

# RIHousing

## RHODE ISLAND HOUSING GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

### Section 1. PROGRAM PURPOSES

In 2012, the Rhode Island General Assembly transferred financial responsibility for the Neighborhood Opportunities Program (“NOP”) to Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”). As a result of this transfer and repeal of the original NOP Rules and Regulations by the Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission, RIHousing hereby sets forth guidelines (the “Guidelines”) applicable to existing units funded through the Permanent Supportive Housing Fund (“PSH”) and the Family Housing Fund (“FHF”). The purpose of this program is to preserve the supply of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable rental housing for very low, low and moderate-income families and individuals.

Under the PSH, existing operating escrows will be used to support operating costs of existing PSH rental units for individuals/families who have a determination of disability by a qualified professional and who require on-going supportive services.

Under the FHF, existing operating escrows will be used to support operating costs of existing FHF rental units for individuals and families working at or near minimum wage.

### Section 2. DEFINITIONS

Defined Terms. As used in these Guidelines the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- a. “**AMI**” means the area median income, as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development adjusted for family size.
- b. “**Disability**” means a physical, mental or emotional impairment, confirmed by a qualified professional, who may be a licensed physician or licensed behavioral health professional. The disability may be of long-term or unknown duration and impedes an individual’s ability to live independently without supportive services.
- c. “**Income**” means gross annual income which includes but is not limited to: gross wages, salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips, bonuses, public assistance, retirement and pension benefits, Workmen’s Compensation, Temporary Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and interest income from assets.
- d. “**Family**” means household with children.
- e. “**Minimum rent for PSH**” means rent calculated at 30% of the federal gross monthly SSI.
- f. “**Minimum rent for FHF**” means rent calculated at 30% of gross monthly household income for individuals and families working at minimum wage for 40 hours per week.
- g. “**Operating cost,**” means costs associated with the day-to-day operation of a

- Development. Some examples include: maintenance and repair, operations staff, taxes, utilities, equipment, supplies and insurance.
- h. **“Permanent Supportive Housing”** means long-term and community-based housing in conjunction with necessary supportive services and/or supervision for persons with disabilities.
  - i. **“Supportive services”** may include, but are not limited to: case management; education; employment and training; behavioral health counseling; life skills development; and supervision.
  - j. **“Term of affordability”** for the purpose of this program means consistency with RIGL 45-53-3 (5) which require that the housing shall remain affordable for a period of not less than thirty (30) years. After the initial ten (10) year contract period or upon depletion of the operating escrow, the Development sponsor may lease units to individuals and families at or below 80% of area median income.
  - k. **“Unit”** for PSH may include a bedroom with shared bath and kitchen facilities.
  - l. **“Very low income”** for the purpose of this program means annual gross income at or less than 40% of area median income.

### **Section 3. ELIGIBLE RESIDENTS**

- a. Eligible residents of FHF developments. Individuals and families whose initial gross annual income does not exceed 40% of the area median income.
- b. Eligible residents for PSH developments. Individuals or families who have a determination of disability by a qualified professional and whose gross annual income is initially at or below 40% of the area median income.

### **Section 4. RENTS**

- a. FHF Rents. Rents will be established at the greater of 30% of gross monthly income minus utility allowances, or the minimum rent as defined above.
- b. PSH Rent. Rents will be established at the greater of 30% of gross monthly income minus utility allowances, or the minimum rent as defined above.
- c. Certification of Income. Income will be certified prior to initial occupancy to demonstrate eligibility and to determine rent. Incomes will be recertified annually to determine rental payments, but may be recertified more frequently due to substantial changes in income.

### **Section 5. REQUIREMENTS**

- a. Low Income Targeting. PSH and FHF Developments must benefit very low-income individuals and families with gross annual incomes at or below 40% of the area median income.
- b. Standards. All units must meet at a minimum the Section 8 Existing Housing Quality Standards. All units must comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including the building and fire codes.

- c. Nondiscrimination. Federal and state regulations prohibit discrimination on the biases of race, color, sex, religion, familial status, age, disability, national origin, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- d. Term of commitment. All recipients must agree to operate FHF and PSH Developments for the Term of affordability. Upon the depletion of the operating escrow, the Development sponsor may lease units to individuals and families with incomes not to exceed 80% of the area median income.
- e. Terms of the Agreement. The terms of the Agreement may be negotiated where conflicts exist with other funding sources.
- f. Monitoring. To ensure compliance with the requirements set forth in these Guidelines, RIHousing may require information and reports on Developments financed hereunder and may conduct site visits and inspections.