



**Local Administrative Policies for the HOME Tenant-
Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program**

Housing Opportunities of SW Washington

Rev. July 17, 2024



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Introduction

Housing Opportunities of SW Washington operates the HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program as a subrecipient of funds administered by the Washington State Department of Commerce or by the City of Longview.

TBRA subrecipients provide rent and utility assistance for people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

In previous years, TBRA referrals were required to come through the local homeless Coordinated Entry system. Participation in the Coordinated Entry system is no longer required. Applicants are now referred to the TBRA program by partnering agencies as described later in this book. The Housing Authority has a Referral Plan approved by the Department of Commerce to receive these partnering agency referrals.

The Housing Authority administers the TBRA program in its participating jurisdictions of Cowlitz County and Lewis County.

The TBRA program is similar in many ways to the Housing Choice Voucher program. However, it is governed by different rules and has special policies and procedures. The special policies and procedures described in this book apply to the HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program.

All other program operating procedures that are not specifically listed in this book are subject to the Housing Authority's [Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan](#).





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Types of TBRA Assistance

Rental Assistance

Rent assistance will be made available to all active TBRA participants in good standing.

Rent assistance is payment of up to 24 months per household for the costs of monthly rent and utilities.

This subsidy will not exceed the difference between the established payment standard and 30% of the household's monthly adjusted income. The TBRA payment standard is subject to alternate payment standard methodology described later in this book.

Security Deposit Assistance

The maximum amount of security deposit assistance is up to two months of rent.

Security deposit payments will be made directly to the landlord.

Deposit assistance will be made available only to new participants and only at the time of admission, as determined by funding availability.

Households may receive security deposit assistance regardless of whether they will be receiving ongoing rent assistance.

Deposit assistance is a grant that does not need to be repaid.

Utility Deposit Assistance

Utility deposit assistance can be combined with the rental assistance or security deposit assistance, but it cannot be the sole type of assistance. Utility deposit assistance will be made available as funding allows.

Utility deposits may be paid for any of the household-paid utility services listed on the utility allowance schedule. Utility deposits cannot be paid for telephone or cable deposits.

Utility deposit payments will be made directly to the utility provider upon approval of the payment contract.





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Eligible Households

Eligible households must be **homeless** or at **imminent risk of homelessness** as described below, AND must be at or **below 80% Area Median Income (AMI)**.

Homeless: Households are homeless if they are unsheltered or residing in a temporary housing program, as defined below.

Unsheltered Homeless:

- ✓ Living outside or in a place that is not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a vehicle, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or campground.
- ✓ Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the household member(s), including children, that have either taken place within the household's primary nighttime residence or has made the household member(s) afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence.

Sheltered Homeless:

- ✓ Residing in a temporary housing program including shelters, transitional or interim housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or government programs.
- ✓ Exiting a system of care or institution where they resided for 90 days or less AND who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that system of care or institution.
- ✓ Residing in a trailer or recreational vehicle that is parked illegally or in a location that is not intended for long-term stays (i.e. parking lots).

Imminent Risk: Households are at imminent risk of homelessness if they will lose their primary nighttime residence (including systems of care or institutions) within 14 days of the date of application for assistance, AND no subsequent residence has been identified, AND the household lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Household: A household is one or more individuals seeking to obtain or maintain housing together. The entire household must be considered for eligibility determination and services.

Income Prioritization: Households with incomes at or below **50%** of AMI must be prioritized.





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Referrals and Partnering Agencies

Households are identified and referred to the TBRA program by the Housing Authority's partnering agencies. Partnering agencies are provided with pre-application packets and application criteria. Applications are received, reviewed, and processed by the partnering agency.

TBRA partnering agencies will establish and maintain a waiting list and priority system consistent with their admissions or client selection procedures.

As TBRA funding becomes available, the Housing Authority will notify partnering agencies. The partnering agency will refer applications to the PHA according to their selection procedures.

Housing Authority staff will review each referred application to verify that the household:

- 1) is homeless or at imminent risk according to the definitions on Page 5,
- 2) is income eligible according to the definitions on page 5,
- 3) is enrolled in case management with the partnering service provider, and
- 4) qualifies under the Housing Authority's admission policies. Chapter 3 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#) contains a complete description of the Housing Authority's admission policies.

The Housing Authority will remain in regular contact with partnering service providers regarding referrals, compliance, progress with the Housing Stability Plan, and budget restrictions.

The partnering agencies that refer applicants for the TBRA program include: Lower Columbia Community Action Program, Salvation Army, local Native American tribal organizations, county Health and Human Services departments, Youth and Family Link, and the Housing Authority's Veteran Integration Program. The Housing Authority will continuously seek and perform outreach to identify new partnering agencies.



