

Santa Cruz County Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan 2023

Overview of Modifications

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Item #	Sec #	Pg #	Section Title	Proposed Wording	Explanation
1	I	3	Selecting Applicants from the Waiting List, Targeting, Preferences, Closing and Opening Waiting List	<p>Selecting Applicants from the Waiting List</p> <p>Additionally, any over-income families residing in Public Housing upon conversion may be added to the waiting list and admitted to the Housing Choice Voucher program if they become income eligible within two years of the conversion. These will be considered special admissions.</p>	No longer applicable, as we are now more than 2 years past the public housing conversion date.
2	I	4	Selecting Applicants from the Waiting List, Targeting, Preferences, Closing and Opening Waiting List	<p>Number of Waiting Lists</p> <p>The Housing Authority maintains a combined waiting list for the Santa Cruz County Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV), the Moderate Rehabilitation Program, and for some units of the Project-Based Voucher Program that do not have site-based waiting lists. (See exceptions for Special Programs in Section III.) Additionally, the Housing Authority maintains a separate waiting list for the Housing Choice Voucher Program for the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista. <u>Should a household (a) come up on both waiting lists at the same time or (b) is housed in the program and comes up on the waiting list, the household is entitled to only one voucher. At no time shall a household be permitted more than one active voucher.</u></p>	Addresses situations where a household comes up on both waiting lists at the same time or is already housed in the Section 8 program and comes up on the waiting list. Proposed wording clarifies that households cannot have more than one active voucher at the same time.
3	I	5	Selecting Applicants from the Waiting List, Targeting, Preferences, Closing and Opening Waiting List	<p>Waiting List Conditions</p> <p><u>Pippin Orchards Apartments</u> 23-25 PBV units- lottery number on the <u>HCV</u> waiting list.</p> <p>2 PBV units for homeless young adults with disabilities — referrals from Encompass Community Services</p> <p><u>Sunrise Senior Apartments</u> Applications received in the first two weeks of opening will be randomized in a lottery. Subsequent applications will be processed based on date the application is received.</p>	2 PBV units at Phippen had been designated for youth participating in a YHDP grant, which has since ended. Upon turnover, these units will be available to top applicants on the HCV waiting list.

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					Sunrise Senior apartments waiting list is no longer in the first two weeks of opening, so unnecessary wording has been removed.
4	I	6	Selecting Applicants from the Waiting List, Targeting, Preferences, Closing and Opening Waiting List	<p>Disabled and Medically Vulnerable Homeless Persons (DMV) Housing Matters, <u>using</u> using prioritization through Smart Path, the Coordinated Entry System for persons experiencing homelessness, <u>administered by the Continuum of Care (CoC).</u> (as administered by the County Human Services Department, Housing for Health Division) provides <u>s</u>-referrals for <u>homeless</u> persons who meet all of the following criteria:</p> <p>a) Disabled as defined by HUD at 24CFR 5.403.</p> <p>b) Medically vulnerable as defined <u>determined</u> by a Homeless Action Partnership approved Vulnerability Index. <u>Continuum of Care prioritization policies.</u></p>	Effective December 30, 2022, the Smart Path Coordinated Entry System is no longer available for assessment and referral to housing resources. Housing for Health (H4H) Division staff within the Human Services Department at the County of Santa Cruz have developed a redesign of the Coordinated Entry System process for the Continuum of Care (CoC).
5	I	8	Selecting Applicants from the Waiting List, Targeting, Preferences, Closing and Opening Waiting List	<p>Mainstream Vouchers <u>The temporary Mainstream Voucher preference, established in 2021 for Housing Authority has established a temporary Mainstream Voucher preference of up to 75 vouchers for</u> non-elderly persons with disabilities who were <u>are</u> at high-risk of severe COVID-19 disease and were <u>are</u> staying in time-limited shelters in Santa Cruz County, has been ended as all of those shelters have been closed. <u>Referrals will be provided by the Human Services Department (HSD) Housing for Health Division using the SCC COVID-19 shelter and Smart Path data. HSD will provide the applicants with supportive services and housing navigation assistance. The COVID-19 Mainstream Voucher preference will automatically expire 180 days after the Governor lifts the state of emergency for California. Once the temporary waiting list preference expires, all Mainstream Vouchers will be available to eligible waiting list applicants.</u></p>	The SCC COVID-19 time-limited shelters have all been closed. This voucher preference is no longer applicable.

