Rent Determination Policy

RENT DETERMINATION POLICY

ACOP, Chapter 6

DETERMINATION OF TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT

[24 CFR 5.609, 5.611, 5.613, 5.615]

INTRODUCTION

The accurate calculation of Annual Income and Adjusted Income will ensure that families are not paying more or less money for rent than their obligation under the regulations.

This Chapter defines the allowable deductions from Annual Income and how the presence or absence of household members may affect the Total Tenant Payment (TTP). Income and TTP are calculated in accordance with 24 CFR Part 5, Subpart F and further instructions set forth in HUD Notices, Memoranda and Addenda. The formula for the calculation of TTP is specific and not subject to interpretation. The PHA's policies in this Chapter address those areas which allow the PHA discretion to define terms and to develop standards in order to assure consistent application of the various factors that relate to the determination of TTP.

A. RENT

The minimum rent for this PHA is $0.

The Total Tenant Payment is the greater of:

- 30% of the adjusted monthly income
- 10% of the monthly income
- The Minimum rent as established by the PHA.
- The minimum rent refers to a minimum total tenant payment and not a minimum tenant rent.

Or

- Flat Rent which shall be determined by the fair market rents (FMR) established by HUD, annually, pursuant to 24 CFR 888.113. These fair market rents , which include utilities (exclusive of telephone and cable TV), are established for dwelling units of various sizes.

The family has a choice of rent.

The Total Tenant Payment does not include charges for excess utility consumption or other charges.

B. INCOME AND ALLOWANCES

Income: The types of money, which are to be used as income for purposes of calculating the TTP are defined by HUD in federal regulations. In accordance with this definition, income from all sources of each member of the household is documented. (See Income Inclusions and Income Exclusions in the Glossary of Terms of this policy.)

Annual Income (See 24CFR5.609)

(a) Annual income means all amounts, monetary or not, which:
  (1) Go to, or on behalf of, the family head or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other family member; or
  (2) Are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date; and
  (3) Which are not specifically excluded in paragraph (c) of this section.
  (4) Annual income also means amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access.

(b) Annual income includes, but is not limited to:
  (1) The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services;
  (2) The net income from the operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight-line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family;
  (3) Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property. Expenditures for amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation is permitted only as authorized in paragraph (b)(2) of this section. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from an investment will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested by the family. Where the family has net family assets in excess of $5,000, annual income shall include the greater of the actual income derived from all net family assets or a percentage of the value of such assets based on the current passbook savings rate, as determined by HUD;
  (4) The full amount of periodic amounts received from Social Security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, disability or death benefits, and other similar types of periodic receipts, including a lump-sum amount or prospective monthly amounts for the delayed start of a periodic amount (except as provided in paragraph (c)(9) of this section);
  (5) Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment and disability compensation, worker's compensation and severance pay (except as provided in paragraph (c)(3)

of this section);

(6) Welfare assistance. If the welfare assistance payment includes an amount specifically designated for shelter and utilities that is subject to adjustment by the welfare assistance agency in accordance with the actual cost of shelter and utilities, the amount of welfare assistance income to be included as income shall consist of: (i) The amount of the allowance or grant exclusive of the amount specifically designated for shelter or utilities; plus (ii) The maximum amount that the welfare assistance agency could in fact allow the family for shelter and utilities. If the family's welfare assistance is ratably reduced from the standard of need by applying a percentage, the amount calculated under this paragraph (b)(6)(ii) shall be the amount resulting from one application of the percentage;

(7) Periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, regular contributions or gifts received from organizations or from persons not residing in the dwelling;

(8) All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces (except as provided in paragraph (c)(7) of this section).

