

7.0 Subsidy Standards and Occupancy Standards

Voucher size is a factor in determining the family's level of assistance under the HCV program. Vouchers for a particular bedroom size are issued based on household composition.

This chapter explains the subsidy standards Pensacola Housing uses to determine the family voucher size for households of various size and composition whenever a voucher is issued, as well as Pensacola Housing's maximum occupancy standards, and the procedures when a family's household composition changes or a family selects a unit size that's different from the voucher size.

7.1 Determining Family Voucher Size [24 CFR 982.402 (b)]

Pensacola Housing does not determine who shares a bedroom or sleeping room, but there must be at least one person per bedroom assigned on the voucher. Two persons per bedroom is the norm. Pensacola Housing's subsidy standards for determining voucher size shall be applied in a manner consistent with Fair Housing guidelines.

For subsidy standards, an adult is a person 18 years old or older.

The bedroom size of the voucher is determined by the household composition, regardless of the unit size rented. All standards in this section relate to the number of bedrooms on the voucher (family voucher size), not the family's actual living arrangements.

The following guidelines are designed to determine the voucher size that will be allocated to each household without either overcrowding or over-housing.

In determining bedroom size, Pensacola Housing will include the presence of children to be born to a pregnant woman, children who are in the process of being adopted, children whose custody or guardianship is being obtained or has been temporarily assigned, children who are temporarily in foster care, and children who are temporarily away at school, with the following exceptions:

1. Students who attend a school more than 50 miles away from the subsidized unit are not considered a member of the household for the purpose of determining subsidy; and
2. Full-time students who attend a school within 50 miles of the subsidized unit but live away from the unit more than half the year are also not included in household composition for the purpose of determining the household's subsidy level.

By default, Pensacola Housing will assign 1 bedroom to 2 people, while following these additional guidelines:

1. One-person households are assigned a 1 bedroom voucher. However, if the individual selects a studio/efficiency apartment, the 0-bedroom payment standard will be used.
2. Adults of different generations may have a separate bedroom. For subsidy standard purposes, different generations are defined as family members from different eras. For example, grandparents/parents; parents/children; etc.
3. Unrelated adults, other than spouses or co-heads, may have a separate bedroom.
4. Adult siblings may have a separate bedroom.
5. A bedroom assignment will not be allocated for a household member, other than a spouse or co-head, who will be absent most of the time, such as a member who is away in the military.
6. Children under 18 of the same gender will be assigned 2 to a bedroom.
7. An approved live-in aide will be provided a separate bedroom. A maximum of one bedroom per household will be allocated for live-in aides. With the head of household's approval, a live-in aide may bring dependents into the household, but doing so cannot result in overcrowding.
8. As per federal regulation, a pregnant woman with no other household members will be treated as a two-person family.

7.1.1 One-bedroom Households

Examples of households that will be assigned a 1-bedroom voucher include:

- 1 adult
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants)

7.1.2 Two-bedroom Households

Examples of households that will be assigned a 2-bedroom voucher include:

- 1 adult, 1 child (including a woman who is pregnant)
- 2 adults (not spouses or cohabitants)
- 1 adult, 2 children (same gender)
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 1 additional adult
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 1 child
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (same gender)
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants)

7.1.3 Three-bedroom Households

Examples of households that will be assigned a 3-bedroom voucher include:

- 1 adult, 2 children (different genders)
- 3 adults (not spouses or cohabitants)
- 1 adult, 2 children (same gender), 1 child (any gender)
- 2 adults (not spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (same gender)
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 2 adults (not spouses or cohabitants)

- 1 adult, 2 children (same gender), 2 children (same gender)
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (same gender), 1 child (any gender)
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (same gender) 2 children (same gender)
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7.1.4 Four-bedroom Households

Examples of households that will be assigned a 4-bedroom voucher include:

- 4 adults (not spouses or cohabitants)
- 2 adults (not spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (different genders)
- 1 adult, 2 children (same gender), 2 children (different genders)
- 3 adults (not spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (same gender)
- 1 adult, 2 children (same gender), 2 children (same gender), 1 child (any gender)
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (same gender), 2 children (same gender), 1 child (any gender)
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (same gender), 2 children (same gender), 1 other adult
- 2 adults (spouses or cohabitants), 2 children (same gender), 2 children (same gender), 2 children (same gender)

7.2 Subsidy Standards and Reasonable Accommodations [24 CFR 982.402 (b, 8)]

When a family requests a larger voucher size than the guidelines allow, Pensacola Housing may grant an exception to its established subsidy standards as a reasonable accommodation if the exception is required because of the age, sex, health, or disability status of one or more family members, or for other personal circumstances.

