongst our community.

If approved, these new policies/practices would not be effective until our next waitlist opening (anticipated to occur no earlier than November 1, 2024).



RESOLUTION 2024-09-25 (3)
(Updating THA’s Waitlist Policies)

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

WHEREAS, the Administrative Plan relates to the administration of the Housing Choice Voucher Program and is required by HUD; and

WHEREAS, the Administrative Plan establishes 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, changes to the Administrative Plan must be approved by the 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:

Staff are authorized to adopt the following updates to the Administrative Plan to reflect the proposed policy changes.

Policy/Process Proposal	Applicable THA Policy Requiring Revision
Separate Waitlists	<p>Chapter 4 “APPLICATIONS, WAITING LIST AND TENANT SELECTION”</p> <p>Clarify language throughout to ensure waitlist policies and procedures apply to both HCV and THA unit waitlists.</p> <p>4-II.B. “Organization of the Waiting List”</p> <p>Establish separate waitlists for vouchers and THA subsidized units, effective no sooner than November 1, 2024.</p>
Continuously Open	<p>4-II.C. “Opening and Closing the Waiting List”</p> <p>Remove THA will select enough households to serve within 24 months.</p> <p>Add effective no sooner than November 1, 2024, THA’s waitlist will remain open until THA makes the decision to close it.</p>

Frequent Purges or Application Expiration Date	<p>4-II.F. "Updating the Waiting List"</p> <p>Update language to specify if a pre-application is not updated and/or renewed within the THA-prescribed time frame (via client portal, email, or regular mail notification), the applicant may be removed from the list.</p>
Random Pulls	<p>4-III.C. "Selection Method"</p> <p>Update language to reflect all applicants will be placed on the waitlist (versus a lottery to place on waitlist) then randomly selected for an offer of assistance.</p>
Update Waitlist Preferences	<p>4-III.C. "Selection Method"</p> <p>Distinguish preferences by Priority 1 and Priority 2.</p> <p>Priority 1 represents groups served ahead of the waitlist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - households impacted by federally declared disaster - families terminated due to funding - time-limited program participants - households exiting single-room occupancy supportive housing - unsuccessful voucher shoppers (ability to apply for a THA unit) <p>Priority 2 represents referrals received through the Continuum of Care from community partners who have entered into an MOU with THA. These households are served in tandem with households on the waitlist. At no time will THA accept more referrals than the number of households pulled from the waitlist.</p>

Approved: September 25, 2024



 Derek Young, Chair

THA's Current Waitlist Policies & Procedures

The following sections outline THA's current practices and policies regarding the waitlist.

The Waitlist Opening

Currently, THA only opens the waitlist when there are enough openings to ensure a new batch of applicants can be served within two years. As a result, every couple of years, for about two weeks, THA accepts applications to be added to our waitlist. The current waitlist is for any type of assistance: a voucher to rent on the private market or a unit at a THA property. We offer families the first available form of assistance.

There are times when we only accept waitlist applications for households that are a certain size. For instance, in 2021, we opened our waitlist to applicants whose households were composed of nine or 10 people. Waitlist applicants were limited to these households because we could anticipate enough openings in our larger units to ensure these households would be served within two years. In contrast, there are so many one- and two-person households currently waiting for assistance that THA has only opened the waitlist to accommodate these smaller households in 2015 and again in 2023.

The Lottery

Once the application window closes, we randomize the applications and select a pre-determined number of households to be added to the existing waitlist. In addition to being randomly selected to be added to the waitlist, households are also randomly assigned a number indicating their place on the current waitlist. In 2023, approximately 15,000 households applied to be added to the waitlist. To ensure everyone could be served within two years, THA could only place 1,825 households on the waitlist.

The Wait

Households who are selected are told they can expect to receive an offer of housing or a subsidy to rent on the private market within 18-24 months, sometimes longer. Waitlist applicants are required to update us if there is a change in their household composition or contact information.

Purging the Waitlist

People may find housing, leave the area, or no longer need THA assistance before they reach the top of the waitlist. As a result, we conduct waitlist purges so that the waitlist is up to date. A waitlist purge allows us to remove people who no longer need/want assistance.

Waitlist purges typically occur once a year or every other year. If a household does not respond when we conduct a waitlist purge, they will be removed and can reapply the next time we open the waitlist. If a household does not respond, they may petition to be re-instated through a reasonable accommodation request (for households with a disability) or by filing a written request within six months of being removed.

Offer of Assistance

THA maintains a consolidated waitlist. That means people seeking access to THA-owned properties and those who prefer a voucher to rent on the private market are served through the same waitlist. Households may turn down an initial offer of assistance once for a good cause (such as being in a lease). That is, a household may be offered a unit at a THA property but may pass on it to receive a voucher so that they can live closer to their child's school or their work.

Once a household is pulled from the waitlist, they are required to complete the full application packet. Households have 10 business days to return their application packet and additional documentation.

