

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
**625 Stanwix Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15222**

## **HOUSING MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS**

### **Applicant - Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Do you have emergency housing assistance?**

No. ACHA does not have any emergency housing in either its public housing or HCV programs.

#### **Why does Allegheny County Housing Authority close waiting lists?**

Every six months the HMO Department evaluates all waiting lists and determines what waiting lists should be opening or closed. If we have a large number of applicants waiting for a certain bedroom size we will close the waiting list. For example, if we have a site with 15 one bedroom units and there are 200 applicants waiting for a one bedroom unit, we will close that waiting list. If we allow the waiting list to grow it will lead to false hope for the applicant who are waiting with a wait list number of 200 plus. However, when we open or close waiting lists, announcements will appear in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *Pittsburgh Courier* as well as on our website.

#### **I'm a victim of domestic violence. Does this give me waiting list priority?**

Yes, you can apply to all waiting lists open and closed. ACHA has preferences that will move a family to the top of the waiting list. The Allegheny County Housing Authority, according to our local needs and preferences, will select families based on the following preferences:

Category 1 Preferences: (1) Applicants for whom a law enforcement agency is seeking housing as an accommodation for its witness protection or confidential informant programs; and (2) police officers whose residency is needed to increase security for public housing residents, (3) a household evicted due to a resident or guest who is subsequently found innocent of the charge that led to eviction or the charge is dismissed and (4) victims of domestic violence.

Category 2 Preference: (1) veterans with an honorable discharge or current military service (Spouse only) who is not currently housed in an Allegheny County Housing Authority project-based assisted unit. Residents of the Allegheny County Housing Authority public housing program asked to move due to the modernization of his or her unit or community regardless of whether the waiting list is open or closed.

Preferences listed in Category 1 have priority over preferences listed in Category 2 and will therefore be offered housing before those listed in Category 2. The date and time of application will be noted on each application and will be utilized to determine the sequence that each individual with a preference is offered housing within the categories.

If an applicant qualifies for multiple categories, the highest one will control.

A preference does not guarantee admission. The applicant must still meet the Allegheny County Housing Authority's eligibility and screening criteria.

**Victims of Domestic Violence:** In order to qualify for the victim of domestic violence preference, a final Protection from Abuse Order must be provided by the applicant to the Allegheny County Housing Authority. The final Protection from Abuse Order must have been issued within 60 days of the date that it is provided to the Allegheny County Housing Authority. However, the Allegheny County Housing Authority may make exceptions to this rule on a case by case basis.

An applicant who lives in a violent neighborhood or is fearful of other violence outside the household does not qualify for the preference of victim of domestic violence.

The applicant must certify that the abuser will not reside with the applicant unless the Housing Authority gives prior written approval.

### **How do I change my address with the ACHA?**

You must tell the ACHA in person at the central office, Low Income Public Housing Site, or in writing of any change in your address. To submit a change of address in person, fill out a change of address form at our Central Office (Picture ID is required):

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Otherwise, write a brief letter that includes your name, social security number, previous address and new address and signed and date. Fax this letter to 412-355-8954 or mail it to the ACHA at the address above. Please note: changing your address with the United States Postal Service does not change your address with the Allegheny County Housing Authority. You must update us separately.

### **How do I cancel my application?**

You may cancel your application at any time by writing to the ACHA at the address listed above. When cancelling your application, please include your name, social security number, date, and signature.

### **I'm at the top of the waiting list – what now?**

You will be sent a letter stating you will need to attend an eligibility appointment. At this appointment, you will need to provide a copy of social security cards for every person who will reside with you along with a birth certificate for each member of the household. In addition, please provide a copy of all income sources within the household. The ACHA will verify all information as well as conduct a criminal background check. We will also check the Debts Owed module in the HUD Enterprise Income Verification system to ensure you do not owe money to another Housing Authority. If you have been determined eligible, you will be invited into a briefing where you will receive your voucher.

### **What if someone in my family does not have a social security number/card?**

It is required that all members of your household have a social security number/card. If you cannot locate your card, a print out from the social security office documenting your social security number is acceptable.

### **What if someone in my family does not have a photo ID?**

It is required that photo IDs are submitted for everyone in your household over the age of 18. There are no exceptions.

### **What if someone in my family does not have a birth certificate?**

It is required that either birth certificates, a valid driver's license or an identification card issued by a government agency be submitted for each household member.

**May I add or remove others from my application?**

You may request to add or remove family members from your application/voucher. However, any request to add a person to your voucher must be approved by the Allegheny County Housing Authority. All adult members of the household will be screened for a criminal background and any debts owed to another Housing Authority. Any member of household wishing to be removed must prove that they will not be living in the subsidized unit.

**Can the ACHA deny assistance?**

Yes. If you do not qualify based on income, or you have a negative criminal background, or you have an unpaid debt to ACHA or another housing authority you will be issued a determination of ineligibility. You may request a hearing if you do not agree with the information that determined you ineligible.

**What is a reasonable accommodation? Can I get one?**

Sometimes people with disabilities may need a reasonable accommodation in order to take full advantage of the Allegheny County Housing Authority housing programs and related services.

A reasonable accommodation is a change, adaption, or modification to the ACHA's rules, policies, practices or services which are necessary to provide a qualified individual with a handicap or disability an equal opportunity to participate fully in services, programs or activities provided by the ACHA.

Your request should be made on your application. Requests can also be made at any time to the Allegheny County Housing Authority's Program Accessibility Administrator, Kate Gilboy. A request may be made either orally or in writing. A request can also be made on behalf of the individual by a family member or other agent.

**What if I have an individual need?**

Please tell us if you need assistance of any kind to access our services. If you need an interpreter or a translator, tell us, and we will provide one for you.

**I have a specific question that isn't answered here. Where do I get the answer?**

If your question isn't answered in this list, please email your question(s) to: <EMAIL ADDRESS HERE>  
You will receive an answer via email.