

## SCREENING CRITERIA FOR RESIDENCY

Thank you for your interest in renting one of our apartments. We want each resident's stay to be a positive experience for themselves and the community. Keeping our apartments safe and livable begins with our application and screening process. This fact sheet describes the application process and the criteria we use to screen your application. Overall, chances are good that you will find a home in one of our communities unless members of your household have engaged in serious criminal behavior, disturbed the peace at past residences, or otherwise not respected rental rules.

Home Forward is committed to Fair Housing and to keeping our housing accessible. Please ask questions if you believe you do not meet the requirements listed below. We can't promise a solution, but we definitely cannot help unless you ask.

Home Forward does not discriminate on the basis of disability status. We comply with requirements of the Fair Housing Act, Equal Opportunity Housing, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Violence against Women Reauthorization Act.

### STEP 1 – APPLY FOR APARTMENTS ON AN OPEN WAITING LIST

You can apply for apartment communities that have an Open Waiting List. To check availability, visit [www.homeforward.org](http://www.homeforward.org) and look under "Find a Home," or call 503.280.3760.

In deciding which communities to apply for, consider their location and the size of unit you need for your household. To avoid being removed from waiting lists, you must let Home Forward know immediately in writing if your address or phone number changes. Check your status on the waiting list regularly by calling the wait list position hotline at 503.415.8000.

Which Bedroom Size Do You Qualify For?			
Public Housing Apartments			Project-Based Section 8 Apartments
Bedrooms	Number of Persons		
	Minimum	Maximum	
<b>Studio</b>	1	2	-One bedroom for the head of household or a couple living together in a spousal type relationship
<b>1</b>	1	3	-One more bedroom for each 2 additional people
<b>2</b>	2	5	Example1: A couple living together is eligible for 1 bedroom.
<b>3</b>	3	7	Example 2: A single parent with 3 children is eligible for 3 bedrooms
<b>4</b>	5	9	

If you need assistance or an interpreter to complete this form, inform staff or call the telephone number listed below.

Si necesita asistencia o un intérprete para completar este formulario, comuníquese al personal o llame al teléfono que ve más abajo.

Если вам нужна помощь или переводчик для заполнения формы, сообщите нашим сотрудникам или позвоните по указанному ниже телефону.

Nếu bạn cần giúp đỡ hoặc một thông dịch viên để điền hoàn chỉnh đơn này, hãy thông báo cho nhân viên hoặc gọi theo số điện thoại dưới đây.

## **STEP 2 - COMPLETE THE SCREENING APPLICATION**

Once you are selected from a waiting list, you will be asked to complete a screening application. The property manager will contact you and schedule a pre-screening interview to fill out the application and discuss any issues that might result in problems with your application.

- We can accept applications from persons 18 years of age or older (as well as some minors under certain conditions).
- We will review all applications to verify income and program eligibility.
- Each household member must meet all relevant requirements. If any person in the household is denied, we will deny the entire household's application.
- If your application is not complete, we will not process it, and your application will be denied.
- Each adult (18 years and older) must show a valid government-issued photo I.D. and proof of a valid social security number (If you cannot provide your I.D. or a social security number, please discuss it with us.)

## **STEP 3: WE WILL REVIEW YOUR SCREENING APPLICATION**

We will review your screening application and other background information to determine if you qualify for our housing. In general, you must meet the following seven criteria to be accepted. *(Please note that some special programs may have different criteria, please check with your Property Manager if you have questions about what applies to you.)*

- 1. No false information.** Inaccurate or false information will be grounds for denial. If we find inaccurate or false information after you sign a rental lease, we will terminate the lease.
- 2. Proof of positive residential history.** We will want positive references from two past landlords who are not related to you. If you have been renting from your current landlord for three or more years, we require only *one* positive landlord reference. Let us know if your history does not include at least two previous landlords. We may still be able to rent to you with other verification, such as a qualified professional reference (see page 5), or proof that you have completed Ready to Rent/Rent Well, or proof of home ownership through the county tax assessor's office. If you do not have positive residential history or do not provide a qualified professional reference, we will deny your application.
  - **Positive landlord references.** It is your responsibility to give us the information we need to contact past landlords. We may deny your application based on a negative landlord reference or if you do not have enough positive rental references. Examples of reported behavior that could result in denial include:
    - Failure to maintain the unit, or tenant-caused damages.
    - Chronic noise or other nuisance behavior that disturbs the peace of the community.

- Repeated or consistent failure to pay rent on time (unless you are rent burdened—see page 5).
  - Failure to report additional occupants when required by the rental agreement.
  - Other serious or repeated conditions that would cause a landlord not to rent to you again.
- 3. No evictions during the past three years.** If your eviction was because of extenuating circumstances or if you have a current Ready to Rent/Rent Well diploma, please discuss this with the property manager at the pre-screening interview.
- 4. No debt owed to past landlords or any Housing Authority.** We will run a consumer credit check on each adult household member to check for debts owed to previous landlords; Home Forward will not deny an applicant based on their credit score. We will generally deny an application if any adult household member has past-due rental debts above \$250. This includes debts owed to Home Forward, to a previous landlord, or to meet any obligation legally required by a rental agreement. We will deny an application if any adult household member owes any amount to any Housing Authority. We may make an exception if past-due debt was caused by extenuating circumstances (see page 5). We encourage you to settle any debts or have current repayment agreements before you apply for housing with Home Forward.
- 5. No abuse of drugs and/or alcohol.** We will deny your application if there is cause to believe that a household member's abuse of drugs and/or alcohol is likely to interfere with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the community by others. We are required to deny applicants who admit to using medical marijuana.
- 6. No criminal activity or other dangerous behavior.** We are required to deny admission to anyone who:
- Is subject to a state sex offender lifetime registration requirement, or
  - Has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacture of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.