Waitlist Preferences

THA maintains certain waitlist preferences, allowing households to be served ahead of others on the waitlist. Preferences are set to meet local needs and funding requirements. For instance, if THA has a unit required to go to a homeless household, then we work to find an eligible family being served through Coordinated Entry (Pierce County's central access point for people experiencing homelessness). THA's current waitlist preferences include:

- Families impacted by a federally declared disaster.
- Families whose assistance was terminated (at no fault of their own) due to lack of funding.
- THA residents on the transfer list who need to move in the event of an emergency, to address disability-related needs, or those who are under- or over-housed.
- Homeless families served by Pierce County's Homeless System.
- Households exiting permanent supportive housing.
- Households who wish to get a voucher to move out of a THA property.
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Limitations Posed by THA's Current Waitlist Approach

THA's waitlist policies were designed to house more people faster and limit the amount of time that people must sit on the waitlist. However, there are still ways in which our current approach could be improved to better serve the community and improve a family's likelihood of being housed in a timely manner once they are pulled from the waitlist. The following briefly summarizes a few major limitations that result from THA's current approach to waitlist management.

Outdated Reflection of Need

THA's waitlist is not reflective of the current housing need in our community. The current waitlist approach only serves families who need and seek out THA's assistance during the two-week period that the waitlist is open every couple of years. Even then, roughly 90% of the households that apply are not selected to be added to the waitlist. Over the two years that the waitlist remains closed, we have had no way of knowing how many more people need THA's assistance and how many who originally applied no longer need or want housing through THA.

False Sense of Available Resources

The last two times the THA waitlist was open to ALL household sizes was 2015 and again in 2023. Yet, THA is presented and listed as a housing resource. We are often the first resource people think of when facing housing challenges. Unfortunately, very few people have a chance to apply to the waitlist. Instead, many people who are referred to THA for assistance are met with the message that our waitlist is not open and will not be open for months, or possibly years.

Lack of Response

When a family is pulled from the waitlist, they must complete the full HUD (Housing and Urban Development) application and submit copies of IDs, birth certificates, social security cards, and documentation pertaining to their income within 10 business days. Recent data has shown that only *half* of the people pulled from the waitlist respond when they are notified and sent the full application packet. The lack of response may be that people no longer need assistance or they are unable to respond and submit the required documentation by the due date and instead opt not to return the packet. Regardless of the reason, this current approach has room for improvement.

Long Processing Time

When packets are returned, they often contain errors or are missing information. Staff work with clients to track down missing documents. On average it takes 76 days from when an initial packet is received until a voucher is issued. For THA units, that average is 126 days (units require

an additional set of paperwork to be completed after the HUD application). This is a significant problem because many forms expire after 120 and need to be re-submitted to remain current. Additionally, THA is penalized when units sit vacant for too long. It is important that the way we operate our waitlist and process files ensure families are housed in a timely manner and units do not sit empty for longer than 30 days.

Lack of Choice

Putting everyone on the same waitlist does not allow families to identify what type of assistance is most appropriate for their circumstances and needs. During our last wait list opening in April 2023, 49% of applicants stated they would prefer a voucher over a unit at a THA property, 47% stated no preference, and 4% stated a preference for a unit at a THA property. When a family is pulled from the waitlist, they are given the first available type of assistance. As a result, given the current preference for a voucher, we are finding that households offered a unit are less likely to respond to the offer of assistance or they turn down a unit once it's been assigned to them. THA's current waitlist policy does not allow us to offer units only to those who expressed a preference for one. Changing our policy will help give families more say over whether they are given a voucher or unit. Hopefully, this will also improve the response rate.

