



DISASTER PREFERENCE

The policy document(s) driving the decisions of a Public Housing Agency (PHA) are the Administrative Plan and/or Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP). A PHA should consider the policies identified in these documents especially if its risk assessment has shown that the PHA and jurisdiction are vulnerable to a disaster.

If a particular risk has been identified, a PHA may consider adopting a **disaster preference** and/or transfer policy prior to a disaster event. This will enable the PHA to provide additional housing options and expedite the transition back to permanent housing.



A disaster preference is a system of local preferences for selecting families to admit to public housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs. A disaster preference would include families that are *involuntarily displaced* due to government action or a natural disaster.

- Note: HUD requirements regarding preferences are at [24 CFR 960.206](#) (public housing) and [24 CFR 982.207](#) (HCV).

Preferences are used only to establish the order of applicants on the waiting list. They do not affect eligibility for applicants who are otherwise ineligible, nor do they change the right of a PHA to adopt and enforce tenant screening criteria.



Important: If a PHA wishes to change its current preference system, it is **required to update the ACOP and/or Administrative Plan and publicize and post copies of any newly adopted and implemented tenant selection policies.**

- Changes to the preference system must also conform to the Consolidated Plan for the PHA's jurisdiction. Pursuant to 24 CFR 903.7(b)(2), changes to admission preferences should be reflected in the annual PHA Plan. The PHA must follow 24 CFR 903.21 requirements for amending or modifying a PHA Plan.
 - If the change to a PHA's preference system is considered a significant amendment to the PHA Plan, then the PHA is subject to requirements for consultation and period for public comment under the PHA Plan requirements pursuant to 24 CFR 903.21(b).



Additional information can be found in the [HCV Program Guidebook](#) and Section 5: PHA Selection Preferences of the [Waiting List and Tenant Selection](#) chapter of the [Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook](#).