
42 U.S. Code § 1437a

Rental payments

(a) Families included; rent options; minimum amount; occupancy by police officers and over-income families

(1) Dwelling units assisted under this chapter shall be rented only to families who are low-income families at the time of their initial occupancy of such units. Reviews of family income shall be made at least annually; except that, in the case of any family with a fixed income, as defined by the Secretary, after the initial review of the family's income, the public housing agency or owner shall not be required to conduct a review of the family's income for any year for which such family certifies, in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary shall establish, which shall include policies to adjust for inflation-based income changes, that 90 percent or more of the income of the family consists of fixed income, and that the sources of such income have not changed since the previous year, except that the public housing agency or owner shall conduct a review of each such family's income not less than once every 3 years. Except as provided in paragraph (2) and subject to the requirement under paragraph (3), a family shall pay as rent for a dwelling unit assisted under this chapter (other than a family assisted under section 1437f(o) or (y) of this title or paying rent under section 1437f(c)(3)

(B) 11 of this title) the highest of the following amounts, rounded to the nearest dollar:

(A) 30 per centum of the family's monthly adjusted income;

(B) 10 per centum of the family's monthly income; or

(C) if the family is receiving payments for welfare assistance from a public agency and a part of such payments, adjusted in accordance with the family's actual housing costs, is specifically designated by such agency to meet the family's housing costs, the portion of such payments which is so designated.

(2) Rental payments for public housing families.—

(A) Authority for family to select.—

(i) In general.—

A family residing in a public housing dwelling shall pay as monthly rent for the unit the amount determined under clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (B), subject to the requirement under paragraph (3) (relating to minimum rents). Each public housing agency shall provide for each family residing in a public housing dwelling unit owned, assisted, or operated by the agency to elect annually whether the rent paid by such family shall be determined under clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (B). A public housing agency may not at any time fail to provide both such rent options for any public housing dwelling unit owned, assisted, or operated by the agency.

(ii) Authority to retain flat and ceiling rents.—

Notwithstanding clause (i) or any other provision of law, any public housing agency that is administering flat rents or ceiling rents pursuant to any authority referred to in section 519(d) of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 before the effective day of such Act may continue to charge rent in accordance with such rent provisions after such effective date, except that the agency shall provide for

families residing in public housing dwelling units owned or operated by the agency to elect annually whether to pay rent under such provisions or in accordance with one of the rent options referred to in subparagraph (A).

(B) Allowable rent structures. —

(i) Flat rents. — Each public housing agency shall establish, for each dwelling unit in public housing owned or operated by the agency, a flat rental amount for the dwelling unit, which—

(I) shall not be lower than 80 percent of—

(aa) the applicable fair market rental established under section 1437f(c) of this title; or

(bb) at the discretion of the Secretary, such other applicable fair market rental established by the Secretary that the Secretary determines more accurately reflects local market conditions and is based on an applicable market area that is geographically smaller than the applicable market area used for purposes of the applicable fair market rental under section 1437f(c) of this title;

except that a public housing agency may apply to the Secretary for exception allowing for a flat rental amount for a property that is lower than the amount otherwise determined pursuant to item (aa) or (bb) and the Secretary may grant such exception if the Secretary determines that the fair market rental for the applicable market area pursuant to item (aa) or (bb) does not reflect the market value of the property and the proposed lower flat rental amount is based on a market analysis of the applicable market and complies with subclause (II) and

(II) shall be designed in accordance with subparagraph (D) so that the rent structures do not create a disincentive for continued residency in public housing by families who are attempting to become economically self-sufficient through employment or who have attained a level of self-sufficiency through their own efforts.

If a new flat rental amount for a dwelling unit will increase a family's existing rental payment by more than 35 percent, the new flat rental amount shall be phased in as necessary to ensure that the family's existing rental payment does not increase by more than 35 percent annually. The preceding sentence shall not be construed to require establishment of rental amounts equal to 80 percent of the fair market rental in years when the fair market rental falls from the prior year.

(ii) Income-based rents. —

(I) In general. —

The monthly rental amount determined under this clause for a family shall be an amount, determined by the public housing agency, that does not exceed the greatest of the amounts (rounded to the nearest dollar) determined under subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (1). This clause may not be construed to require a public housing agency to charge a monthly rent in the maximum amount permitted under this clause.

(II) Discretion. —

Subject to the limitation on monthly rental amount under subclause (I), a public housing agency may, in its discretion, implement a rent structure under this clause requiring that a portion of the rent be deposited to an escrow or savings account, imposing ceiling rents, or adopting income exclusions (such as those set forth in subsection (b)(5)(B)), or may establish another reasonable rent structure or amount.

(C) Switching rent determination methods because of hardship circumstances .

— Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), in the case of a family that has elected to pay rent in the amount determined under subparagraph (B)(i), a public housing agency shall immediately provide for the family to pay rent in the amount determined under subparagraph (B)(ii) during the period for which such election was

made upon a determination that the family is unable to pay the amount determined under subparagraph (B) (i) because of financial hardship, including—

- (i) situations in which the income of the family has decreased because of changed circumstances, loss of^[2] reduction of employment, death in the family, and reduction in or loss of income or other assistance;
- (ii) an increase, because of changed circumstances, in the family's expenses for medical costs, child care, transportation, education, or similar items; and
- (iii) such other situations as may be determined by the agency.

(D)Encouragement of self-sufficiency.—

The rental policy developed by each public housing agency shall encourage and reward employment and economic self-sufficiency.

(E)Income reviews.—

Notwithstanding the second sentence of paragraph (1), in the case of families that are paying rent in the amount determined under subparagraph (B)(i), the agency shall review the income of such family not less than once every 3 years.

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