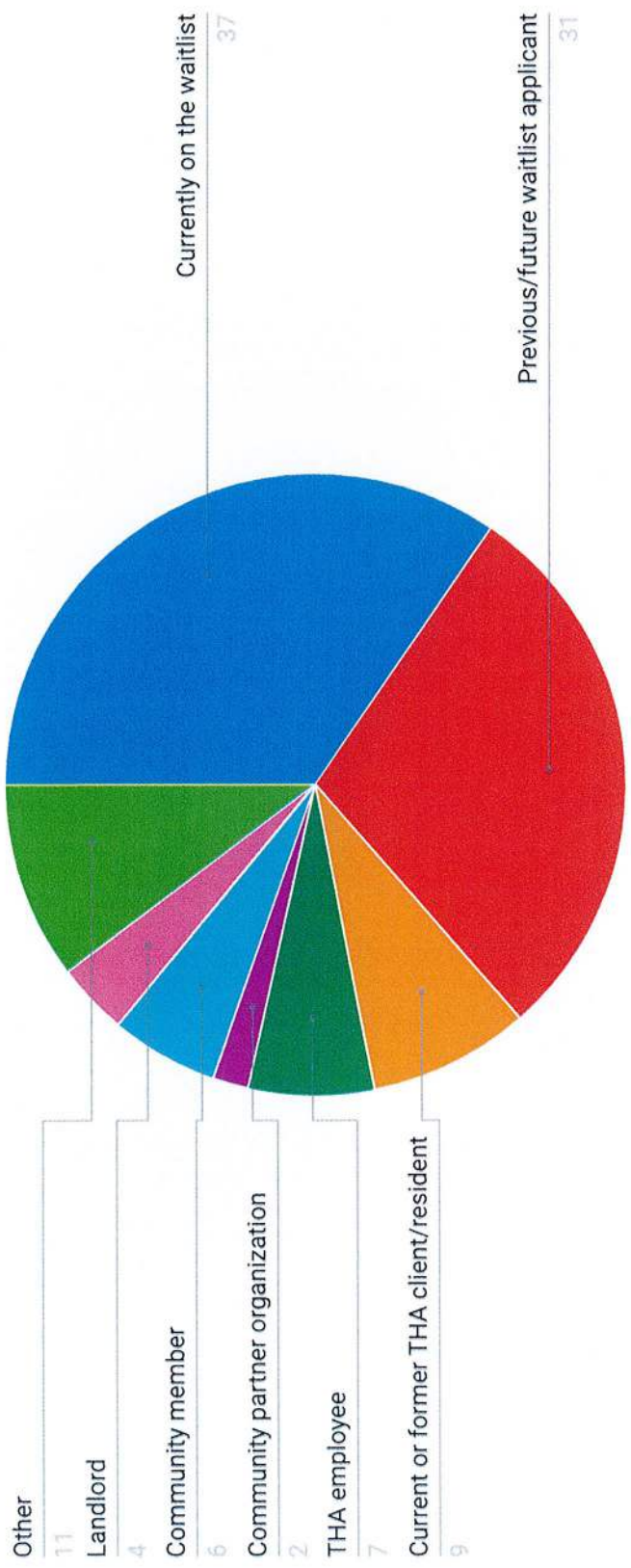
Confusing Waitlist Preferences

In some cases, THA's waitlist preferences do not align with actual housing needs and requests. For instance, THA allows households in one of our subsidized units to exercise Choice Mobility. That is, after one year of residency in a THA unit, the resident can request a voucher to rent on the private market. Currently, THA policy states for every five vouchers that become available we will issue four to households on the Choice Mobility list and one to a household on the waitlist. THA does not have enough people requesting Choice Mobility to justify such a large portion of our vouchers going to this group as opposed to the waitlist.

A waitlist preference means the household meeting that preference is served *before* households on the waitlist. THA has preferences to serve homeless families working with outside agencies, but we do not have a cap on the number of referrals. The current THA policy does not identify what mechanisms are in place to ensure families on the waitlist continue to be served while also allowing THA to maintain waitlist preferences. This can cause confusion for staff who are managing the waitlist and trying to ensure they are compliant with policies that do not always accurately reflect the demands for housing that we are trying to address.

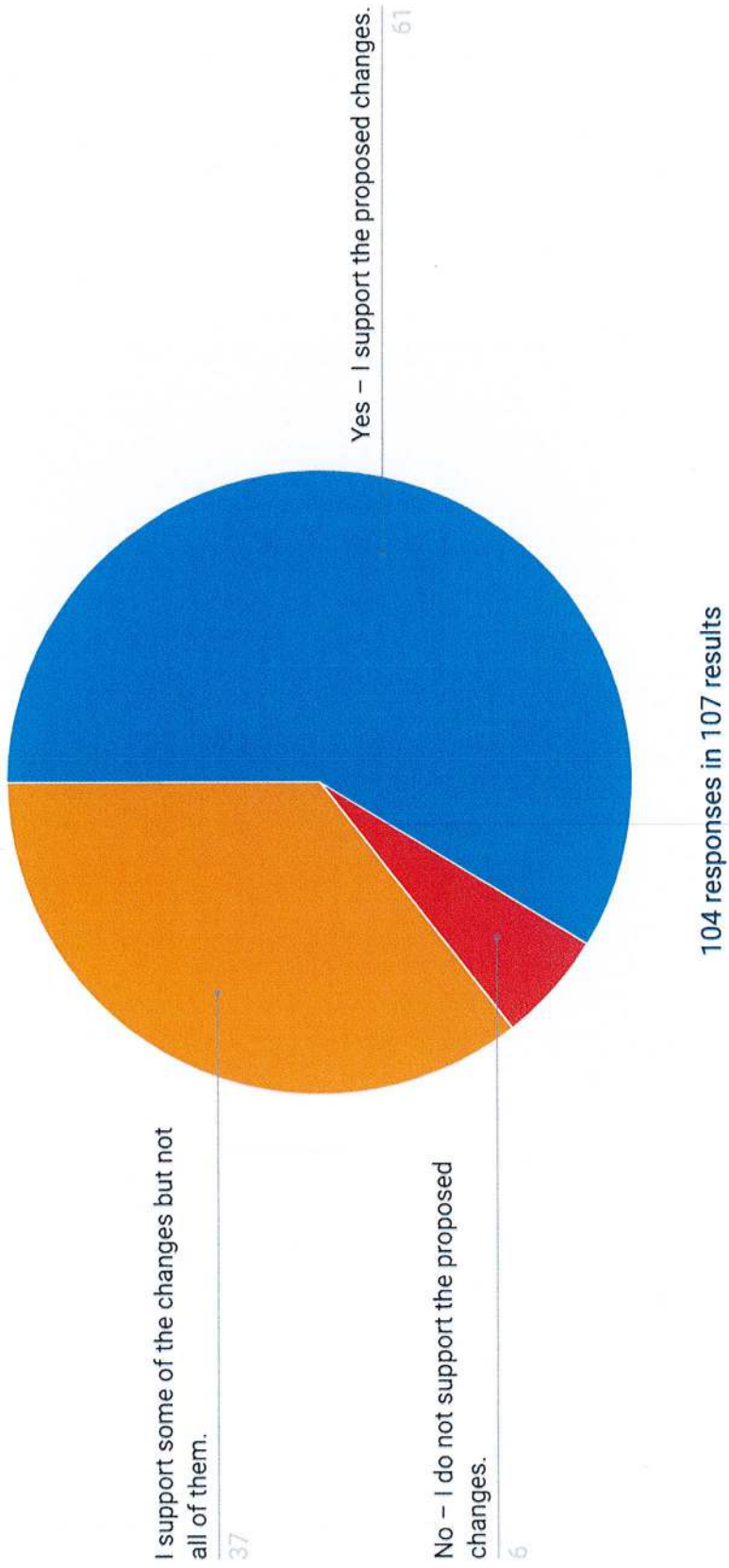
APPENDIX B: PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY

