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Subpart A—Deconcentration of Poverty and Fair Housing in Program Admissions

§ 903.1 What is the purpose of this subpart?

The purpose of this subpart is to specify the process which a Public Housing Agency, as part of its annual planning process and development of an admissions policy, must follow in order to develop and apply a policy that provides for deconcentration of poverty and income mixing in certain public housing developments and to affirmatively further fair housing in admissions.

References to the “1937 Act” in this part refer to the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437 *et seq.*)

§ 903.2 With respect to admissions, what must a PHA do to deconcentrate poverty in its developments and comply with fair housing requirements?

(a) *General.* The PHA’s admission policy includes the PHA’s policy designed to promote deconcentration of poverty and income mixing in accordance with section 16(a)(3)(B) of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437n), which is submitted to HUD as part of the PHA Annual Plan process. Deconcentration of poverty and income mixing is promoted by a policy that provides for bringing higher income tenants into lower income de-

velopments and lower income tenants into higher income developments.

(1) The provisions of this section apply to applicants to and residents seeking voluntary transfers within covered public housing developments (“covered developments” as specified in paragraph (b) of this section).

(2) The statutory requirement to design a policy to provide for deconcentration and income mixing is not to be construed to impose or require any specific income or racial quotas for any development or developments.

(b) *Applicability of deconcentration of poverty and income mixing requirements—*

(1) *Developments subject to deconcentration of poverty and income mixing requirements.* The deconcentration requirements of this subpart apply to general occupancy, family public housing developments, excluding those developments listed in paragraph (b)(2) of this section. Developments to which this subpart is applicable are referred to as “covered developments”.

(2) *Developments not subject to deconcentration of poverty and income mixing requirements.* This subpart does not apply to the following public housing developments:

(i) Public housing developments operated by a PHA with fewer than 100 public housing units;

(ii) Public housing developments operated by a PHA which house only elderly persons or persons with disabilities, or both;

(iii) Public housing developments operated by a PHA which consist of only one general occupancy, family public housing development;

(iv) Public housing developments approved for demolition or for conversion to tenant-based assistance; and

(v) Public housing developments which include public housing units operated in accordance with a HUD-approved mixed-finance plan using HOPE VI or public housing funds awarded before the effective date of this rule, provided that the PHA certifies (and includes reasons for the certification) as part of its PHA Plan (which may be accomplished either in the annual Plan submission or as a significant amendment to its PHA Plan) that exemption

from the regulation is necessary to honor an existing contractual agreement or be consistent with a mixed finance plan, including provisions regarding the incomes of public housing residents to be admitted to that development, which has been developed in consultation with residents with rights to live at the affected development and other interested persons.

(c) *Deconcentration of poverty and income mixing*—(1) *Steps for implementation.* To implement the statutory requirement to deconcentrate poverty and provide for income mixing in covered public housing developments, a PHA must comply with the following steps:

(i) *Step 1.* A PHA shall determine the average income of all families residing in all the PHA's covered developments. A PHA may use median income, instead of average income, provided that the PHA includes a written explanation in its PHA Annual Plan justifying use of median income in the PHA's Annual Plan.

(ii) *Step 2.* A PHA shall determine the average income of all families residing in each covered development. In determining average income for each development, a PHA has the option of adjusting its income analysis for unit size in accordance with procedures prescribed by HUD.

(iii) *Step 3.* A PHA shall determine whether each of its covered developments falls above, within or below the Established Income Range. The Established Income Range is from 85 to 115 percent (inclusive) of the average family income (the PHA-wide average income for covered developments as defined in Step 1), except that the upper limit shall never be less than the income at which a family would be defined as an extremely low income family under 24 CFR 5.603(b).