(c) Annual income does not include the following:

(1) Income from employment of children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years;

(2) Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually persons with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone);

(3) Lump-sum additions to family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance and worker's compensation), capital gains and settlement for personal or property losses (except as provided in paragraph (b)(**5**) of this section);

(4) Amounts received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of medical expenses for any family member;

(5) Income of a live-in aide, as defined in 24 CFR Sec. 5.403;

(6) The full amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution;

(7) The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire;

(8) (i) Amounts received under training programs funded by HUD; (ii) Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS); (iii) Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred (special equipment, clothing, transportation, child care, etc.) and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program; (iv) Amounts received under a resident service stipend. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed $200 per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, resident initiatives coordination, and serving as a member of the

PHA's governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time; (v) Incremental earnings and benefits resulting to any family member from participation in qualifying State or local employment training programs (including training programs not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives, and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the employment training program;

(9) Temporary, nonrecurring or sporadic income (including gifts);

(10) Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era;

(11) Earnings in excess of $480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (excluding the head of household and spouse);

(12) Adoption assistance payments in excess of $480 per adopted child.

(13) The incremental earnings and benefits to any resident 1) whose annual income increases due to employment of a family member who was unemployed for one or more years previous to employment; or 2) whose annual income increases as the result of increased earnings by a family member during participation in any economic self sufficiency or other job training program; or 3) whose annual income increases due to new employment or increased earnings of a family member during or within six months of receiving state-funded assistance, benefits or services, will not be increased during the exclusion period. For purposes of this paragraph, the following definitions apply:

(a) State –funded assistance, benefits or services means any state program for temporary assistance for needy families funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, as determined by the PHA in consultation with the local agencies administering Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Welfare-to-Work programs. The TANF program is not limited to monthly income maintenance, but also includes such benefits and services as one-time payments, wage subsidies and transportation assistance—provided that the total amount over a six-month period is at least $500.

(b) During the 12 month period beginning when the member first qualifies for a disallowance, the PHA must exclude from Annual Income any increase in income as a result of employment. For the 12 months following the exclusion period, 50% of the income increases shall be excluded.

(c) Regardless of how long it takes a resident to work for 12 months (to qualify for the first exclusion) or the second 12 months (to qualify for the second exclusion), the maximum period for the disallowance (exclusion) is 48 months.

(d) The disallowance of increased income under this section is only applicable to current residents and will not apply to applicants who have begun working prior to admission (unless their earnings are less than would be earned working ten hours per week at minimum wage, under which they qualify as unemployed.)

(14) Deferred periodic amounts from supplemental security income and social security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts;

(15) Amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under State or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling unit;

(16) Amounts paid by a State agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home;

(17) Amounts specifically excluded by any other Federal statute from consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under any program to which the exclusions set forth in the above list of excluded income apply. The following list of benefits is excluded income:

- The value of the allotment provided to an eligible household for coupons under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 [7 USC 2017 (h)];
- Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 [42 USC 5044 (g), 5088]; Examples of programs under this Act include but are not limited to:
  - The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP);
  - Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)
  - Senior Companion Program (SCP);
  - The Older American Committee Service Program; and
  - National Volunteer Antipoverty Programs such as VISTA, Peace Corps, Service Learning Program, and Special Volunteer Programs.
- Small Business Administration Programs, such as the National Volunteer Program to Assist Small Business and Promote Volunteer Service to Persons with Business Experience, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and Active Corps of Executives (ACE);
- Payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act [43 USC 1626 (a)];
- Income derived from certain submarginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes [25 USC 459e];
- Payments or allowances made under the Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program [42 USC 8624 (f)];
- Payments received under programs funded in whole or in part under the Job Training Partnership Act [29 USC 1552 (b)];
- Income derived from the disposition or funds of the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians [Pub. L. 94-540, 90 State 2503-04]; and
- The first $2,000 of per capita shares received form judgment funds awarded by the Indian Claims Commission or the Court of Claims [25 USC 1407-08], or from funds held in trust for an Indian Tribe by the Secretary of Interior [25 USC 117 (b), 1407].