What is your relationship to Tacoma Housing Authority?

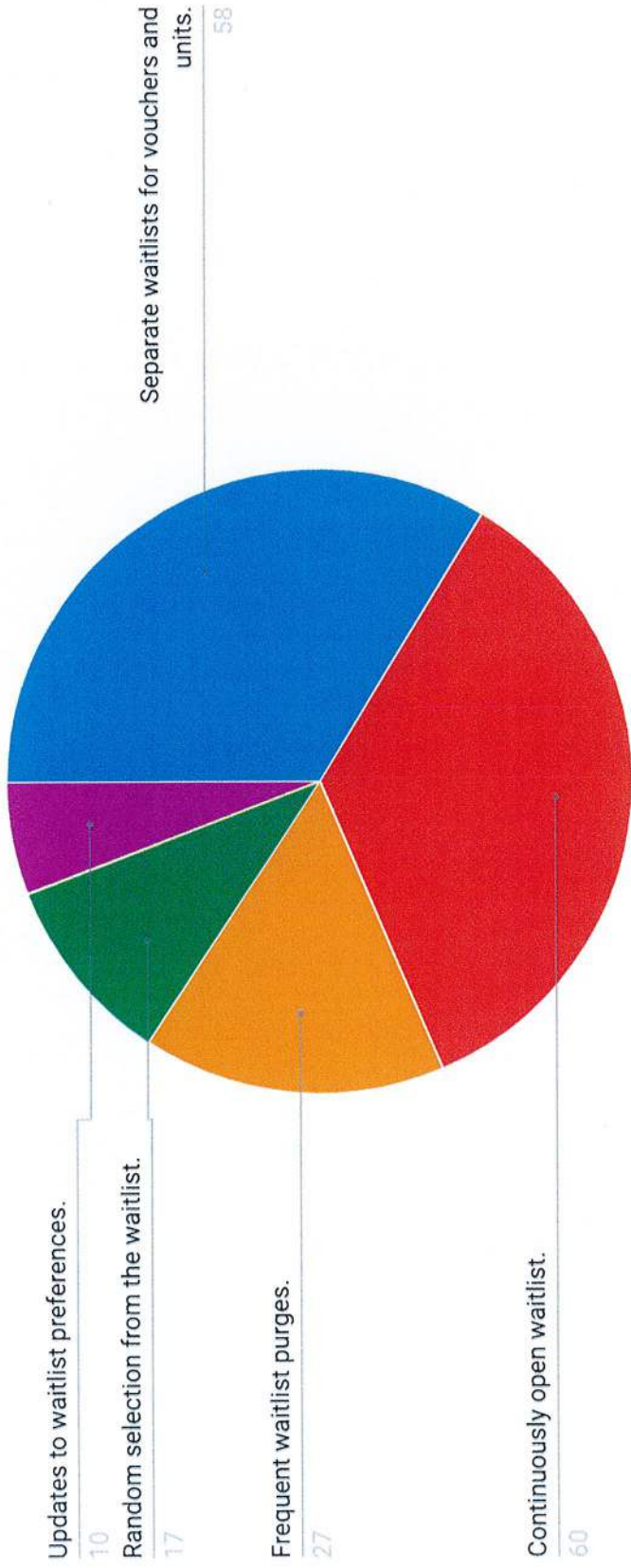


107 responses in 107 results

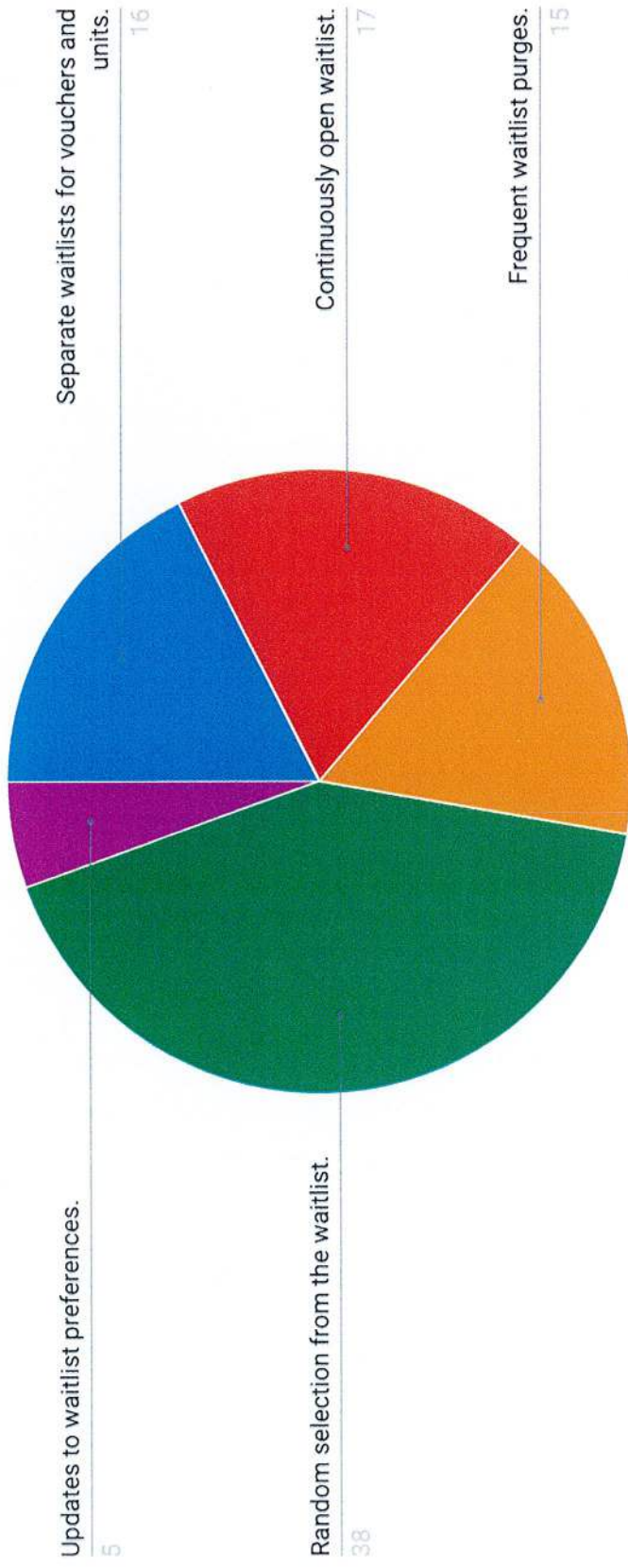
Do you support the proposed changes?



Of the proposed changes, what change are you most in support of:



Of the proposed changes, what change are you most concerned about or do not support:



91 responses in 107 results

What is your relationship to Tacoma Housing Authority?	If these changes are approved, what concerns do you want staff to address or mitigate as we prepare to implement the changes?
Community member	<p>I am concerned that people who have needed a voucher for years will be bypassed over people who were randomly selected shortly after applying for a voucher. I know it would be a VERY long waitlist if first come, first served, but I feel like everyone deserves a solid opportunity for the help they need if they are willing to wait long enough. I literally have friends who ended up homeless in Tacoma that had to relocate to other states to get a housing voucher. Multiple friends, not just one.</p> <p>Also, I think there should be a priority preference for people with a disabled person in their household (with some sort of documentation, of course). If an adult is disabled, they likely have a significantly reduced income compared to wage earners. Or if there is a significantly disabled child in the home (receiving SSI or a DDA client), that may very well affect whether or not a parent has to stay home to care for their child full-time because 99% of daycares will not provide care for a child with a significant disability.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
Community member	<p>My main concern is folks who don't have phones or access to the internet being able to stay current with regular check-ins for the waitlist. There's also those who lose phones or are transient. Is there a way to add a case worker community org as an alternative contact?</p>
Community member	<p>So does this only apply to people that live in tacoma? I have an apartment in south hill and I just got the papers and I'm getting ready ti go to court and was wondering if u help people who already have apartment that are not on any assistance help them get on assistance</p>
Community member	<p>This seems to be a very ambitious undertaking that levels the odds of receiving assistance. As presented it sounds like a positive change for the community.</p>
Community partner organization	<p>Check-in requirements. Don't make being poor a fulltime job.</p>
Community partner organization	<p>I don't love the random selection from the waitlist. I don't think it's fair for some people to have waited for years for funding to not have priority over people who recently got on the waitlist.</p>
Current or former THA client/resident	<p>I have no concerns at the moment</p>
Current or former THA client/resident	<p>I've been on the wait-list since 2018, I didn't know I was removed if I wasn't selected , 4 years ago I had 6 months to find a unit for housing choice I've been homeless since 2015 ! I GAVE UP HOPE</p>

