



PHA Policy

The PHA will use the following local preferences for all the general Housing Choice Voucher Program applicants. These preferences will not be given to Non-Elderly Disabled applicants, Project Based Voucher applicants or any other applicants unless specified in this administrative plan:

- A victim of an act(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (two points)
 - For Victims of Domestic Violence, dating violence or stalking the incident must have occurred within the previous four (4) Months of the date the tenant is selected from the waiting list. – Verification of a claimed incident(s) of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence or stalking must be provided in one of the following three ways:
 - Approved Certification (Form HUD 50066) with supporting documentation.
 - A certification by the victims’ domestic violence service provider, attorney or a medical professional from whom the victim has sought assistance in addressing the domestic violence. In which the professional attests under penalty of perjury that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse.
 - Police or Court Record and the PHA's VAWA Certification Form.
 - The letter/form must identify when the actual or threatened physical violence against the applicant last occurred. The family must certify that the abuser will not ever be part of the household.
- An applicant who is living, working, or is hired to work in the state of Rhode Island (one point).
 - A Rhode Island Resident is a resident of Rhode Island or a person working in Rhode Island. In order to verify that an applicant is a resident, the PHA will require a minimum of two (2) of the following documents: rent receipts and lease, utility bills, employer or agency records (i.e. Paystubs), school records indicating the address on file, driver’s license, voter registration record, or credit report.
 - Prior to processing the application, the PHA may require a second certification from the same or a similar source that the applicant still qualifies under this preference.

The PHA will use the following “Non-Elderly Disabled targeted funding” preference(s) for applicants of the Housing Choice Voucher Program that qualify for a Non-Elderly Disabled voucher. The preference points may not be combined with the VAWA and the Rhode Island Resident preference and cannot be combined with any other preference unless otherwise stated. The following targeted funding preference(s) will be capped at the current Non-Elderly Disabled program size. This means the maximum number of preferences that will

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be made available at any point in time will not exceed the number of vouchers available for issuance under this specific targeted funding group.

- Non-elderly persons with disabilities who are transitioning out of institutional or other segregated settings, at serious risk of institutionalization, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.
- The PHA will limit the allocation of its homeless preference to no more than 75% of its Non-Elderly Disabled program size.
- The PHA will limit the allocation of its institutionalization/segregated setting preference to no more than 25% of its Non-Elderly Disabled program size.
 - “Homeless” means:
 - **A Non-elderly person with disabilities over the age of 18 who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: (Two Points)**
 - An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
 - An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
 - An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;
 - In order to confirm that individuals/families qualify under this definition, the applicant must be referred by the Continuum of Care’s (CoC) Coordinated Entry System. Written authorization and a certification from the CoC’s authorized representative must be provided verifying the homeless status of the family/individual with Rhode Island’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
 - **A Non-elderly person with disabilities over the age of 18 who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence provided that: (One Point)**
 - The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;

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- No subsequent residence has been identified; and
 - The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing;
 - In order to confirm that individuals/families qualify under this definition, the applicant must be referred by the Continuum of Care's (CoC) Coordinated Entry System. Written authorization and a certification from the CoC's authorized representative must be provided verifying the homeless status of the family/individual with Rhode Island's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The applicant must also provide verification of the court ordered eviction order.
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- **A Non-elderly person with disabilities over the age of 18 that is also an unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with at least one person that is a Non-elderly persons with disabilities over the age of 18, with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who: (One Point)**
 - Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a); and
 - Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance; and
 - Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
 - Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities; chronic physical health or mental health conditions; substance addiction; histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect); the presence of a child or youth with a disability; or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED),

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- illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment;
- In order to confirm that individuals/families qualify under this definition, the applicant must be referred by the Continuum of Care's (CoC) Coordinated Entry System. Written authorization and a certification from the CoC's authorized representative must be provided verifying the homeless status of the family/individual with Rhode Island's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
 - **A Non-elderly person with disabilities over the age of 18 whose family is (One Point):**
 - Fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence; and
 - Has no other residence; and
 - Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.
 - In order to confirm that individuals/families qualify under this definition, the applicant must be referred by the Continuum of Care's (CoC) Coordinated Entry System. Written authorization and a certification from the CoC's authorized representative must be provided verifying the homeless status of the family/individual with Rhode Island's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
 - The applicant must also provide verification of a claimed incident(s) of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence or stalking in one of the following three ways:
 - Approved Certification (Form HUD 50066) with supporting documentation.
 - A certification by the victims' domestic violence service provider, attorney or a medical professional from whom the victim has sought assistance in addressing the domestic violence, in which the professional attests under penalty of perjury that the incidents in question are bona fide incidents of abuse.