(18) Amounts of scholarships funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 including awards under the Federal work-study program or under the

Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs [20 USC 187 (uu)]. Examples of Title IV programs include but are not limited to:

- Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (Pell Grants), Supplemental Opportunity Grants, State Student Incentive Grants, College Work Study, and Byrd Scholarships.
- Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 [42 USC 3056 (f)]: Examples of programs under this act include but are not limited to:
  - □ Senior Community Services Employment Program (CSEP);
  - □ National Caucus Center on the Black Aged;
  - □ National Urban League;
  - □ Association National Pro Personas Mayors;
  - □ National Council on Aging;
  - □ American Association of Retired Persons;
  - □ National Council on Senior Citizens; and
  - □ Green Thumb.
- Payments received after January 1, 1989, from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established in the Agent Orange product liability litigation;
- Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (Pub. L. 96-420, 94 Stat. 1785];
- The value of any child care provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 [42 USC 9858 (q)];
- Earned income tax credit refund payments received on or after 1/1/91 [26 USC 32 (j)];
- Payments by the Indian Claims Commission to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakima Indian Nation or the Apache Tribe of Mescalero Reservation;
- Allowances, earnings and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990;
- Any allowance paid under the provisions of 38 USC 1805 to a child suffering from spina bifida who is the child of a Vietnam veteran;
- Any amount of crime victim compensation (under the Victims of Crime Act) received through crime victim assistance (or payment or reimbursement of the cost of such assistance) as determined under the Victims of Crime Act because of the commission of a crime against the applicant under the Victims of Crime Act; and
- Allowances, earnings and payments to individuals participating in programs under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

Adjusted Income is defined as the Annual income minus any HUD allowable deductions.

C. ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS AND OTHER ALLOWABLE EXCLUSIONS (24 CFR 5.611)

Adjusted income means annual income (as determined by the responsible entity) of the members of the family residing or intending to reside in the dwelling unit, after making the following deductions:

(a) Mandatory deductions. In determining adjusted income, the responsible entity must deduct the following amounts from annual income:
   (1) $480 for each dependent;
   (2) $400 for any elderly family or disabled family;
   (3) The sum of the following, to the extent the sum exceeds three percent of annual income: (i) Unreimbursed medical expenses of any elderly family or disabled family; and
   (ii) Unreimbursed reasonable attendant care and auxiliary apparatus expenses for each member of the family who is a person with disabilities, to the extent necessary to enable any member of the family (including the member who is a person with disabilities) to be employed, but this allowance may not exceed the earned income received by family members who are 18 years of age or older who are able to work because of such attendant care or auxiliary apparatus; and
   (4) Any reasonable child care expenses necessary to enable a member of the family to be employed or to further his or her education.

(b) Permissive deductions--for public housing only. For public housing only, a PHA may adopt additional deductions from annual income. The PHA must establish a written policy for such deductions.

PHA shall adopt all mandatory HUD Income Exclusions.

D. AVERAGING INCOME

When Annual Income cannot be anticipated for a full twelve months, the PHA will:

- Annualize current income and conduct an interim reexamination if income changes.

If there are bonuses or overtime which the employer cannot anticipate for the next twelve months, bonuses and overtime received the previous year will be used.

Income from the previous year may be analyzed to determine the amount to anticipate when third-party or check-stub verification is not available.

If by averaging, an estimate can be made for those families whose income fluctuates from month to month, this estimate will be used so that the housing payment will not change from month to month.

The method used depends on the regularity, source and type of income.

E. MINIMUM INCOME

There is no minimum income requirement. Families who report zero income are required to complete a written certification every three months. See attached form.

Families that report zero income will be required to provide information regarding their means of basic subsistence, such as food, utilities, transportation, etc.

The PHA will request credit checks for all adult members of families that report zero income.

Where credit reports show credit accounts open and payments current, the PHA will take action to investigate the possibility of fraud or program abuse.