(iv) *Step 4.* A PHA with covered developments having average incomes outside the Established Income Range may explain or justify the income profile for these developments as being consistent with and furthering two sets of goals: the goals of deconcentration of poverty and income mixing as specified by the statute (bringing higher income tenants into lower income developments and vice versa); and the local

goals and strategies contained in the PHA Annual Plan. Elements of explanations or justifications that may satisfy these requirements may include, but shall not be limited to the following:

(A) The covered development or developments are subject to consent decrees or other resident selection and admission plans mandated by court action;

(B) The covered development or developments are part of PHA's programs, strategies or activities specifically authorized by statute, such as mixed-income or mixed-finance developments, homeownership programs, self-sufficiency strategies, or other strategies designed to deconcentrate poverty, promote income mixing in public housing, increase the incomes of public housing residents, or the income mix is otherwise subject to individual review and approval by HUD;

(C) The covered development's or developments' size, location, and/or configuration promote income deconcentration, such as scattered site or small developments;

(D) The income characteristics of the covered development or developments are sufficiently explained by other circumstances.

(v) *Step 5.* Where the income profile for a covered development is not explained or justified in the PHA Annual Plan submission, the PHA shall include in its admission policy its specific policy to provide for deconcentration of poverty and income mixing in applicable covered developments. Depending on local circumstances, a PHA's deconcentration policy (which may be undertaken in conjunction with other efforts such as efforts to increase self-sufficiency or current residents) may include but is not limited to providing for one or more of the following actions:

(A) Providing incentives designed to encourage families with incomes below the Established Income Range to accept units in developments with incomes above the Established Income Range, or vice versa, including rent incentives, affirmative marketing plans, or added amenities;

(B) Targeting investment and capital improvements toward developments

with an average income below the Established Income Range to encourage applicant families whose income is above the Established Income Range to accept units in those developments;

(C) Establishing a preference for admission of working families in developments below the Established Income Range;

(D) Skipping a family on the waiting list to reach another family in an effort to further the goals of the PHA's deconcentration policy;

(E) Providing such other strategies as permitted by statute and determined by the PHA in consultation with the residents and the community, through the PHA Annual Plan process, to be responsive to the local context and the PHA's strategic objectives.

(2) *Determination of compliance with deconcentration requirement.* HUD shall consider a PHA to be in compliance with this subpart if:

(i) The PHA's income analysis shows that the PHA has no general occupancy family developments to which the deconcentration requirements apply; that is, the average incomes of all covered developments are within the Established Income Range;

(ii) The PHA has covered developments with average incomes above or below the Established Income Range and the PHA provides a sufficient explanation in its Annual Plan that supports that the income mix of such development or developments is consistent with and furthers the goal of deconcentration of poverty and income mixing and also the locally determined goals of the PHA's Annual and Five Year Plans, and the PHA therefore need not take further action to deconcentrate poverty and mix incomes; or

(iii) The PHA's deconcentration policy provides specific strategies the PHA will take that can be expected to promote deconcentration of poverty and income mixing in developments with average incomes outside of the Established Income Range.

(3) *Right of return.* If a PHA has provided that a family that resided in a covered public housing development has a right to admission to a public housing unit in that development after revitalization, the requirements of

paragraph (c) of this section do not preclude fulfilling that commitment or a PHA's commitment to return a family to another development after revitalization.

(4) *Family's discretion to refuse a unit.* A family has the sole discretion whether to accept an offer of a unit made under a PHA's deconcentration policy. The PHA may not take any adverse action toward any eligible family for choosing not to accept an offer of a unit under the PHA's deconcentration policy. In accordance with the PHA's established policies, the PHA may uniformly limit the number of offers received by applicants.

(5) *Relationship to income targeting requirement.* Nothing in this section relieves a PHA of the obligation to meet the requirement to admit annually at least 40 percent families whose incomes are below 30 percent of area median income as provided by section 16(a)(2) of the 1937 Act, 42 U.S.C. 1437n(a)(2).

(d) *Fair housing requirements.* All admission and occupancy policies for public housing and Section 8 tenant-based housing programs must comply with Fair Housing Act requirements and with regulations to affirmatively further fair housing. The PHA may not impose any specific income or racial quotas for any development or developments.

