

Chapter 12

TRANSFER POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains COC's transfer policy, based on HUD regulations, HUD guidance, and COC policy decisions.

This chapter describes HUD regulations and COC policies related to transfers in four parts:

Part I: Emergency Transfers. This part describes emergency transfers, emergency transfer procedures, and payment of transfer costs.

Part II: PHA Required Transfers. This part describes types of transfers that may be required by the PHA, notice requirements, and payment of transfer costs.

Part III: Transfers Requested by Residents. This part describes types of transfers that may be requested by residents, eligibility requirements, security deposits, payment of transfer costs, and handling of transfer requests.

Part IV: Transfer Processing. This part describes creating a waiting list, prioritizing transfer requests, the unit offer policy, examples of good cause, deconcentration, transferring to another development and reexamination.

COC may require the tenant to move from the unit under some circumstances. There are also emergency circumstances under which alternate accommodation for the tenant must be provided, that may or may not require a transfer.

The tenant may also request a transfer, such as a request for a new unit as a reasonable accommodation.

COC must have specific policies in place to deal with acceptable transfer requests.

PART I: EMERGENCY TRANSFERS

12-I.A. OVERVIEW

HUD categorizes certain situations that require emergency transfers. The emergency transfer differs from a typical transfer in that it requires immediate action by COC.

In the case of a genuine emergency, it may be unlikely that COC will have the time or resources to immediately transfer a tenant. Due to the immediate need to vacate the unit, placing the tenant on a transfer waiting list would not be appropriate. Under such circumstances, if an appropriate unit is not immediately available, COC should find alternate accommodations for the tenant until the emergency passes, or a permanent solution, i.e., return to the unit or transfer to another unit, is possible.

12-I.B. EMERGENCY TRANSFERS

If the dwelling unit is damaged to the extent that conditions are created which are hazardous to life, health, or safety of the occupants, COC must offer standard alternative accommodations, if available, where necessary repairs cannot be made within a reasonable time [24 CFR 966.4(h)].

The VAWA requires COC to adopt an emergency transfer plan for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.

COC Policy

The following are considered an emergency circumstance warranting an immediate transfer of the tenant or family:

Maintenance conditions in the resident's unit, building or at the site that pose an immediate, verifiable threat to the life, health or safety of the resident or family members that cannot be repaired or abated within 24 hours. Examples of such unit or building conditions would include: a gas leak, no heat in the building during the winter, no water, toxic contamination, and serious water leaks.

Damage as a result of carelessness or negligence of the resident or a member of the resident's household.

If the resident is responsible for such damage, restitution must be paid to COC for the expense of repairing the damage up to the current insurance deductible.

A verified incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. For instances of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. The threat may be established through documentation outlined in section 16-VII.D. To request the emergency transfer, the requestor must submit an emergency transfer request form (HUD-5383) (Exhibit 16-4 of this ACOP), although, COC may waive this requirement in order to expedite the transfer process.

COC will immediately process requests for transfers due to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking once a full request is received and absent of any conflicting information. COC will allow a tenant to make an internal emergency transfer under VAWA when a safe unit is immediately available, as applicable and without disclosing the victim's location. COC defines *immediately available* as a vacant unit that is ready for move-in within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 30 days. If an internal transfer to a safe unit is not immediately available, COC will refer the resident to other housing providers who may have safe and available units to which the tenant could move and/or conduct outreach activities with an organization that assist/provide resources to victims in seeking an external emergency transfer outside the COC portfolio.

COC has adopted an emergency transfer plan, which is included as Exhibit 16-3 to this plan.

12-I.C. EMERGENCY TRANSFER PROCEDURES

COC Policy

Any condition that would produce an emergency work order would qualify a family for an emergency transfer if the repairs cannot be made within 24 hours.

If the transfer is necessary because of maintenance conditions, and an appropriate unit is not immediately available, COC will provide temporary accommodations to the tenant by arranging for temporary lodging at a hotel or similar location. The family is entitled to alternative accommodations even if the tenant, household member, guest, or other covered person is responsible for the damage that caused the hazard or if a family is in the process of being evicted.

If the conditions that required the transfer cannot be repaired, or the condition cannot be repaired in a reasonable amount of time, COC will transfer the resident to the first available and appropriate unit after the temporary relocation.

Emergency transfers that arise due to maintenance conditions are mandatory for the tenant.

If the emergency transfer is necessary to protect a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, COC will follow procedures outlined in Exhibit 16-4.

12-I.D. COSTS OF TRANSFER

COC Policy

COC will bear the reasonable costs of temporarily accommodating the tenant and of long-term transfers, if any, due to emergency conditions.