F. INCOME OF PERSON PERMANENTLY CONFINED TO NURSING HOME

If a family member is permanently confined to a hospital or nursing home and there is a family member left in the household, the PHA will calculate the Total Tenant Payment by:

- Including the income of the person permanently confined to the nursing home and giving the family the medical deductions allowable on behalf of the person in the nursing home.

G. REGULAR CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS [24 CFR 5.609(a)(7)]

Regular contributions and gifts received from persons outside the household are counted as income for calculation of the Total Tenant Payment.

Any contribution or gift received every twelve (12) months or more frequently will be considered a "regular" contribution or gift, unless the amount is less than one hundred dollars ($100) per year. This includes rent and utility payments made on behalf of the family and other cash or non-cash contributions provided on a regular basis. It does not include casual contributions or sporadic gifts. (See Chapter on "Verification Procedures," for further definition.)

If the family's expenses exceed their known income, the PHA will make inquiry of the family about contributions and gifts.

H. ALIMONY AND CHILD SUPPORT [24 CFR 5.609(a)(7)]

Regular alimony and child support payments are counted as income for calculation of Total Tenant Payment.

If the amount of child support or alimony received is less than the amount awarded by the court, the PHA must use the amount awarded by the court unless the family can verify that they are not receiving the full amount.

The PHA will accept as verification that the family is receiving an amount less than the award if:

- The HCDCH receives verification from the agency responsible for enforcement or collection.
- The family furnishes documentation of child support or alimony collection action filed through a child support enforcement/collection agency, or has filed an enforcement or collection action through an attorney.

It is the family's responsibility to supply a certified copy of the divorce decree.

I. LUMP-SUM RECEIPTS [24 CFR 5.609(b)(5), (c)]

Lump-sum additions to Family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance and worker's compensation), capital gains, and settlement for personal or property losses, are not included in income but may be included in assets.

Lump-sum payments caused by delays in processing periodic payments (unemployment or welfare assistance) are counted as income. Lump sum payments from Social Security or SSI are excluded from income, but any amount remaining will be considered an asset. Deferred periodic payments which have accumulated due to a dispute will be treated the same as periodic payments which are deferred due to delays in processing.

In order to determine amount of retroactive tenant rent that the family owes as a result of the lump sum receipt:

- The PHA uses a calculation method which calculates retroactively or prospectively depending on the circumstances.

Prospective Calculation Methodology

If the payment is reported on a timely basis, the calculation will be done prospectively and will result in an interim adjustment calculated as follows:

- The entire lump-sum payment will be added to the annual income at the time of the interim.

Retroactive Calculation Methodology

The family must pay this "retroactive" amount to the PHA in a lump sum.

At the PHA's option, the PHA may enter into a Repayment Agreement with the family.

The amount owed by the family is a collectible debt even if the family becomes unassisted.

Attorney Fees

The family's attorney fees may be deducted from lump-sum payments when computing annual income if the attorney's efforts have recovered a lump-sum compensation, and the recovery paid to the family does not include an additional amount in full satisfaction of the attorney fees.

J. CONTRIBUTIONS TO RETIREMENT FUNDS - ASSETS

Contributions to company retirement/pension funds are handled as follows:

- While an individual is employed, count as assets only amounts the family can withdraw without retiring or terminating employment.

K. ASSETS DISPOSED OF FOR LESS THAN FAIR MARKET VALUE

The PHA must count assets disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years preceding certification or reexamination. The PHA will count the difference between the market value and the actual payment received in calculating total assets.

Assets disposed of as a result of foreclosure or bankruptcy are not considered to be assets disposed of for less than fair market value. Assets disposed of as a result of a divorce or separation are not considered to be assets disposed of for less than fair market value.

The PHA's minimum threshold for counting assets disposed of for less than Fair Market value is $1,000. If the total value of assets disposed of within a one year period is less than $1,000, they will not be considered an asset.