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Tenant Selection Policy

Referred application packets must contain a Service Provider Certification signed by a representative of the partnering agency. The Certification will verify that the referred applicant is either homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Referred applicants must be actively involved in case management services by a partnering provider. The Housing Authority will verify active case management participation.

TBRA families who are on the HCV waiting list will retain any tenant selection preferences for which they qualified at the time of TBRA admission.





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Voucher Issuance

A TBRA Voucher will be issued to an applicant after the Housing Authority has determined that the family is eligible for the program and after the family has attended an oral briefing. TBRA Vouchers will be issued according to the voucher issuance policies of the HCV program. Refer to Chapter 5 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#) for a full description.

Occupancy Standards

Occupancy standards are used to determine the unit size for which the household is eligible and thus, the amount of assistance to be provided. Fair housing rules permit a household to select smaller units that do not create seriously crowded conditions.

Participants may also select larger units. For Payment Standard methodology, see page 12.

Occupancy standards for TBRA will otherwise conform to the HCV occupancy standards discussed in Chapter 6 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#).





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Tenancy Approval

Once a family is issued a TBRA Voucher, the family must locate an eligible unit, with an owner or landlord willing to participate in the TBRA program. Once a family finds a suitable unit and the owner is willing to lease the unit under the program, the owner and family must follow the tenancy approval process outlined in Chapter 9 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#).

As part of the tenancy approval process, the owner and family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval to the Housing Authority.

The RFTA must be submitted no later than the expiration date stated on the Voucher.

The Housing Authority will complete the initial inspection, determine whether the unit passes inspection standards, and notify the owner and the family of the determination within 15 days of submission of the RFTA. Refer to Chapter 8 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#) for a full description of inspection procedures.





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Inspections and Unit Standards

Units must meet HCV inspection standards. Refer to Chapter 8 of the Housing Authority's [HCV Administrative Plan](#) for a complete discussion of inspections and housing standards.

Timing of Inspections

Inspections must be passed prior to lease signing and conducted annually during the period of assistance. Units may also be inspected as a result of housing quality complaints initiated by the landlord or household.

PHA-Owned Units

If households are occupying a unit owned by the Housing Authority, an independent entity must inspect the unit.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Units must comply with the Washington State Carbon Monoxide Alarm Laws (RCW 19.27.530 (2009) and Chapter 132 Laws of 2012 (SSB 6472)). Alarms must be located outside of each separate sleeping area, in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom and on each level of the residence. Single station carbon monoxide alarms must be listed as complying with UL 2034, and installed in accordance with code and the manufacturer's instructions. Combined CO and smoke alarms are permitted.





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Lead-Based Paint

The Housing Authority is responsible for following applicable laws and regulations pertaining to Lead-Based Paint. See the HCV Administrative Plan for a complete discussion of Lead-Based Paint assessment, applicability, and related procedures.

Each household will certify to the presence of household members under the age of six during the intake process.

Each household is provided a Lead Hazard Information Pamphlet during their program orientation, prior to selecting and occupying a unit. A Lead Disclosure Notice is also attached to every Request for Tenant Approval, which requires the landlord to disclose any known lead-based paint or hazards in the unit prior to occupancy.

HOSWWA will check with the local or state health department at least quarterly for a list of children with elevated blood lead levels in our service area. If available, this list will be cross-checked with the addresses of our assisted units in which children reside. Files of client households that have children under six will be flagged for ongoing monitoring. See Chapter 16 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#) for a discussion of health department information monitoring.





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Payment Standards and Rent Reasonableness

The Housing Authority will use a Commerce-Approved Payment Standard that reflects actual rents and estimated utility consumptions based on the results of documented local market analysis conducted by the Housing Authority.

Housing Authority staff will conduct a Rent Comparability study to determine the reasonableness of the requested rent amount. If the Rent Comparability analysis supports the requested rent amount, the Payment Standard will be the sum of the approved rent plus the utility allowance, known as the Gross Rent. This will ensure that program participants do not pay rent that exceeds 30% of their monthly adjusted income.

A household may select smaller units that do not create seriously crowded conditions. Participants may also select larger units. In either case, the Housing Authority will continue to use the alternative methodology for establishing the payment standard.

This alternative methodology for establishing the TBRA payment standard will only be used at new admission to the TBRA program, and at each annual reexamination, and each time a family moves to a new unit. New methodology will not be established at interim reexaminations.

For a full description of Rent Comparability procedures, see Chapter 8 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#).

Utility Allowance Standard

The Housing Authority will use the Utility Allowance schedule established for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program.