The reasonable cost of transfers includes not just the cost of packing materials, moving, and unloading, but also the cost of disconnecting and reconnecting any existing resident-paid services such as telephone and cable television.

Rather than reimbursing the family for eligible, reasonable expenses related to the move, COC will either complete the move or make arrangements and pay for the move.

PART II: COC REQUIRED TRANSFERS

12-II.A. OVERVIEW

HUD regulations regarding transfers are minimal, leaving it up to the PHA to develop reasonable transfer policies.

The PHA may require that a resident transfer to another unit under some circumstances. For example, the PHA may require a resident to transfer to make an accessible unit available to a disabled family. The PHA may also transfer a resident to maintain occupancy standards based on family composition. Finally, a PHA may transfer residents to demolish or renovate the unit.

A transfer that is required by COC is an adverse action and is subject to the notice requirements for adverse actions [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)(i)].

12-II.B. TYPES OF COC REQUIRED TRANSFERS

COC Policy

The types of transfers that may be required by COC, include, but are not limited to, transfers to make an accessible unit available for a disabled family, transfers to comply with occupancy standards, transfers for demolition, disposition, revitalization, or rehabilitation, and emergency transfers as discussed in Part I of this chapter.

Transfers required by COC are mandatory for the tenant. The family will be given 15 days to vacate the unit after receipt of written notice.

Transfers to Make an Accessible Unit Available

COC Policy

When a non-accessible unit becomes available, COC will transfer a family living in an accessible unit that does not require the accessible features, to an available unit that is not accessible. COC may wait until a disabled resident requires the accessible unit before transferring the family that does not require the accessible features out of the accessible unit.

Occupancy Standards Transfers

COC may require a resident to move when a reexamination indicates that there has been a change in family composition, and the family is either overcrowded or over-housed according to COC policy [24 CFR 960.257(a)(4)]. On some occasions, COC may initially place a resident in an inappropriately sized unit at lease-up, where the family is over-housed, to prevent vacancies. The public housing lease must include the tenant's agreement to transfer to an appropriately sized unit based on family composition [24 CFR 966.4(c)(3)].

COC Policy

COC will transfer a family when the family size has changed, and the family is now under-housed or over-housed for the unit occupied.

For purposes of the transfer policy, overcrowded and over-housed are defined as follows:

Under-housed: the number of household members exceeds the maximum number of persons allowed for the unit size in which the family resides, according to the chart in Section 5-I.B.

Over-housed: the family no longer qualifies for the bedroom size in which they are living based on COC's occupancy standards as described in Section 5-I.B.

COC may also transfer a family who was initially placed in a unit in which the family was over-housed to a unit of an appropriate size based on COC's occupancy standards, when COC determines there is a need for the transfer.

COC may elect not to transfer an over-housed family in order to prevent vacancies.

A family that is required to move because of family size will be advised by COC that a transfer is necessary and that the family has been placed on the transfer list.

Families that request and are granted an exception to the occupancy standards (for either a larger or smaller size unit) in accordance with the policies in Section 5-I.C. will only be required to transfer if it is necessary to comply with the approved exception.

Ratio shall be one transfer for every five move-in(s) from the waiting list when occupancy is at 94%.

Demolition, Disposition, Revitalizations, or Rehabilitation, Including Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Conversions Transfers

These transfers permit COC to demolish, sell or do major capital or rehabilitation work at a building site [PH Occ GB, page 148.

COC Policy

COC will relocate a family when the unit or site in which the family lives is undergoing major rehabilitation that requires the unit to be vacant, or the unit is being disposed of or demolished. COC's relocation plan may or may not require transferring affected families to other available public housing units.

If the relocation plan calls for transferring public housing families to other public housing units, affected families will be placed on the transfer list.

In cases of revitalization or rehabilitation, the family may be offered a temporary relocation if allowed under Relocation Act provisions, and may be allowed to return to their unit, depending on contractual and legal obligations, once revitalization or rehabilitation is complete.

12-II.C. ADVERSE ACTION [24 CFR 966.4(e)(8)(i)]

COC required transfer is an adverse action. As an adverse action, the transfer is subject to the requirements regarding notices of adverse actions. If the family requests a grievance hearing within the required timeframe, COC may not take action on the transfer until the conclusion of the grievance process.

12-II.D. COST OF TRANSFER

COC Policy

COC will bear the reasonable costs of transfers that COC requires, except that residents will be required to bear the cost of occupancy standards transfers.

The reasonable costs of transfers include the cost of packing materials, moving, and unloading.

