



The Occupancy Cycle

Department of Housing **Services**

The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston

- **Pre-Application:** A family can submit a pre-application IF the wait list is open. This application is not the full application but provides enough to determine preliminary eligibility and placement on the list. Letters are sent out if the family is found to be ineligible.
- **Waiting List:** The Housing Authority determines the size of unit (i.e., number of bedrooms) for which an applicant is eligible according to occupancy standards. The waiting list is divided by the number of bedrooms and local preferences. The Public Housing list is separate from the Housing Choice Voucher Program (formerly Section 8). The wait list is purged annually, to ensure it is current.
- **Needs Estimation:** The Charleston Housing Authority estimates the opening of the waiting list by specific unit sizes (number of bedrooms) based on projected turnover as this will be influenced by the wait list. Preferences requested by the pre-applicants are verified. If the validity of a preference

cannot be verified, the preference is disallowed and the pre-application is repositioned on the waiting based on the date and time the application was accepted.

- **Final Eligibility:** Families are scheduled for an interview, at which time an application is accepted. Income and other required information are sent to third parties for verification and background checks are performed. Income eligibility is then determined by comparing gross annual income to the established maximum income limits. The family is given the opportunity to choose between income-based rent or flat rent. At this point, a determination is made as to whether or not a unit is available for the family. If no unit is available at that time, the application is placed in a pool of verified applications, waiting for a unit to become available. If a family is ineligible, a letter of denial will be sent and the family is given an opportunity for an informal hearing.
- **Unit Offer:** The family will receive an offer of an available unit. Should the family decline the offer of **one (1) unit**, their name will go to the bottom of the wait list. If the family refuses a **2nd** offer, they will be removed from the wait list altogether. Security deposits and proof of utility deposits are required once the family accepts the offer of a unit.
- **Lease Up:** The Charleston Housing Authority schedules and conducts inspections of vacant units and prepares them for move-in. At the time of an actual move-in, an inspection is done with the family and they are given information related to their tenancy prior to the signing of the lease. Families are issued keys and additional unit repairs are completed if necessary.
- **Orientation:** An orientation is held to explain the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the Charleston Housing Authority and the tenants. Questions are answered and lease provisions are reviewed. The orientation sessions will give the tenant the opportunity to understand the lease agreement and receive tips on housekeeping, budgeting, positive social skills, crime prevention and ways to avoid evictions.
- **Continued Occupancy:** Assisted tenancy begins on the effective date stated in the lease. Should the family opt for income-based rent, recertifications are done on an annual basis. For those who have chosen to pay a flat rent, recertifications are done every three (3) years. The recertification process requires the family to attend an interview and to provide updated income and expense documentation. A new rent amount is subsequently determined based on this updated information. Preventive maintenance inspections are completed annually as well. Any changes in family composition and income that occur at any time during the year must be reported to the appropriate AMP office.
- **Move Out:** The family may terminate the lease by giving proper written notice to the appropriate AMP office. The Charleston Housing Authority may terminate the lease for lease violations. Should this occur, tenants are provided with Notice of Termination Letters and informed of their right to an informal or grievance hearing for terminations of assistance or tenancy.