The family will be asked to provide reasonable accommodation paperwork completed by a medical or service provider familiar with the family's circumstances before Pensacola Housing will make such a determination. Pensacola Housing will respond to such requests within 14 business days of receiving completed reasonable accommodation paperwork.

7.3 Occupancy Standards [24 CFR 982.402 (c, d)]

HQS standards allow two persons per bedroom and two persons per sleeping area. At the initial inspection, the inspector will make a determination as to the number of rooms that are acceptable sleeping rooms for the purpose of deciding maximum occupancy level according to HQS. The inspector's determination will be made on a case-by-case basis, based on HQS standards, the design of the structure, family composition, and safety of egress.

The maximum occupancy for a 0 bedroom/studio unit is two persons. For all other unit sizes, the maximum occupancy is two persons per bedroom plus two persons per

additional sleeping area. Generally, units in Pensacola Housing’s jurisdiction have one additional sleeping area above the number of bedrooms, but there may be exceptions.

Unit Size	Maximum Occupancy Standard*
0 bedroom	2
1 bedroom	2 + 2 per additional sleeping area (usually 4 total)
2 bedroom	4 + 2 per additional sleeping area (usually 6 total)
3 bedroom	6 + 2 per additional sleeping area (usually 8 total)
4 bedroom	8 + 2 per additional sleeping area (usually 10 total)
5 bedroom	10 + 2 per additional sleeping area (usually 12 total)
6 bedroom	12 + 2 per additional sleeping area (usually 14 total)

Note that the inspector may set a lower maximum occupancy standard for a specific unit, based on the design of the structure and other factors listed above.

When selecting a unit, the family may select an otherwise eligible unit with fewer bedrooms than the family voucher size. In such a case, the lower payment standard and utility allowance will be used. The unit must still be affordable for the family at initial lease up, and the family cannot be overcrowded.

The family may also select an otherwise eligible unit with more bedrooms than the family voucher size. In such a case, the lower payment standard and utility allowance will be used to calculate the subsidy. The unit must still meet the affordability standard for the family at initial lease up, as calculated using the appropriate payment standard and utility allowance.

7.4 Pensacola Housing Errors

If Pensacola Housing uses the incorrect family voucher size when issuing a voucher and the family has leased up with the voucher, the voucher size, payment standard, and utility allowance will be set to the appropriate level at the family’s next annual review, or if the family is issued a moving voucher.

7.5 Changes to Household Composition

See Chapter 16 of this Administrative Plan for policies on when and how new members may be added to the household. Families are required to notify Pensacola Housing of all changes in household composition within 10 business days of the date of the addition to, or departure from, the household.

If, after an addition to the household, the family no longer meets the maximum occupancy standards defined above, meaning the unit is now too small and the family is overcrowded, Pensacola Housing will issue a new voucher of the appropriate size and the family will be instructed to move.

If a family becomes over-housed as the result of a decrease in household size, Pensacola Housing will reduce the family's subsidy to the appropriate voucher size, payment standard, and utility allowance at the family's next annual review, or when a moving voucher is issued.

7.6 Under-housed and Over-housed Families

The family voucher size will be determined by Pensacola Housing in accordance with the above guidelines and will determine the maximum rent subsidy for the family. However, the family may select a unit that is smaller than the assigned voucher size, as long as doing so will not violate the maximum occupancy standards defined above, or those established by local ordinance. The family may also select a unit that is larger than the assigned voucher size, as long as the unit meets the affordability standard (the "40 percent rule") for the family.

If the family selects a unit smaller than the voucher size, the payment standard and utility allowance for the actual unit selected will be used to determine the subsidy. If the family selects a unit larger than the voucher size, the payment standard and utility allowance for the family voucher size will be used.