What is your relationship to Tacoma Housing Authority?	If these changes are approved, what concerns do you want staff to address or mitigate as we prepare to implement the changes?
Current or former THA client/resident	<p>My experience has looked like this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eligible for Pierce County rental assistance. Waited and that never came through. 2. Because I owed 2 months rent, landlord neglected major repairs on property, then health department posted notice to leave because living conditions were unsafe 3. Because I could no longer live there per health department, the Multicultural Center who I was assigned to said I was no longer eligible for the rental assistance program. 4. After my work shift I had no place to sleep so I took a trash bag from work, cut the ends off and slept on the ground in a place I wouldn't be seen. <p>I did this for months. The waitlists are closed last time I checked.</p>
Current or former THA client/resident	Recommend updating income limits as it is hard for people to afford a place now
Currently on the waitlist	even though I have been on the waitlist since 2016, I'd like the opportunity to qualify to rent a property even with a low credit score and below poverty median. Finding someone to rent to me is so difficult and I wish I could just apply for a unit.
Currently on the waitlist	I am desperately hoping to get an apartment from the waiting list. I hope we can move soon.
Currently on the waitlist	I have been on the waitlist since 2014?? I would definitely be ill
Currently on the waitlist	i think the people who have a voucher should be able to move if needed becuse the voucher gives the person to move anytime when needed if there in a complicated situation there should be a way you can override the voucher and give them one so that they can easily move without complicating things
Currently on the waitlist	I would like for my application to proceed as swiftly as possible. Thanks.
Currently on the waitlist	i would like for the section 8 voucher holders to be able to find a place to live without looking and searching for places its not very easy to look for apartments while on section 8 becuase most landlords do not accept section 8
Currently on the waitlist	I would like to see the housing authority to answer the phone often and take messages from people . Also I would like to see shorter waiting lists then usual
Currently on the waitlist	I'll hope these changes are approved.

Currently on the waitlist	If someone is on the wait list they should not have to re sign up. I'm 55 years old a Washingtonian and a citizen of the United States. So why am I still living in my car? Two years going on three!!! I am ashamed to be from this greedy fuild state and until we take care of our own back yard how can we be spending on anything else. We are human beans and this right here will destroy the entire world. I'm not asking for you making these decisions for a miracle...it's the humanity and Washington state better start dealing with this issue cause it can be better. It must be better and who's checking all these non profits? Books?? Funds??? Where are all these funds going. Not to us the homeless or I'd be housed. Stop playing with lives and start with your own community's! You are causing my health to crumble and your actions are directly the reason I'm in constant pain depression and becoming ill . I'm not going to sugar cote for the government and States course of blame on this issue with homelessness. Each day you make it larger. If people keep doing something and nothing good changes than your all insane and should be fired! I m looking for a job and believe you me I would do some real work. Stop funding what don't work and stop making these buildings for all the low income..make houses duplexes and spread us out.!! Like shall shan. I want to breath not be in a closed up building. I need a yard to work in . All these programs are designed to keep us comfortable not bring us out of poverty. I want help out of your so called generosity so I can take care of me and mines. Now what?? Can I get a job...a job that can afford this state that I'm native too.??? Thank you
Currently on the waitlist	Just to sselect more people wjo are in need alot fastwr
Currently on the waitlist	I have been on the wait list do no where lam need all the help i can det
Currently on the waitlist	make sure people get notified to these changes when they go in effect like multiple attempts to the waitlisters
Currently on the waitlist	My concern is frequently opening the waitlist myself and my children have been on the wait list since 2018, would family's just applying get seniority over those who have waited over five years?
Currently on the waitlist	Please hurry! We would be able to stay at our current addresses if we had vouchers to help us with our current rent. This would free up your waitlist and save us the distress and costs of moving, especially when the housing isn't even available.
Currently on the waitlist	Staff should keep in contat with applicants for updates on changes
Currently on the waitlist	The time you're given to get in the documents they require like myself I've waited 3 years to be called and my father and myself are living together he has cancer and I'm working to make sure I am able to stay fed and sheltered because I've been homeless for 5 years. My father or myself weren't able to fill out the pdf paperwork correctly from what she told me and were put back in the waiting list because she says we didn't do it in time. We stay in Seattle and I have no transportation nor am I able to bring my sick father in to do the paperwork so now we're struggling.
Currently on the waitlist	The wait-list for housing should be made easy for person that needs it

