

# Occupancy Standards

Occupancy Standards are based on the size of the household, which is based on the family's composition as detailed in this Administrative Plan.

## Voucher Size Issued

HUD guidelines require that the HA establish occupancy standards for the determination of Voucher bedroom size and that such standards provide for a minimum commitment of subsidy while avoiding overcrowding. The standards for the Voucher size also must meet the minimum requirements of HUD's Housing Quality Standards.

The unit size on the Voucher remains the same as long as the family composition remains the same, regardless of the actual unit size rented.

The occupancy standards for Voucher issuance are set up to determine the size of the Voucher to be issued. The HA does not limit who shares a bedroom/sleeping room.

Families will not be required to use rooms other than bedrooms for sleeping purposes in the Voucher size determination.

These general guidelines are used in determining Voucher size:

<u>Voucher Size</u>	<u>Minimum # Persons</u>	<u>Maximum # Persons</u>
1 BR	1	2
2 BR	2	4
3 BR	3	6
4 BR	4	8
5 BR	6	10
6 BR	8	12

- The head (and spouse or significant other, if applicable) of household will be eligible for a separate bedroom.
- Persons of the same sex, but of different generations, and persons of the opposite sex over the age of 7 (other than spouses or significant others), should have separate bedrooms.
- Units will be assigned so that a minimum of one person will occupy each bedroom.
- Foster children will be included in determining unit size.
- Space may be provided for a child who is away at school but who lives with the family during school recesses.

- Space will not be provided for a family member who will be absent most of the time, such as a member who is away in the military or incarcerated.

The HA shall grant exceptions from the standards if the HA determines that the exceptions are justified by the relationship, age, and sex, or the health or handicap of family members, or other individual circumstances, such as:

- Persons who, because of verified medical reasons, cannot share a bedroom.
- An elderly, handicapped, or disabled person who requires a live-in attendant.
- Children of the same sex with more than ten years of age difference. (A child is defined as a minor who is a person under the age of 18 who is neither head nor spouse.)
- Different generations. (Generations are defined by decades.)

The HA will consider the request according to the conditions outlined in this plan and determine whether or not the request will be granted. The necessity for an exception to unit size standards must be verified and documented. The granting of the exception shall be at the discretion of the HA.

## **Changes to Voucher Size**

### **Voucher Issuance Prior to Lease**

If there has been a permissible change in family composition, the family will be issued the appropriate bedroom size.

### **Voucher Issuance After Lease**

The family may request a larger bedroom size Voucher, based on an increase in family size or other circumstances, by submitting to the HA in writing a request for a larger size Voucher; the request must detail the justification for the request.

When the household size or family circumstances permit the issuance of another size Voucher, the HA will only issue a change in Voucher size when the family is being recertified or in the process of moving to a new unit.

The unit considerations in this section should be used as a guide to determine whether and when the bedroom size should be changed. If an unusual situation occurs that is not currently covered in this policy, the case will be taken to the Chief of Housing & Community Development who will review the situation, depending on the individual circumstances and the verification provided.

## **Unit Size Selected**

The family may select a different size dwelling than that listed on the Voucher, except for single, non-elderly, non-disabled households who are required to select only one bedroom units.

There are three criteria related to occupancy standards and Voucher size to consider when calculating tenant rent:

- Voucher Payment Standard–The HA must always use the Payment Standard for the lower of the family size or unit size.
- Utility Allowance–The utility allowance used to calculate the gross rent is based on the actual size of the unit the family selects, regardless of the size authorized on the family's Voucher.
- Housing Quality Standards–HQS Standards allow two persons per living/sleeping room and would permit the following maximum occupancy, assuming the family opts to use a living room as a living/sleeping area:

<b><u>Bedrooms Present</u></b>	<b><u>Maximum Occupancy</u></b>
1	4
2	6
3	8
4	10
5	12
6	14