

North Carolina PHA Homeless Preference Tool Kit

1. Adopt a preference or set-aside policy in your ACOP, Section 8 Admin Plan, or both. Options to consider:
 - **Asheville:** Consistent with the *Asheville-Buncombe Five Year Strategic Plan on Homelessness*, HACA will give one preference point to families and individuals who are homeless as defined by HUD and who will be receiving regular on-site supportive services from a local homeless services, social services or mental health agency for at least six months after moving into a voucher-assisted unit. Status will be verified through the agency that commits to provide the supportive services.
 - **Brevard:** Based on needs identified in the consolidated plan and on consultation with local partner agencies, the PHA provides a preference for families and individuals who are homeless, as defined either by HUD or for McKinney-Vento purposes, and who will be receiving regular on-site housing case management services from a local homeless services, domestic violence, social services, school social work, or mental health agency for at least six months after moving in. This preference will be verified by the agency that commits to provide the case management.
 - **Durham:** In support of the City of Durham's Mayor's Challenge to End Homelessness, and based on the community needs identified by local partnering agencies within the Durham Continuum of Care, the PHA has implemented a referral system by which referrals of homeless families/individuals for the Housing Choice Voucher Program are accepted. An allotment of 225 referrals has been divided amongst the following seven agencies: Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, Families Moving Forward, Urban Ministries, Housing for New Hope, Durham Rescue Mission, Durham VA, and the Durham COC. Each applicant/family referred will be receiving supportive services from a local homeless services agency, or mental health agency for at least six months after leasing up in an assisted unit. Referrals are accepted regardless of whether or not a family is on the existing voucher waiting list, and regardless of whether the regular PHA voucher waiting list is open or closed, consistent with 24 CFR 982.206(c). The status of homelessness, as defined by HUD, is verified by the referring agency, and eligibility for the Housing Choice Voucher program is determined by the PHA, in accordance with HUD regulations and PHA policy.
 - **Winston-Salem:** Based on the PHAs Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plans the PHA provides a preference for a Chronic Homeless Person or Chronic Homeless Families that are receiving documented supportive services and referred by an approved Homeless Council Agency. The Authority will limit the number of applicants that qualify for this preference to the number that does not allow for more than 10 percent of the units in each development to be occupied by this applicant preference group. Based on the PHAs Administrative Plan the PHA will convert up to 25 percent of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Vouchers and Home Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Vouchers annually to regular Housing Choice Vouchers to allow an approved Homeless Council Agency to refer additional families for PSH vouchers and HOME TBRA Vouchers.

2. Identify supportive service partner(s) in your local Continuum of Care (CoC). In larger NC cities, the CoC leads should be readily known and accessible. In smaller communities of the Balance of State CoC find your contact at <http://www.ncceh.org/bos/regionalcommittee/> and reach out to the Balance of State staff (bos@ncceh.org) if you need help starting that conversation.
3. Over time, the staff of the PHA and CoC supportive service agency need to build a strong working relationship. At the admissions stage, the PHA needs to be willing to consider the supportive services commitment as a mitigating factor for minor crimes related to homelessness, as well as bad credit or landlord references. When problems arise, make sure staff reach out to the supportive services partner. Supportive services should, at a minimum, include move-in assistance; early on-site contact with the resident to help get settled; outreach assistance for financial resources, job training, and/or disability benefits; and readiness to meet with the resident and PHA staff or property manager to assist with corrective actions if/when a potential lease violation occurs.

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