We will also deny applicants for certain types of criminal activity, depending on the type of activity and when it occurred. We will use the following criteria to assess criminal activity for household members ages 15 and older.

Timeframe	Activity
Denial regardless of when activity occurred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A felony involving serious injury, kidnapping, death, arson, rape, sex crimes and/or child sex crimes, extensive property damage, drug-related offenses (sale, manufacture, delivery or possession with intent to sell), class A/felony burglary or class A/felony robbery.</li> <li>• Pending charges or outstanding warrants for any activity that Home Forward would deny an application for.</li> </ul>
Denial if activity occurred 7 years ago or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any felony, misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor involving assault, intimidation, sex, drugs (sale, manufacture, delivery or possession with intent to sell), property damage or weapons violations.</li> </ul>
Denial if activity occurred 3 years ago or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any drug-related or violent criminal activity or other criminal acts that could harm the health, safety, or peace of a community.</li> </ul>

- 7. Other relevant cause for denial.** We may deny an application if there is credible information about criminal behavior, *even if there has not been a conviction for such behavior*. Additionally, we will deny individuals who constitute a likely threat to the health or safety of an individual, the apartment community, or the property of others.

Home Forward reserves the right to deny an application for any reason relevant to the applicant's ability to fulfill lease obligations. In such a case, we will give the applicant an opportunity to dispute the information.

## **EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

If you are unable to meet the screening criteria listed above, here are some circumstances you may want to discuss with the property manager and/or hearing officer. This information is not part of the screening criteria used to determine eligibility, but it may help you with the application process.

**Reasonable Accommodation Requests:** You may request a reasonable accommodation related to your disability, examples include: physical assistance completing the application; modification of apartments or common areas; or permission to have a service, assistance, or companion animal. Please submit all requests in writing. You can get a Request for Reasonable Accommodation form from the property manager. If you cannot make a request in writing, please ask the property manager for assistance.

**Documentation of Domestic Violence:** Home Forward will not deny admission if the only negative information we find is directly related to your past as a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Please submit documentation by either 1) requesting and submitting a self-certification form, or 2) submitting a police report or court record, or 3) submitting a letter from a qualifying professional who helped you address issues related to your domestic violence situation.

**Drug and Alcohol Treatment:** If you are denied based on use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol we will reconsider your denial if you have successfully completed a treatment program and have maintained your sobriety. If you have not completed a treatment program we may also consider a professional reference letter or other documents related to your sobriety.

**Excessive Rent Burden:** We will not deny you for negative rental history if it is based on excessive rent burden. Excessive rent burden is generally defined as when a household pays more than 50 percent of its total monthly income for rent and utilities.

**Professional References Letters:** You can use professional references for several purposes, including to:

- Supplement your rental history
- Verify your sobriety
- Request a reasonable accommodation
- Document domestic violence
- Address past criminal history

A qualifying professional reference must have known you or your household for at least six months and have worked with you during the last six months. A professional reference is not a relative, friend, or neighbor. A qualifying professional reference can be a:

- Teacher
- Lawyer
- Previous or current employer
- Spiritual leader (this includes pastors, priests, imams, or any other leaders from any faith or religion)
- Counselor
- Doctor or licensed professional
- Case manager representing a rehabilitation center, social service/disability agency, or clinic

#### **STEP 4: YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO REQUEST AN INFORMAL HEARING**

If we deny your application for any reason, we will notify you in writing. You will have the right to request an informal hearing with Home Forward to present special circumstances which explain why you believe your application should be approved. We use a screening company to help us make application screening decisions. Please understand that the property manager cannot overrule the screening company's recommendation for denial. We will give you the opportunity to appeal any relevant negative information that has been reported. You must submit your request for an informal hearing in writing to the property manager within 14 days of the date on the denial letter.

#### **APPLICANT RIGHTS**

You have rights at every stage in the application process that are important to understand:

1. Applicants have the right to receive an estimate of the waiting list time for their desired apartment community and bedroom size.
2. Denied applicants will receive written notice of the denial, stating the reasons for the denial and their rights to request an informal hearing.
3. Applicants have the right to dispute the accuracy of information reported and to request corrections to reports by screening agencies.
4. Applicants may contact the screening agency that collected information on them.
5. Applicants may obtain a free copy of their report from the consumer-reporting agency used.
6. Applicants have the right to present witnesses and other information at the informal hearing to explain their side of the situation.
7. Applicants have the right to be represented at the informal hearing.
8. Applicants have the right to look at their file before the informal hearing and to get copies at their expense.
9. Applicants have the right to a written decision stating the reasons for their denial.
10. Denied applicants have a right to reapply whenever the waiting list is open.