

Chapter 00, Introduction. The chapter does not contain any policy related matters. This is an entirely new addition to the Administrative Plan. It has background information and regulatory requirements.

Chapter 01, Overview. There are no policy related matters in this chapter. This chapter describes the purpose of the Administrative Plan and outlines roles and responsibilities for the Housing Authority, tenants, landlords and HUD.

Chapter 02, Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. There are no significant policy changes included in this chapter. Chapter now includes written policies which match the Housing Authority's practices related to non-discrimination, VAWA process and reasonable accommodations.

Chapter 03, Eligibility. This chapter contains significant changes to align program policies with the Housing Opportunity through Modernization Act (HOTMA) and make other technical changes.

3-I.J. Guests. Modifies the guest policy to allow guests to remain in a unit no longer than 30 consecutive days or a total of 90 cumulative days in a calendar year. The previous practice was to allow guests to stay no more than 14 days in a calendar year. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

3-III.C. Restriction on Assets. HOTMA rules now require that the Housing Authority deny admission to families who have net assets exceeding \$100,000 and/or have real property that is suitable for occupancy by the family as a residence. The section outlines reasons that an owned home may not be "suitable for occupancy." (Effective January 1, 2025, or when the software

Chapter 04, Applications, Waiting List and Tenant Selection. This chapter does not contain any significant changes.

Emergency Housing Voucher. Removal of information related to Emergency Housing Voucher waitlist. This program has begun to sunset, and no new Emergency Housing Vouchers may be issued.

4-III.C. Local Preferences. Addition of two new absolute waitlist preferences for the following populations:

1. Family Unification Program and Foster Youth Initiative referrals
2. Victims of domestic violence who need an emergency transfer from a Project Based Voucher unit. This will enable the Housing Authority to issue the tenant a Housing Choice Voucher

Chapter 05, Briefings and Voucher Issuance. This chapter contains no significant changes. Changes are largely adding background, regulatory information, and memorializing current practices.

Chapter 06. Income. This chapter includes significant changes resulting from HOTMA as well as several policy clarifications and minor tweaks.

6-I.B. Household Composition and Income. Absences due to placement in Foster Care. Allows for the Housing Authority to continue counting a child placed in foster care for purposes of voucher size unless the child has been permanently removed from the household. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

6-I.B. Household Composition and Income. Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead. Absence due to Medical Reasons. Allows for reinstatement of voucher assistance as a reasonable accommodation when rental assistance is terminated due to medical absence from the unit and the sole household member returns to the unit. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

6-I.B. Household Composition and Income. Absent Head, Spouse, or Cohead. Family Members Permanently Confined for Medical Reasons. Provides policy clarification so that a family members income is counted unless there is documentation that a family member will be permanently out of the assisted unit. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

6-I.B. Household Composition and Income. Caretakers for a Child. Provides policy clarification as to how a caretaker of a minor child will be treated when no other adult family member remains in the household. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

6-I.C. Calculating Annual Income. Anticipating Annual Income. Provides policy clarification as to how the Housing Authority will count sporadic income. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

6-1.E. Calculating Annual Income. Earned Income Disallowance (EID) for Persons with Disabilities. This is a significant change to the Administrative Plan. HOTMA removed the EID from regulation. This program has allowed certain disabled households to have new income excluded from annual income calculations. With the removal of the EID program, HUD provided guidance through HOTMA as to how the income of any remaining households utilizing this EID would be treated. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

6-1.F. Calculating Annual Income. Businesses and Self-Employment Income. Provides specific guidance as to how the Housing Authority will count earnings and expenses from self-employment. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

6-1.G. Calculating Annual Income. Student Financial Assistance. This is a significant change to the Administrative Plan. Generally speaking, provides that any financial assistance that a student receives in excess of tuition and other require fees be included as income. There are some federally allowable exclusions noted. (Effective January 1, 2025)

6-II.C. Asset Inclusions and Exclusions. Necessary and Non-Necessary Personal Property. This is a significant change to the Administrative Plan. HOTMA defined necessary personal property that will be excluded from income. Necessary personal property include things such as cars/vehicles that the family relies upon for work and school as well as educational materials, medical equipment and others. Items such as recreational cars, watercraft, jewelry and collectibles will be counted as an asset. The Housing Authority will use the family's estimate of the value of such non-necessary items unless it is believed that the estimate is off by \$200 or more. (Effective January 1, 2025)

6-III. Adjusted Income. Elderly or Disabled Family Deduction. HUD has increased the allowable deduction for elderly and disabled persons from \$400 to \$525 annually. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Sonoma County Housing Authority Summary of Administrative Plan Changes

6-III.D. Adjusted Income. Health and Medical Care Expenses Deduction. This is a significant change to the Administrative Plan. HOTMA rules have dramatically changed how medical expenses will be deducted from an assisted persons annual income. New rules change the countable expenses from those exceeding 3% of annual income to those exceeding 10% of a family's annual income. (Effective January 1, 2025)

6-III.E. Adjusted Income. Disability Assistance Expense. Earned Income Limit on the Disability Assistance Expense Deduction. This is a significant change to the Administrative Plan. HOTMA rules cap the expenses the Housing Authority can deduct from annual income so that in combination of the medical expenses, the cost for care does not exceed the earned income received by the family member who is able to work. (Effective January 1, 2025)