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				<p>Additionally, to the extent that any homeless targeted referral voucher programs become fully utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Housing Authority may issue Mainstream Vouchers to Mainstream eligible homeless persons referred for other voucher programs to avoid a delay in their housing placement. This temporary authority will automatically expire 180 days after the Governor lifts the state of emergency for California.</p>	
6	I	8	<p>Selecting Applicants from the Waiting List, Targeting, Preferences, Closing and Opening Waiting List</p>	<p><u>Graduates of the Continuum of Care (CoC) Shelter Plus Care- (S+C), Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Programs,- Program and Family Unification Program (FUP) Youth in Project Based Voucher units.</u></p> <p>A program known as New Roots is a partnership between the Housing Authority and Encompass Community Services to provide supportive services and housing to homeless youth ages 18-24 with disabilities.</p> <p>The Housing Authority may graduate Youth Homeless Demonstration Project participants when these four conditions apply: 1.) The young adult has been stably housed for two or more years. 2.) The Case Manager agrees that the young adult has sufficiently benefitted from supportive services. 3.) The young adult is in good standing with the Housing Authority. 4.) There are vouchers/funding available. The Housing Authority may transfer the young adult to regular HCV so “younger” youth can have access to the permanent supportive housing.</p>	<p>The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program “New Roots” Permanent Supportive Housing Program has been replaced by a Rapid Rehousing program and transferred to a new provider, Covenant House, per recommendation and approval of the local Continuum of Care and with HUD approval.</p>
7	I	9	<p>Selecting Applicants from the Waiting List, Targeting, Preferences, Closing and Opening Waiting List</p>	<p><u>Targeting</u> Notwithstanding the above, if necessary to meet the HUD <u>MTW</u> statutory requirement that 75% of newly admitted families in any fiscal year be families who are extremely<u>very</u> low-income (incomes not exceeding 30<u>50</u>% of area median income), the Housing Authority retains the right to select extremely<u>very</u> low-income families ahead of other eligible families on an as-needed basis to ensure the HUD <u>MTW</u> income targeting requirement is met.</p>	<p>Aligning with MTW Statutory Requirements.</p>

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8	II	10	Issuing or Denying Housing Choice Vouchers, Term of the Housing Choice Voucher, and Extensions or Suspension of the Term	<p>All Housing Choice Vouchers are issued with an initial term of at least 60 days. One or more extensions of at least an additional 60 days will be considered.</p> <p>Extensions may be granted</p> <p>1. If voucher holders provide proof that despite a diligent effort, they could not find a unit suitable to their needs; or</p> <p>In special cases only, such as a large family, a “special needs” family, hospitalization or drug rehabilitation, death in the family, etc.</p>	Voucher extensions are granted to all eligible voucher holders as a courtesy, without consideration of search efforts or special circumstances.
9	III	11	Special Purpose Programs	<p><u>Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing – VASH</u></p> <p><u>Upon HUD approval, the Housing Authority will operate HUD-VASH in accordance with MtW administrative flexibilities that are not otherwise in conflict with the HUD-VASH Operating Requirements.</u></p>	Added wording to clarify that the Housing Authority will seek to apply MTW waivers and flexibility to the HUD VASH program.
10	III	11	Special Purpose Programs	<p><u>Family Unification Program – Youth Vouchers</u></p> <p>Youth will also be identified through the county <u>C</u>oordinated <u>E</u>ntry <u>S</u>ystem.</p> <p>The Santa Cruz County Consortium of Care (CoC), titled Homeless Action Partnership, launched the Coordinated Entry System, titled Smart Path to Housing and Health. The Smart Path lead agency is the County HSD. They will use it to assist in identifying youth who were previously on a child welfare caseload and may be eligible for FUP.</p>	Effective December 30, 2022, the Smart Path Coordinated Entry System is no longer available for assessment and referral to housing resources. Housing for Health (H4H) Division staff within the Human Services Department at the County of Santa Cruz have developed a redesign of the Coordinated Entry System process for the Continuum of Care (CoC).