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- Police or Court Record and the PHA's VAWA Certification Form. The letter/form must identify when the actual or threatened physical violence against the applicant last occurred. The family must certify that the abuser will never be part of the household.
- “At risk of becoming homeless” means:
 - **A Non-elderly person with disabilities over the age of 18 who is at risk of becoming homeless because they (One Point):**
 - Do not have sufficient resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “Homeless” definition in this section; and meets the following conditions:
 - Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance; and
 - Is living in the home of another person because of economic hardship; and
 - Has been notified via court order that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days of the date of application for assistance; or
 - Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals; or
 - Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons,
 - Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution);
 - In order to confirm that individuals/families qualify under this definition, the applicant must be referred by the Continuum of Care’s (CoC) Coordinated Entry System. Written authorization and a certification from the CoC’s authorized representative must be provided verifying the near homeless status of the family/individual within Rhode Island’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

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- Prior to processing the application, the PHA may require a second certification from the same or a similar source that the applicant still qualifies under this preference.
- “Transitioning out of institutional or other restricted settings” means:
 - **A Non-Elderly person with a disability who is transitioning out of an Institutional or other segregated setting (One Point):**
 - Which include, but are not limited to:
 - Congregate settings populated exclusively or primarily with individuals with disabilities;
 - Congregate settings is characterized by regimentation in daily activities, lack of privacy or autonomy, policies limiting visitors, or limits on individuals’ ability to engage freely in community activities and to manage their own activities of daily living; or
 - Settings that provide for daytime activities primarily with other individuals with disabilities.
 - The person transitioning must be referred to the PHA by a partner agency or other approved state office that has a service agreement with the PHA. The agency making the referral must provide a certification that the applicant qualifies under this definition and that care coordinating services will be given to the individual in order for them to successfully participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program
 - Prior to processing the application, the PHA may require a second certification from the same or a similar source that the applicant still qualifies under this preference.
- “At risk of institutionalization” means:
 - **A Non-Elderly person with a disability which is at serious risk of institutionalization (One Point):**
 - Which is defined as an individual with a disability who as a result of a public entity's failure to provide community services or its cut to such services will likely cause a decline in health, safety, or welfare that would lead to the individual's eventual placement in an institution.
 - This includes individuals experiencing lack of access to supportive services for independent living, long waiting lists for or lack of access to housing combined with community based services, individuals currently living under poor housing conditions or homeless with barriers to geographic mobility, and/or currently living

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alone but requiring supportive services for independent living.

- A person cannot be considered at serious risk of institutionalization unless the person has a disability.
- An individual may be designated as at serious risk of institutionalization either by a health and human services agency or by a community-based organization that specializes in providing such services.
- For the intent of this preference correctional facilities shall not be considered an institutional setting.
- The person at risk of transitioning must be referred to the PHA by a partner agency or other approved state office that has a service agreement with the PHA. The agency making the referral must provide a certification that the applicant qualifies under this definition and that care coordinating services will be given to the individual in order for them to successfully participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program.
- Prior to awarding the preference, the PHA may require a second certification from the same or a similar source that the applicant still qualifies under this preference.

Preference points will be aggregated, with the exception of preferences related to the Non-elderly disabled vouchers – which shall not be considered for other Housing Choice Vouchers. Only one preference may be applied to an applicant being considered for Non-Elderly Disabled vouchers, and it may only be one of the specific Non-Elderly Disabled preferences. An applicant may request a preference at the time of application as well as any time his/her circumstances has changed while on the waiting list. Before issuance of a voucher, the PHA will verify that the family qualifies for all of the preferences based on the family's current circumstances.