



This document contains strategies that Public Housing Agencies (PHA) and Property Owners can implement for project-based voucher (PBV) units to improve occupancy.

PHA Strategies:

- **Maintain good working relationships with Property Owners.** Collaborate on ways to streamline tenant eligibility and leasing processes, including how the Property Owner notifies the PHA of upcoming vacancies. PHAs may work with Property Owners to establish timeframes for how and when vacancies will be communicated and referrals will be provided by the PHA.
- **Consider using project-specific waiting lists.** Project-specific waiting lists help to ensure that the families on the waiting list are interested in the project. Applicants who occupy PBV units must be selected by the PHA in accordance with the policies in the PHA administrative plan. PHAs may use separate waiting lists for PBV units in individual projects or buildings.¹
- **Keep the waiting list current.** Eligible applicants may be identified faster if PHAs periodically review their waiting lists. Evaluate if the number of people on the waiting list(s) are adequate to fill upcoming vacancies. If the waiting list is not adequate, PHAs should actively market the project. A “best practice” is to review and update the waiting list every 6 months.
- **Use data to better estimate turnover and leasing rates.** PHAs and Property Owners are encouraged to work together to estimate PBV unit turnover rates at a property. It is a “best practice” to not wait until the unit is vacant to provide a referral.
- **Eliminate delays related to the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) of turnover units.** Upon receiving notification from the Property Owner that a unit will become vacant, reduce the HQS lead time by immediately scheduling an HQS inspection to occur on or close to the date the Property Owner indicates the unit will be ready for inspection.
- **Reassess current use of Administrative Fees to facilitate the leasing of units.** PHAs may expedite the occupancy process by supporting prospective tenants with security deposit assistance, utility deposit assistance, renters' insurance, etc.²
- **Invest in technology.** Evaluate capabilities and processes to determine if adding technological solutions can expedite occupancy. PHAs may find time savings in solutions such as electronic transfer of forms/paperwork, platforms for families to update contact information held by the PHA, and videoconferencing options for meeting with Property Owners and families.³
- **Consider contractor support.** PHAs may contract with third parties to assist with Housing Choice Voucher program administration, including HQS inspections, rent calculations, and tenant screenings. Collaborate with contractor(s) on actions that can be taken and tools that can be used to improve PHA operational timelines.⁴

¹ Refer to [24 CFR 983.251\(c\)](#) for more information.

² See [PIH Notice 2022-18](#) for additional eligible uses.

³ PHAs are obligated to take appropriate steps to ensure effective communication with persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency. Refer to [PIH Notice 2020-32](#) for more information.

⁴ PHAs must follow the federal procurement standards in 2 CFR part 200. Refer to PHA Procurement Training on the HUD Exchange at <https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/pha-procurement-training/#chapter-1-introduction> for more information.



- **Add or remove contract units based on demand.** Work with the Property Owner to evaluate whether the PBV units match demand among applicant families (e.g., for ground floor vs. upper floors, accessibility features, proximity to elevator, bedroom size). PHAs may remove long-term vacant units from the HAP contract.⁵ PHAs and Property Owners may agree to add or substitute contract units that match demand.⁶

Property Owner Strategies:

- **Maintain the property with a focus on attracting and retaining residents.** HUD recommends the following practices:
 - Keep the property desirable for prospective tenants by improving curb appeal;
 - Maintain and update all units so that they are competitive in the rental market; and
 - Conduct resident surveys to identify issues and areas for improvement.
- **Reduce unit turnover time.** Schedule repairs so that there is minimal wait time in getting units ready for the next family. Keep PHAs informed of average wait times in turning over a unit and if there will be any delays.
- **Advertise the property.** Request that PHAs place property promotional materials in their offices or websites. Promotional materials can be used to feature activities (e.g., education or training) provided by the resident organization that would be of interest to families.⁷ Consider holding joint leasing events with the PHA administering the HAP contract to streamline applicant processing times. These events can be marketed as a benefit of the property.
- **Evaluate if policies can give flexibility to families.** For PBV-assisted families who have requested tenant-based assistance,⁸ provide families with the ability to revoke the notice of intent to vacate if they were unable to find housing through tenant-based assistance or otherwise change their minds.
- **Evaluate screening criteria.** The Property Owner is responsible for screening and selection of tenants consistent with PBV program requirements.⁹ Property Owners of projects with PBV units may want to consider the impact of their tenant screening practices on the time it takes to occupy a unit. For example, credit checks may not be necessary for assisted residents as a portion of the rent is subsidized. The data also show that criminal history is not a good predictor of housing success.¹⁰
- **Communicate the importance of occupancy.** For properties that received LIHTC financing for new construction or rehabilitation, low occupancy could have a significant impact on the availability of tax credit benefits for the project owners/investors. It is incumbent on Property Owners to communicate these occupancy-related deadlines so that the PHA that is the administrator of the HAP contract may prepare and allocate staff resources appropriately.

⁵ Refer to [24 CFR 983.254\(b\)](#) for more information.

⁶ Refer to [24 CFR 983.207](#) and [PIH Notice 2017-21](#) Attachment J for more information.

⁷ Property Owners of Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) properties, including RAD/Section 18 blends, must provide \$25 per occupied unit annually for resident participation, of which at least \$15 per occupied unit shall be provided to the legitimate resident organization. See [Notice PIH 2019-23/H 2019-09](#) for more information about this and other differences between standard PBV and RAD.

⁸ Refer to [24 CFR 983.261](#) for more information.

⁹ Refer to [24 CFR 983.253\(a\)](#) for more information.

¹⁰ For more information see <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-frm-asst-sec-051722.html>.