Rather than reimbursing the family for eligible, reasonable expenses related to the move, COC will either complete the move or make arrangements and pay for the move.

PART III: TRANSFERS REQUESTED BY TENANTS

12-III.A. OVERVIEW

The only requests that COC is required to consider are requests for reasonable accommodation.

12-III.B. TYPES OF RESIDENT REQUESTED TRANSFERS

COC Policy

The types of requests for transfers that COC will consider are limited to requests for transfers to alleviate a serious or life-threatening medical condition, transfers due to a verified threat of physical harm or criminal activity, reasonable accommodation, transfers to a different unit size provided that the family qualifies for the unit according to COC's occupancy standards, and transfers to a location closer to employment. No other transfer requests will be considered by COC.

COC will consider the following as high-priority transfer requests:

When a transfer is needed to alleviate verified medical problems of a serious or life-threatening nature

When there has been a verified threat of physical harm or criminal activity. Such circumstances may, at COC's discretion, include an assessment by law enforcement indicating that a family member is the actual or potential victim of a criminal attack, retaliation for testimony, or a hate crime.

When a family requests a transfer as reasonable accommodation. Examples of a reasonable accommodation transfer include, but are not limited to, a transfer to a first-floor unit for a person with mobility impairment, or a transfer to a unit with accessible features.

COC will consider the following as regular priority transfer requests:

When a family requests a larger bedroom size unit even though the family does not meet COC's definition of overcrowded, as long as the family meets COC's occupancy standards for the requested size unit

When the head of household or spouse is employed 25 miles or more from the public housing unit, has no reliable transportation, and public transportation is not adequate

Transfers are only applicable at COC owned/managed developments; transfer requests to tax credit communities are not allowed, unless it's necessary to meet a reasonable accommodation request.

12-III.C. ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSFER

Transferring residents do not have to meet the admission eligibility requirements pertaining to income or preference. However, COC may establish other standards for considering a transfer request.

COC Policy

Except where reasonable accommodation is being requested, COC will only consider transfer requests from residents that meet the following requirements:

- Have not engaged in criminal activity that threatens the health and safety of residents and staff

- Owe no back rent or other charges, or have a pattern of late payment

- Have no housekeeping lease violations or history of damaging property

- Can get utilities turned on in the name of the head of household (applicable only to properties with tenant-paid utilities)

A resident with housekeeping standards violations will not be transferred until the resident passes a follow-up housekeeping inspection.

Exceptions to the good record requirement may be made when it is to COC's advantage to make the transfer.

Exceptions will also be made when COC determines that a transfer is necessary to protect the health or safety of a resident who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking and who provide documentation of abuse in accordance with section 16-VIID of this ACOP. In response to an emergency transfer request under such circumstances, the PHA will not evaluate whether tenants are in good standing as part of the assessment or provision of an emergency transfer. Whether or not a tenant is in good standing does not impact their ability to request an emergency transfer under VAWA.

If a family requested to be placed on the waiting list for a unit size smaller than designated by the occupancy guidelines, the family will not be eligible to transfer to a larger size unit for a period of two years from the date of admission, unless they have a change in family size or composition, or it is needed as a reasonable accommodation.

12-III.D. SECURITY DEPOSITS

COC Policy

When a family transfers from one unit to another, COC will transfer their security deposit to the new unit. The tenant will be billed for any maintenance or others charges due for the “old” unit.

If COC determines, based on family provided documentation, that paying a new security deposit will create a financial hardship for the family, COC will enter into a payment agreement with the family allowing the family to pay the deposit in installments. Any unused portion of the deposit from the family's “old” unit will be applied to the balance on the new security deposit. If the family does not make payments in accordance with the agreement, the family’s tenancy may be terminated in accordance with policies in Chapter 13.

12-III.E. COST OF TRANSFER

COC must pay moving expenses to transfer a resident with a disability to an accessible unit as an accommodation for the resident’s disability [Notice PIH 2010-26].

COC Policy

The resident will bear all the costs of transfer they request. However, COC will bear the transfer costs when the transfer is done as a reasonable accommodation.

12-III.F. HANDLING OF REQUESTS

COC Policy

Residents requesting a transfer to another unit or development will be required to complete the request for transfer form.

In order to request the emergency transfer under VAWA, the resident will be required to submit an emergency transfer request form (HUD-5383) (Exhibit 16-4 of this ACOP). COC may, on a case-by-case basis, waive this requirement and accept a verbal request in order to expedite the transfer process. If COC accepts an individual's statement, COC will document acceptance of the statement in the individual's file in accordance with 16-VII.D. of this ACOP. Transfer requests under VAWA will be processed in accordance with the COC's Emergency Transfer Plan (Exhibit 16-3). In case of a reasonable accommodation transfer, COC will encourage the resident to make the request in writing using a reasonable accommodation request form. However, COC will consider the transfer request any time the resident indicates that an accommodation is needed whether or not a formal written request is submitted.