Currently on the waitlist	There is a need for help with grandparents raising grand children due to death prison or abuse and neglect drugs mainly...it's hard as a grandparents on a fixed income to take care of a grand child correctly with not much money and most of us are retired and have 1 bed room apartments now in a big need for 2 bed room but can not afford it...
Currently on the waitlist	There shouldn't be a waiting list for senior citizens that pay the taxpayers money. People been on waiting list over 10 years and still waiting. Those changes need to be dealt with.
Landlord	I have a concern for the frequent purges and that those effected may not be able to navigate a timely response to notifications due to various crisis in which the live under.
Landlord	It is not that I am concerned but I am interested in learning more about the reasons and benefits of this method.
Landlord	Random selection is unfair to applicants who have been on the waitlist for a long period, and to those who have been waiting to join the waitlist for a long period.
Other	Helping families that want to be added to wait-list that show documentation of being homeless such as staying at motels there really families that are using there own money from welfare to stay in motels and no family help noone
Other	<p>Hi - I'm a Pierce Country resident and regular volunteer for your non-profit partner organizations that serve people experiencing homelessness. I admire the courage you showed in your Jan 12 letter to the Pierce County Homeless Coalition, admitting you only open the housing list every two years could not have been easy.</p> <p>I support the continuously open list, but by your admission there is not even close to enough housing available, so more needs to be done.</p> <p>While I'm not sure how the THA housing list relates to the Coordinated Entry program, I think Tacoma needs to work with Pierce County and the non-profit partners to develop a single page white paper on the short and long term housing crisis in Pierce County. Then you and your partners need to use that white paper to lobby our elected officials and the general public to build more affordable housing.</p> <p>Don't bury the headline, which to me is something like "Someone experiencing homelessness for just two days is at severe risk for addiction, trafficking, violence, or death by exposure. Our current wait time for housing is over two YEARS."</p>
Other	I've been homeless since 11/22 and have no idea what is going on, no one has updated me on housing and I am disabled and my mother who is in her 70's was homeless with me and she had to leave to live her sister in California

Other	Stop helping so many who have 15 kids! Why not start helping our aging communities! My aunt was on wait list for 5 years who makes just over 700\$ a month on disability! She can't work! Never has worked! Was denied housing because you help "families" ! Why does someone need to be homeless to get help! She needs a small 55 or older community.. she don't do well with places with kids.. make people go to work! Get a job! If they can make babies they can work!
Previous/future waitlist applicant	A 60 year old single man who is on SSI (limited income) needs assistance with permanent housing. Would this proposed changes give him a favorable outcome? Thank you
Previous/future waitlist applicant	Back in April when the wait-list opened, I had applied whiley kids and I were in a home but a few days later we ended up homeless and in a family shelter and we weren't selected. I think if there were emergency vouchers for situations like this, I think it would helpful and less stressful on families. I know it's tricky with funding being limited but I think it would help a lot. Thank you for letting us share our thoughts.
Previous/future waitlist applicant	Continuous open waitlist Frequent purging
Previous/future waitlist applicant	I am a senior low income we are the new coming homeless. Being priced out high rent.soon my rent will be with yearly increases more than I get on social security. Do more for seniors that are on or want need to be on the waiting list I didn't get to be on the waiting list.last year due to many had a exceeded the limit to apply.
Previous/future waitlist applicant	I am not in favor of the random selection from the waitlist. This basically comes down to luck. With all things equal it means someone could be pulled after a short wait, while others could be passed time and time again. People should be able to move up the list given that have stayed active. It is frustrating that given two households with same needs and in theory one could spend a month on the list while the other could spend years.
Previous/future waitlist applicant	I do not think an open waitlist is the right answer. I believe that this would just create more of a delay and people actually getting the housing that they need. I do believe something needs to be done to make sure that people are still qualified, and willing to participate in the program. I've gotten on the waitlist once and I'm currently waiting to get on again the first time that I was on the waitlist by the time I became eligible I wasn't meeting the financial criteria and now that I really need help I have nowhere to turn to you

Previous/future waitlist applicant	I don't really have a concern with any of the possible changes. I do worry that the unhoused sometimes have trouble with keeping their contact information updated or can be difficult to reach and I would want that to be considered before removing anyone from the list. And if I use my own example of a previous homeless person who became disabled and unable to work but now has housing but still looks to something that might be better suited for myself because of the longevity and stability of the housing authority I wonder about my own needs. We live in such a competitive housing market and I worry about my landlord selling the property to someone not interested in low income housing and would want to be considered for housing with the housing authority even though my current needs are met but not if it meant someone had to sleep outside at night. It is such a complex issue and I pray for everyone working on it.
Previous/future waitlist applicant	I feel we should still be ranked because it's not fair to have someone on the wait-list two years and someone comes along one day and signs up and gets housing assistance before the person that has been waiting for their opportunity to get help. I like the separation of public housing and housing choice vouchers. In my opinion they should have been separate years ago. I'm pleased with list remaining open. I also support purging the list because too many people don't keep their information up to date or they secure housing, don't inform you, and they're taking up precious space on the list and wasting your time. It appears the wait-list preferencing will be more fair. I'm hoping single people will be treated equally to families. We all need help and we're all scared about tomorrow with these insane rental prices.
Previous/future waitlist applicant	I have been trying to get housing for 6 years an I still haven't been selected it's a very stressful an sometimes Im like should I even apply cause I probably won't get picked so I think it will help out
Previous/future waitlist applicant	I think the biggest issue has been, people who REALLY NEED on the waitlist cant get on, due to the lottery and random selection. I understand there is ALOT of people who need the help but I'm sorry there MUST be some priority list for people who are in more of a desperate need, for example i myself was homeless and no family to help with my child and i was a single parent. There was no other help or resources so even though this isn't intended to serve as a emergency housing, this is often mostly the only option for most. So i wasn't able to get on this list long ago cuz of the lottery.
Previous/future waitlist applicant	I was on the list they said I got kicked off because I didn't respond to some mail, THAT I NEVER Received! So I'm on a list to be put on the list I never got they said they sent! Now I have to wait I was on the list and my name should of been called I was on the list 8 years that so not fare