(1) *Nondiscrimination.* A PHA must carry out its PHA Plan in conformity with the nondiscrimination requirements in Federal civil rights laws, including title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing Act. A PHA cannot assign persons to a particular section of a community or to a development or building based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin for purposes of segregating populations (§1.4(b)(1)(ii) of this title).

(2) *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing.* PHA policies that govern eligibility, selection and admissions under its PHA Plan should be designed to reduce racial and national origin concentrations. Any affirmative steps or incentives a PHA plans to take must be stated in the admission policy.

(i) HUD regulations provide that PHAs should take affirmative steps to overcome the effects of conditions

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which resulted in limiting participation of persons because of their race, national origin or other prohibited basis (§1.4(b)(1)(iii) and (6)(ii) of this title).

(ii) Such affirmative steps may include but are not limited to, appropriate affirmative marketing efforts; additional applicant consultation and information; and provision of additional supportive services and amenities to a development.

(3) *Validity of certification.* (i) HUD will take action to challenge the PHA's certification under §903.7(o) where it appears that a PHA Plan or its implementation:

(A) Does not reduce racial and national origin concentration in developments or buildings and is perpetuating segregated housing; or

(B) Is creating new segregation in housing.

(ii) If HUD challenges the validity of a PHA's certification, the PHA must establish that it is providing a full range of housing opportunities to applicants and tenants or that it is implementing actions described in paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this section.

(e) *Relationship between poverty deconcentration and fair housing.* The requirements for poverty deconcentration in paragraph (c) of this section and for fair housing in paragraph (d) of this section arise under separate statutory authorities and are independent.

[65 FR 81222, Dec. 22, 2000, as amended at 67 FR 51033, Aug. 6, 2002]

Subpart B—PHA Plans

§ 903.3 What is the purpose of this subpart?

(a) This subpart specifies the requirements for PHA plans, required by section 5A of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437c–1) (the Act), as amended.

(b) The purpose of the plans is to provide a strategic planning framework for PHA management operations and capital planning:

(1) Local accountability; and

(2) An easily identifiable source by which public housing residents, participants in the tenant-based assistance program, and other members of the

public may locate basic PHA policies, rules and requirements concerning the PHA's operations, programs and services.

(c) Title VII of the Housing and Economic Reform Act, Public Law 110–289, section 2702, amends 42 U.S.C. 1437c–1(b) to provide qualified PHAs an exemption from the requirement of section 5A of the Act to submit an annual PHA Plan. The term “qualified PHA” means a public housing agency that meets the following requirements:

(1) The sum of the number of public housing dwelling units administered by the agency, and the number of vouchers under section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) administered by the agency, is 550 or fewer; and

(2) The agency is not designated under section 42 U.S.C. 1437d(j)(2) as a troubled public housing agency, and does not have a failing score under SEMAP during the prior 12 months.

[78 FR 63770, Oct. 24, 2013]

§ 903.4 What are the public housing agency plans?

(a) *Types of plans.* There are two public housing agency plans. They are:

(1) The 5-Year Plan (the 5-Year Plan) that a public housing agency (PHA) must submit to HUD once every five PHA fiscal years. The 5-Year Plan covers the five PHA fiscal years immediately following the date on which the 5-Year Plan is due to HUD; and

(2) The Annual Plan (Annual Plan) that the PHA must submit to HUD for each fiscal year immediately following the date on which the Annual Plan is due to HUD and for which the PHA receives:

(i) Section 8 tenant-based assistance (under section 8(o) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, 42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) (tenant-based assistance); or

(ii) Amounts from the public housing operating fund or capital fund (under section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437g) (public housing)).

(b) *Format.* HUD may prescribe the format of submission (including electronic format submission) of the plans. HUD also may prescribe the format of attachments to the plans and documents related to the plan that the PHA does not submit but may be required to