COC will respond in writing by approving the transfer and putting the family on the transfer list, by denying the transfer, or by requiring more information or documentation from the family, such as documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking in accordance with section 16-VII.D of this ACOP.

If the family does not meet the "good record" requirements under Section 12-III.C., the manager will address the problem and, until resolved, the request for transfer will be denied.

COC will respond in writing within ten (10) business days of the submission of the family's request. If COC denies the request for transfer, the family will be informed of its grievance rights.

PART IV: TRANSFER PROCESSING

12-IV.A. OVERVIEW

Generally, families who request a transfer should be placed on a transfer list and processed in a consistent and appropriate order. The transfer process must be clearly auditable to ensure that residents do not experience inequitable treatment.

12-IV.B. TRANSFER LIST

COC Policy

COC will maintain a centralized transfer list to ensure that transfers are processed in the correct order and that procedures are uniform across all properties.

Emergency transfers will not automatically go on the transfer list. Instead emergency transfers will be handled immediately, on a case by case basis. If the emergency cannot be resolved by a temporary accommodation, and the resident requires a permanent transfer, the family will be placed at the top of the transfer list.

Transfers will be processed in the following order:

1. Emergency transfers (hazardous maintenance conditions, health department condemnation, VAWA)
2. Demolition, renovation, etc.
3. High-priority transfers (verified medical condition, threat of harm or criminal activity, and reasonable accommodation)
4. Transfers to make accessible units available
5. Occupancy standards
6. Other COC-required transfers
7. Other resident-requested transfers

Within each category, transfers will be processed in order of the date a family was placed on the transfer list, starting with the earliest date.

With the approval of the executive director or his/her designee, COC may, on a case-by-case basis, transfer a family without regard to its placement on the transfer list in order to address the immediate need of a family in crisis.

Demolition and renovation transfers will gain the highest priority as necessary to allow COC to meet the demolition or renovation schedule.

Transfers and HCV abatement-affected families will take precedence over waiting list admissions.

Emergency transfers, high priority tenant requested transfers, transfers to make accessible units available, and demolition transfers will take precedence over waiting list admissions.

All other transfers will be processed at a rate of one transfer to five admissions when occupancy is at 94%.

12-IV.C. TRANSFER OFFER POLICY

COC Policy

Residents will receive one offer for a COC required transfer and one offer for a resident requested transfer.

When the transfer is required by COC, the refusal of that offer without good cause will result in lease termination.

When the transfer has been requested by the resident, the refusal of that offer without good cause will result in the removal of the family from the transfer list. In such cases, the family must wait one year to reapply for another transfer.

12-IV.D. GOOD CAUSE FOR UNIT REFUSAL

COC Policy

Examples of good cause for refusal of a unit offer include, but are not limited to, the following:

Inaccessibility to source of employment, education, or job training, children's day care, or an educational program for children with disabilities, so that accepting the unit offer would require the adult household member to quit a job, drop out of an educational institution or job training program, or take a child out of day care or an educational program for children with disabilities.

The family demonstrates to COC's satisfaction that accepting the offer will place a family member's life, health or safety in jeopardy. The family should offer specific and compelling documentation such as restraining orders, other court orders, or risk assessments related to witness protection from a law enforcement agency, or documentation of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or human trafficking in accordance with section 16-VII.D of this ACOP. Reasons offered must be specific to the family. Refusals due to location alone do not qualify for this good cause exemption.

A health professional verifies temporary hospitalization or recovery from illness of the head of household, other household members (as listed on the lease)

The unit is inappropriate for the applicant's disabilities, or the family does not need the accessible features in the unit offered and does not want to be subject to a 30-day notice to move.

The unit has lead-based paint and the family includes children under the age of six.

COC will require documentation of good cause for unit refusals.

12-IV.E. DECONCENTRATION

COC Policy

If subject to deconcentration requirements, COC will consider its deconcentration goals when transfer units are offered. When feasible, families above the Established Income Range will be offered a unit in a development that is below the Established Income Range, and vice versa, to achieve COC's deconcentration goals. A deconcentration offer will be considered a "bonus" offer; that is, if a resident refuses a deconcentration offer, the resident will receive one additional transfer offer.

12-IV.F. REEXAMINATION POLICIES FOR TRANSFERS

COC Policy

The reexamination date will be changed to the first of the month in which the transfer took place.