L. CHILD CARE EXPENSES

Un-reimbursable child care expenses for children under 13 may be deducted from annual income if they enable an adult to work, attend school full time, or actively seek employment.

In the case of a child attending private school, only before or after-hours care can be counted as child care expenses.

Child care expenses must be reasonable. Reasonable is determined by what the average child care rates are in the PHA's jurisdiction.

Allowability of deductions for child care expenses is based on the following guidelines:

Child care to work: The maximum child care expense allowed must be less than the amount earned by the person enabled to work. The "person enabled to work" will be the adult member of the household who earns the least amount of income from working.

Child care for school: The number of hours claimed for child care may not exceed the number of hours the family member is attending school (including one hour travel time to and from school).

- **Amount of Expense:** The PHA will survey the local care providers in the community to determine what is reasonable. The PHA will use the collected data as a guideline. If the hourly rate materially exceeds the guideline, the PHA may calculate the allowance using the guideline.

M. MEDICAL EXPENSES [24 CFR 5.603]

When it is unclear in the HUD rules as to whether or not to allow an item as a medical expense, IRS Publication 502 will be used as a guide.

Nonprescription medicines must be doctor-recommended in order to be considered a medical expense.

Nonprescription medicines will be counted toward medical expenses for families who qualify if the family furnishes legible receipts with identification of the type of purchase.

Acupressure, acupuncture and related herbal medicines will not be considered allowable medical expenses.

Chiropractic services will be considered allowable medical expenses.

N. PRORATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR "MIXED" FAMILIES [24 CFR 5.520]

Applicability

Proration of assistance must be offered to any "mixed" applicant or participant family. A "mixed" family is one that includes at least one U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant and any number of ineligible members.

"Mixed" families that were participants on June 19, 1995, and that do not qualify for continued assistance must be offered prorated assistance. (See Chapter titled "Recertifications.") Applicant mixed families are entitled to prorated assistance. Families that become mixed after June 19, 1995, by addition of an ineligible member are entitled to prorated assistance.

Prorated Assistance Calculation

Prorated assistance will be calculated by subtracting the Total Tenant Payment from the applicable Maximum Rent for the unit the family occupies to determine the Family Maximum Subsidy. The family's TTP will be calculated by:

- Dividing the Family Maximum Subsidy by the number of persons in the family to determine Member Maximum Subsidy.
- Multiplying the Member Maximum Subsidy by the number of eligible family members to determine Eligible Subsidy.
- Subtracting the amount of Eligible Subsidy from the applicable Maximum Rent for the unit the family occupies to get the family's Revised Total Tenant Payment.

O. REDUCTION IN BENEFITS

See Chapter 11 entitled "Recertifications" Item D for reduction in welfare benefits.

P. UTILITY ALLOWANCE AND UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS

If the cost of utilities (excluding telephone) is not included in the Tenant Rent, a utility allowance will be deducted from the total tenant payment. The Utility allowance is intended to help defray the cost of utilities not included in the rent. The allowances are based on the monthly cost of reasonable consumption utilities in an energy conservative household, *not* on a family's actual consumption. (See Utility Allowance Schedule at Appendix A)

When the Utility Allowance exceeds the family's Total Tenant Payment, the PHA will provide a Utility Reimbursement Payment for the family each month. The check will be made out directly to the tenant.

Q. EXCESS UTILITY PAYMENTS

NEED TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL RELIEF 965.502

Residents in units where the PHA pays the utilities may be charged for excess utilities if additional appliances or equipment are used in the unit. This charge shall be applied as specified in the lease. [24CFR 966.4(b)(2)]

R. FLAT RENTS

Fair Market Rent as a Basis for Flat Rents

The PHA will set flat rents to some of its public housing units using as a basis the current fair market rent for units comparable in size in the area in which each public housing development is located.

The PHA will not set flat rents below the monthly operating cost to operate the units.

Notice to Residents

The PHA will provide thirty (30) day notice to all families affected by any new flat rent policies.