Previous/future waitlist applicant	I would rather the THA pull applications in the order of the date applicants applied. To me, that's more fair than a random pull. Random pulls could skip over those who's been waiting longer than other applicants. For example, if someone's only been on the waiting list for 2 months gets approved before a person that's been waiting over a year is unfair to me. Random selections are still "lottery" draws in my opinion.
Previous/future waitlist applicant	<p>STOP PUTTING RACE ON APPLICATIONS</p> <p>DISABLED PEOPLE SINGLE NEED HELP TO SENIOR</p> <p>IVE APPLIED NUMOUSE TIME NEVER GOT DRAW FOR IT</p> <p>██████████ I WORKED MY WHOLE LAST 5 YRS NEEDING HELP NEER HAVE BEEN LETTING HOMELESS IN THE APARTMENTS DANGEROUS FOR INNOCENT LIVE ON HILLTOP SCARED DAILY CAR DAMAGED SHOOTINGS AREA BAD NEED SAFETY STOP ONLY HELP FAMILY AND HOMELESS LOTTERY IS THE WAY</p>
Previous/future waitlist applicant	Thank you for let me know this information. I want to be on the wait-list. But I don't know how to put my name on the list. Hopely let me know. Thank you very much!
Previous/future waitlist applicant	The thought of a lottery is not good in my opinion because I have been on the PSHA waitlist for almost 9 yrs and need help so badly because i am 66 yrs old and still have to work for a living. My income does not meet the requirements and I have to work 2 jobs to survive. I need some relief and help. Soon I cannot work and then I am homeless. After working all my life.
Previous/future waitlist applicant	There ought to be an uqqr limit, such that, despite not being selected from the continuously open wait-list, an applicant should be selected or prioritized or favored for having applied for such an extended amount of time...(a maximum waiting period).
Previous/future waitlist applicant	They all sound like good ideas. It would be nice if you didn't just address families in your anouncements. It gives individuals the idea that they don't matter and none of this is for them.---that--go individuals are out of luck--go live in your car, if you have one.

Previous/future waitlist applicant	Well for one, how about port ins? I had lost my section 8 when I moved to Washington on Oct. 2020 because of COVID related situations. I used up all my extensions including the additional extensions I was given due to no one (ie managers, landlords) not being able to answer so I could schedule an appointment because they do not accept walk ins. I am currently just bouncing around friends and family, and if not that, sleeping in a vehicle that doesn't work that my aunt had given me to use with my now 3 month old baby. It's been stressful especially with a newborn who was admitted even for rsv. And when released just back to the car. So, with that said, where does this type of situation fall on and how can we be helped especially because it isn't our fault that we lost out on something we didn't neglect as far as porting in but wasn't successful because we weren't able to get a hold of people to actually get the answers we inquire or be helped to know if we are able to live there because there are vacancies and they do accept subsidies such as section 8?
THA employee	<p>1.) I think the frequent waitlist purges are necessary but we should be aware of the harm this could have on those who are unhoused. Unhoused individuals often don't have access to a phone or a reliable phone and it can be harmful to require this population to frequently notify THA that they'd like to stay on the waitlist.</p> <p>2.) One concern I have with a random selection from the waitlist is that it is based on equality, not equity. While I do think that everyone should get a chance to receive subsidized housing, I think it's important for THA to strive for equity and look at still housing households based on priority. There are a lot of different housing situations. Those living on the streets, in vehicles, with family/friends. etc. and not all of those living situations are equally detrimental to a families wellbeing.</p>
THA employee	<p>I LOVE these changes including 'Updates to waitlist preferences' but form would only allow 3 choices. That being said I am asking clarification for "Random":</p> <p>I can't support what I don't understand. How is "Random" defined? I read through the summary and a little further down. I don't see where it is explained how Random will be defined, other than being able to pull Households who could fit certain programs, or funding requirements, which was mentioned elsewhere. Is that how you mean it?</p> <p>If the explanation was in the sentences themselves, I wasn't getting it.</p> <p>██████████</p>
THA employee	Random selection from waitlist is not fair approach, unless everyone has applied at the same time. It disadvantages folks who have been waiting for a long time already. The other updates, especially continuously open waitlist and frequently waitlist purges, will help keep to the more current or interested applicants to the top. - All in my opinion.