

SUBSIDY STANDARDS

Loudoun County Department of Family Services (LCDFS) must establish Subsidy Standards (formally referred to as “Occupancy Standards”) that determine the number of bedrooms needed for families of different sizes and compositions. Housing Choice Voucher staff determines the appropriate number of bedrooms for each family under the Subsidy Standards (family unit size). The family unit size number is entered on the Voucher issued to the family. LCDFS issues the family a Voucher for the family unit size when a family is selected for participation in the program.

The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 affect the Subsidy Standards issue. LCDFS does not impose their standards relative to family composition (e.g., stating sex or age parameters, stating that an unrelated persons cannot share a bedroom, stating parents cannot share a bedroom with children, etc.) Families may sleep as they wish provided Housing Quality Standards is satisfied and no overcrowding occurs. It may not always be possible to issue the smaller number of bedrooms if the family requests special consideration of specific exceptions.

DETERMINING FAMILY UNIT SIZE FOR ISSUANCE: The following requirements apply when Housing Choice Voucher staff determines the family unit size under the Subsidy Standards:

1. The Standards must provide for the smallest number of bedrooms needed to house a family without overcrowding.
2. The Standards must be consistent with space requirements under the Housing Quality Standards.
3. The Standards must be applied consistently for all families of like size and composition.
4. A Child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family in determining the family unit size.
5. A family that consists of a pregnant woman (with no other persons) may be treated as a two-person family.
6. Any live-in-aide (approved by Housing Choice Voucher staff to reside in the unit to care for a family member who is disabled or is at least 50 years of age) must be counted in determining the family unit size.
7. Unless a live-in-aide resides with the family, the unit size for any family consisting of a single person must be either a zero-bedroom, or one-bedroom unit, as determined under the Subsidy Standards.
8. A child who is away at school but returns to live with the family during breaks and school closings is counted in determining the family unit size, if so elected by the family.
9. Families who are in the process of securing legal custody of children and can document the custody process can be counted in determining the unit size.
10. Children who are subject to a joint custody agreement but live in the unit at least 50% of the time can be counted in determining the unit size.

11. In determining unit size for a particular family, Housing Choice Voucher staff may grant an exception to its established Subsidy Standards if the exception is justified by the age, sex, health, handicap, or relationship of family members or other personal circumstances. For a single person (other than a disabled or elderly person or remaining family member), Housing Choice Voucher staff exception may not override the limitation in explained (7) above.
12. Independent Group Residences (IGRs) require Housing Choice Voucher staff to issue a 0-BR or 1-BR subsidy for each eligible individual who will reside in an IGR in accordance with the Phase Information Sheet. A Resident Assistant who resides in the unit may be provided a bedroom.
13. When Rental Vouchers are issued to manufactured home owners for assistance with space rental, the family is issued a voucher based on the Subsidy Standards and not the number of bedrooms in the manufactured home. Utility allowances will be based on the number of bedrooms listed on the Certificate, not the number of bedrooms in the manufactured home.

Mod Rehab units have LCDFS approved Management Plans on file which define the Subsidy Standards and related issues for occupancy of the units. These specific properties may deviate from this policy within approved parameters.

The following charts are only general guidelines to assist Housing Choice Voucher staff and family in selecting or assigning the bedroom size:

I. Standards Used to Issue Subsidy:

Bedroom Size Family	Minimum Number in Family	Maximum Number in
0-BR	1	1
1-BR	1	2
2-BR	2	4
3-BR	4	6
4-BR	6	8
5-BR	8	10
6-BR	10	12

II. Standards to Determine if the Unit Selected is Acceptable in Accordance with NSPIRE:

Housing Quality Standards allow 2 persons per living/sleeping area and would permit the following maximum occupancy, assuming one additional living/sleeping area is in the unit:

0-BR	1	4-BR	10
1-BR	4	5-BR	12

2-BR	6	6-BR	14
3-BR	8		

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS:

The dwelling unit must have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons; refer to LCDFS regulations for Housing Quality Standards issues related to occupancy of unit.

EFFECT OF FAMILY UNIT SIZE-MAXIMUM SUBSIDY:

The family unit size as determined for a family under the Subsidy Standards is used to determine the maximum rent subsidy for the family:

Voucher program. LCDFS establishes Payment Standards by number of bedrooms. The Payment Standard for the family must be the lower of:

- The Payment Standard for the family unit size listed on the Voucher; or
- The Payment Standard for the unit rented by the family.

SIZE OF UNIT OCCUPIED BY FAMILY:

- The family may lease an otherwise acceptable dwelling unit with fewer bedrooms than the family unit size. However, the dwelling unit must meet the applicable Housing Quality Standards space requirements.
- The family may lease another wise acceptable dwelling unit with more bedrooms than the family unit size.

I: HCV/HCV Forms/Subsidy Standards.doc