6-III.E. Adjusted Income. Disability Assistance Expense. Payments to Family Members. No disability expenses may be deducted from annual income when the recipient of this income is person in the assisted family. (Effective January 1, 2025)

6-III.F. Adjusted Income. Childcare Expense Deduction. The family must identify who in the family is participating in an eligible activity that necessitates childcare. The family must provide documentation of the correlation between the eligible activity and the childcare expense. If the expense is to allow a family member to work, the cost of the childcare may not exceed the income received. (Effective January 1, 2025)

6-III.G. Adjusted Income. Hardship Exemptions. Per HOTMA rules, phased-in relief is available for families that the changes to health and medical, disability, and childcare expenses creates an undue financial hardship. (Effective January 1, 2025)

6-IV.A. Overview of Rent and Subsidy Calculations. Minimum Rent. The Housing Authority is removing the minimum rent requirement of \$50. Moving forward there will relieve a burden on many extremely low-income families. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

6-IV.A. Hardship Exemption Requests. This section is removed in its entirety. Without a minimum rent, there is no need for hardship exemption requests. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Chapter 7. Verifications. There are significant changes to policy made in this chapter as shown below. All other edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background.

7-I.B. Use of Other Program's Income Determinations. This new policy will allow the Housing Authority to utilize income calculations from other "Safe Harbor" agencies as identified by HUD. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

7-I.C Streamlined Income Determinations. Modifies the frequency by which non-fixed income must be verified from annually to every third year. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

7-I.D. Verification Hierarchy. Modifies the hierarchy of income verification methods approved by HUD. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

7.1.F. Level 4 Verification. EIV + Self-Certification. Allows that the Housing Authority may use an average of the last two quarters of income listed in the federal Enterprise Income Verification System (EIV) to determine income. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

7.I.H. Level 2: Oral Third-Party Verification. Value of Asset Income. The Housing Authority will allow a self-certification of the value of a family's assets and anticipated asset income when assets are less than \$50,000. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

7-II.C. Documentation of Age. Under certain circumstances, the Housing Authority will accept alternate forms of verification of age. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

7-III.I. Federal Tax Refunds or Refundable Tax Credits. If a family's net assets exceed \$50,000, the Housing Authority must verify the amount of any federal tax return. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

7-III.K. Income from Excluded Sources. The Housing Authority will accept a family's self-certification as verification of fully excluded income. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Chapter 8. HQS and Rent Reasonableness. There are no significant changes to policy made in this chapter. Edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background.

Chapter 9. General Leasing Policies. There are no significant changes to policy made in this chapter. Edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background.

Chapter 10. Moves with Continued Assistance. There is one significant change to policy made in this chapter as shown below. All other edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background.

10.B.1. Restrictions on Moves. Grounds for Denial or Termination of Assistance. New policy stating that any household that is subject to a repayment agreement will be denied portability until the debt owed to the Housing Authority is paid in full. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Chapter 11. Reexaminations. This chapter includes significant changes resulting from HOTMA as shown below. All other edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background.

Part II. Interim Reexaminations. Interim Increases. The Housing Authority may NOT process income increases if the increase results less than a 10% increase in annual adjusted income. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Part II. Interim Reexaminations. Interim 10% or Greater. The Housing Authority will not conduct an interim reexamination for increases when the annual reexamination is within three months of the reported change. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Chapter 12. Termination of Assistance and Tenancy. There are no significant changes made in this chapter. Edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background. No significant changes to policy are included.

Chapter 13. Owners. There are no significant changes made in this chapter. Edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background. No significant changes to policy are included.

Chapter 14. Program Integrity. There are no significant changes made in this chapter. Edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background. No significant changes to policy are included.

Chapter 15. Special Housing Types. This chapter reinstates the Homeownership program which was halted in 2019. It also removes references to residential care facilities. All other changes are non-substantive.

Chapter 16. Program Administration. This chapter includes changes to the Housing Authority's repayment agreement policies. In addition to the changes noted below, the chapter now includes regulatory information.

Part III. Informal Reviews and Hearings. Outlines Housing Authority guidelines for informal reviews and informal hearings. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Part IV. General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families. Downpayment Requirement. Adds that families are required to pay a 10% down payment of the total amount owed prior to the Housing Authority allowing them to enter into a repayment agreement. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Part IV. General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families. Payment Thresholds. Adds payment thresholds for repayment amounts to standardize repayment agreements across all families. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Part IV. General Repayment Agreement Guidelines for Families. Due Dates. Adds that all payments on a repayment agreement are due on the 1st of each month and late after the 15th of the month. (Effective at approval of Administrative Plan)

Chapter 17. Project Based Voucher Program. There are no significant changes made in this chapter. Edits are largely due to the addition of regulatory guidance and background. No significant changes to policy are included.

17-V.F. Additional HAP Requirements. Vacancy Payments. Added the Housing Authority practice of not providing vacancy payments in PBV HAP contracts.

Chapter 18. This chapter has been left intentionally blank.

Chapter 19. Special Purpose Vouchers. This is a brand-new chapter that describes the Housing Authority's special purpose voucher programs including the Family Unification Program, the Foster Youth Initiative Program, the Mainstream Voucher Program, and the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program. The majority of this chapter outlines the program criteria and eligibility rules.