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11	III	12-13	Special Purpose Programs	<p><u>Family Unification Program – Youth Vouchers</u></p> <p><u>Youth who first leased a unit with a FUP/FYI voucher after December 27, 2020 the provisions of Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (FSHO) apply. FSHO provides a 24-month extension of voucher assistance for:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. FUP/FYI youth who are participating in a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program under Section 23 of the U.S. Housing Act or an MTW self-sufficiency program.</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>a) _____ If the youth is offered an FSS slot during their first 36 months of FUP/FYI assistance, the youth must participate in the FSS program to receive an extension of assistance.</u> <u>b) If the youth is offered an FSS slot after the 36-month mark, the youth may choose to accept the FSS slot or decline the slot and meet the education, workforce development, or employment requirement instead.</u> <u>2. FUP/FYI youth who were unable to enroll in FSS but engaged in education, workforce development, or employment, or employment activities for at least 9 months of the 12-month period preceding the extension. The youth is considered to be unable to enroll in FSS if the youth has not been offered an FSS slot during the first 36 months of receiving FUP/FYI assistance.</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>a) The youth must have engaged in at least one of the following activities for not less than 9 months of the 12-month period preceding each extension.</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>i. Education:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. The youth was engaged in obtaining a “recognized postsecondary credential” or a “secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;” or</u> <u>2. The youth was enrolled in an “institution of higher education” a “proprietary institution of higher education,” or a “postsecondary vocational institution” as defined in the Higher Education Act.</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>ii. Workforce Development: The youth was participating in a career pathway, as such term is defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).</u> <u>iii. Employment: The youth was employed.</u> <p>1.3.<u>FUP/FYI youth who meet one of the statutory exceptions:</u></p> 	<p>Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (FSHO) extension of assistance for FUP-Youth participants, and expansion of how to qualify for extension if not enrolled in FSS. Also provides for statutory exceptions.</p> <p>These changes allow more youth with FUP-Y vouchers to extend their time limited assistance.</p>
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Santa Cruz County Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan 2023

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				<p>a) <u>Are responsible for the care of a dependent child under the age of 6 or for the care of an incapacitated person;</u></p> <p>b) <u>Are regularly and actively participating in a drug addiction or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program; or</u></p> <p>c) <u>Are incapable of complying with the requirement to participate in an FSS program or engage in education, workforce development, or employment activities, as applicable, due to a documented medical condition.</u></p>	
12	III	13	Special Purpose Programs	<p><u>Family Unification Program</u> Once a family has been certified as eligible and accepted into the Family Unification Program, they will attend an orientation session provided by the Housing Authority, during which Section 8 procedures and regulations will be explained in detail.</p>	Orientation sessions may now be conducted remotely. Service providers are not required to attend.
13	III	13	Special Purpose Programs	<p><u>Medicaid Waiver Program</u> Once an individual and/or family has been certified as eligible and accepted into the Medicaid Waiver Program, they, or their designated representative, will attend an orientation session provided by the Housing Authority, during which Section 8 procedures and regulations will be explained in detail.</p>	Orientation sessions may now be conducted remotely. Service providers are not required to attend.
14	III	15	Special Purpose Programs	<p><u>Emergency Housing Vouchers</u> <u>Upon HUD approval, the Housing Authority will operate EHV in accordance with MTW administrative flexibilities that are not otherwise in conflict with the EHV Operating Requirements.</u></p>	Added wording to clarify that the Housing Authority will seek to apply MTW waivers and flexibility to the HUD EHV program.
15	IV	16	Occupancy Policies	<p><u>Definition of a Family</u> A family is a person or group of people related by blood, marriage, adoption or affinity that live together in a stable family relationship. Furthermore, the Housing Authority has adopted HUD’s definition of “family” as defined in <u>24 CFR 5.403</u>. This definition of family includes single individuals, <u>single persons who are youth</u>, as well as groups of people residing together, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.</p>	HUD FSHO requires an update to clarify that single persons who are youth are included in the definition of “family”.
16	V	18	Encouraging Participation by Owners	<p><u>Property Agent Incentive Programs</u> <u>The County of Santa Cruz has provided funding to provide initial lease-up funds for property agents (owners/managers) renting to households either at-risk-of or</u></p>	The Property Agent Incentive Program is funded by the County to

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			Outside Areas of Low-Income and Minority Concentration	<p><u>currently experiencing homelessness. The qualifying special population tenant-based voucher/subsidy programs for this incentive include Disabled Medically Vulnerable (DMV), Family Unification Program (FUP), Welfare to Work (WtW), Homeless Families with Minor Children (HFMC), Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH), Mainstream COVID, Stability Vouchers, and Shelter Plus Care. Additional homelessness designated vouchers may be included upon approval by the County.</u></p> <p><u>All local jurisdictions within the County of Santa Cruz have provided funding for a risk mitigation fund which is available to property agents within the County of Santa Cruz regardless of voucher type utilized by the tenant.</u></p>	provide move-in bonuses and by all jurisdictions in the County to provide risk mitigation funds for property owners renting to households in qualifying programs.
17	XIV	26	The Process for Establishing and Revising Payment Standards	<u>Upon HUD Approval of the Housing Authority's MTW Supplement, the Housing Authority may utilize payment standards that fall between 80%-120% FMR.</u>	The Housing Authority is requesting an MTW waiver to allow greater local flexibility in the establishment of payment standards.
18	XVII	30	Project Based Voucher Program	3. Project-Based Vouchers Per Complex (Income-Mixing Requirements or Project Cap) <u>Upon HUD Approval of the Housing Authority's MTW Supplement, the Housing Authority may, at their discretion, raise the PBV cap within a project to support units in excess of the 25 percent or 25-unit Project Cap in accordance with the MTW waiver approved by HUD.</u>	The Housing Authority is requesting an MTW waiver to up to 100% of units at a given project to be project-based.
19	XVII	32-33	Project Based Voucher Program	8b. Non-Competitive Selection Process a) The Housing Authority may provide PBV assistance to <u>a project in which the Housing Authority improve, develop, or replace units in a public housing property or property that it controls or</u> has an ownership interest <u>or over which the Housing Authority has control, in</u> -without using a competitive process, <u>but only in cases in which the Housing Authority is engaged in an initiative to improve, develop, or replace a public housing property or site.-</u>	Reworded to clarify that PBVs may be awarded non-competitively only for former Public Housing properties.
20	XVII	33	Project Based Voucher Program	8c. Competitive Selection Process for PBV Award to PHA-Owned Units. If the Housing Authority wishes to project-base units at a property in which it has an ownership interest, <u>and the proposed project does not meet the Non-</u>	Reworded to clarify procedure for considering proposals to project base PHA owned or controlled