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Subsidy Determination

The Housing Authority will follow the HCV definitions for documenting and calculating a family's adjusted monthly income. See Chapter 6 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#) for a full description of the sources of income, exclusions, and deductions used to calculate rental subsidy.

The maximum subsidy will be determined by subtracting 30% of the family's monthly adjusted income from the family's gross rent (rent plus utilities).

When a family experiences a change of income, deductions, or household composition, the Housing Authority may recalculate the family's subsidy according to the procedures in Chapter 11 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#).

Minimum Household Contribution Policy

The minimum household contribution is 0.





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Reexaminations

The Housing Authority will follow the HCV guidelines for performing annual reexaminations and interim reexaminations. See Chapter 11 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#) for a full description of annual and interim reexamination procedures.

Assessing Housing Stability

TBRA reexaminations will include an assessment of housing stability. The Housing Authority will request verification from the family's partnering agency case manager to verify whether or not:

- 1)** the family is continuing to actively participate in case management,
- 2)** the family has reached self-sufficiency, and
- 3)** the case manager recommends the household for recertification.

Families that reach self-sufficiency will be exited from the TBRA program.

Families whose household income exceeds the applicable HUD income limits will be exited from the TBRA program.

Engaging with Case Management

If a participant family is found to be no longer participating in case management from their referring provider, the family will be given the opportunity to reestablish case management. Participants may reestablish case management with the same agency, or they may choose to receive case management from a new provider.

Families that choose not to reestablish case management will be exited from the TBRA program.

Participants may request to change case management providers at any time if the family's needs have changed.

In all cases, a new Housing Stability Plan will be required from the family and their new case manager.





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Rent Assistance Payments to Owners

Rental Assistance payments will be made directly to the owner/agent on behalf of the family.

Timely Payment Policy

The Housing Authority is responsible for making payments promptly when due to the owner in accordance with the terms of the contract. The Housing Authority will follow the same payment procedures as the HCV program.

Owner Rent Increases

The owner may not adjust the contract rent until after the first contract year is completed.

After the first year is complete, the owner may request an increase to the contract rent at any time with proper written notice. The owner is required to notify the assisted family and the Housing Authority, in writing, at least 60 days before the effective date of the proposed rent increase.

Any requested rent increase will be subject to a Rent Comparability review. For a full description of Rent Comparability procedures, see Chapter 8 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#).





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Moving with Continued Assistance

Moves will be subject to the rules and procedures outlined in Chapter 10 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#), with some exceptions noted below.

Portability

TBRA assistance will not be transferred outside of the participating jurisdiction.

PHA Approval

All moves with continued assistance will be subject to written PHA approval.



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Termination and Denial

The Housing Authority will follow the rules and procedures outlined in Chapter 12 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#) for termination of assistance or denial of assistance, with some exceptions noted below.

Notices such as contract violations, termination of assistance, and denial of assistance will be copied to the family's case manager.

TBRA participants must meet the income eligibility requirements described on page 5 at the time of admission. If a family's income exceeds 80% AMI before admission to the program, TBRA assistance will be denied.

Families that reach self-sufficiency will be exited from the TBRA program.

Families that do not maintain participation with case management will be exited from the TBRA program.

Term Limits and Reenrollment

Each rent subsidy contract cannot exceed one year. However, rent assistance can be extended by entering a new subsequent contract if the Housing Authority continues to administer the TBRA program and has funds available.

The maximum term is two continuous years. However, a family can be reenrolled to begin a new term of participation if reenrollment is supported by both the participant and the partnering service provider.





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Grievances

TBRA families will be granted the same Informal Reviews and Informal Hearings described in Chapter 16 of the [HCV Administrative Plan](#).

Informal Reviews are offered to TBRA applicants when the Housing Authority makes any determination described in 16-III.B. of the HCV Plan.

Informal Hearings are offered to participating TBRA families when the Housing Authority makes any determination described in 16-III.C. of the HCV Plan.





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File Checklist

- Pre-Application
- HMIS Consent Form
- Case Management Certification
- Case Management Stability Plan
- Verification of Social Security Number for all members of the household
- Verification of legal identity (driver's license, birth certificate, military ID) for all household members
- Declaration of Citizenship for all household members
- Release of information signed by all adult household members
- Fraud affidavit
- 3rd party verifications
- Income and deduction calculations
- Rental calculation worksheet
- Request for Tenancy Approval
- Signed TBRA Voucher
- Rent reasonableness checklist/certification
- Inspection checklist
- Lead-based paint certification
- Housing Assistance Payments Contract
- Tenancy Addendum
- VAWA Addendum Form HUD-91067
- Signed lease
- Move-in condition report