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				<p><u>Competitive Selection</u> Process <u>criteria</u>, the proposal in question will be scored by designated Housing Authority staff.</p> <p><u>Upon HUD Approval of the Housing Authority’s MTW Supplement, the Housing Authority will utilize a HUD waiver to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <u>eliminate the independent third-party review process in the award of PBV’s to properties owned or controlled by the Housing Authority</u> b) <u>eliminate the third-party rent reasonableness process at properties that the Housing Authority owns, manages, or controls, such that rent reasonableness would be conducted by Housing Authority staff; and</u> c) <u>eliminate third-party inspections of properties owned, managed, or controlled by the Housing Authority such that inspections would be conducted by Housing Authority staff.</u> 	<p>properties that do not meet criteria for non-competitive selection, including how that process would change if MTW waiver is approved.</p>
21	XVII	33-34	Project Based Voucher Program	<p>11. Waiting List and Tenant Selection</p> <p><u>Upon approval of the Authority’s MTW Supplement, the Housing Authority will allow moves from PBV units with an HCV after 12 months for all families who have come from the HCV waiting list. However, for families who did not come from the HCV waiting list (including households originating from a site-based waiting list or referral-based households), the Housing Authority will require households to reside in the PBV unit for 24 months before being eligible to transfer with an HCV. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for good cause.</u></p>	<p>Added wording to reflect MTW waiver regarding PBV portability.</p>
22	XIX	37	Interim Redeterminations of Family Income and Composition	<p><u>Alternate Reexamination Schedule</u></p> <p><u>Upon HUD Approval of the Housing Authority’s MTW Supplement, the Housing Authority will utilize a HUD waiver to conduct reexaminations for fixed-income families at least every three years and conduct reexaminations for all remaining families at least every two years.</u></p> <p><u>In between reexaminations, the HACSC will conduct interim adjustments to redetermine subsidy when the household experiences a qualifying event. Qualifying events will include decreases in income, increases in income (when requested by the household), changes in household composition, and changes to the contract rent. When interim adjustments are conducted, HACSC may apply payment standards and utility allowances in effect at the time of the effective</u></p>	<p>Added wording to reflect MTW flexibility associated with alternate reexamination waiver.</p>

Santa Cruz County Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan 2023

Overview of Modifications

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				<p><u>date of the adjustment. HACSC will reserve the right to conduct reexaminations more frequently either for administrative or financial reasons. Additional details regarding the implementation of alternate reexamination schedules, qualifying events for interim adjustments and application of new payment standards will be available on the Housing Authority website and will be communicated to all impacted tenants at the time of their certification.</u></p>	
23	XXII	37	<p>Procedural Guidelines and Performance Standards for Conducting Required HQS Inspections</p>	<p><u>The following items will be considered life-threatening fails in Housing Quality Standards inspections:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. Gas (natural or liquid petroleum) leak or fumes</u> <u>2. Electrical hazards that could result in shock or fire</u> <u>3. Inoperable or missing smoke detectors</u> <u>4. Inoperable or missing carbon monoxide detectors</u> <u>5. Gas/oil fired water heater or heating, ventilation, or cooling system with missing, damaged, improper, or misaligned chimney or venting</u> <u>6. Lack of alternative means of exist in case of fire or blocked egress</u> <u>7. Conditions that present the imminent possibility of injury</u> <u>8. Absence of a functioning toilet in the unit</u> <p><u>Life-threatening fails will be reported immediately to the tenant, landlord, and Housing Authority management.</u></p>	<p>Added wording to define life-threatening fails in Housing Quality Standards inspections in accordance with HUD regulation</p>