

17.0 Other Changes in Household Conditions

This chapter reviews the rules and processes covering changes in household conditions besides changes in household income or household composition, which were covered in Section 16.3 and its subsections.

17.1 Absences from the Assisted Unit [24 CFR 982.312]

It is the responsibility of the head of household to report all changes in household conditions, including temporary absences from the unit, to Pensacola Housing.

Pensacola Housing defines a “temporary absence” as any or all members of the household, including the head of household, being away from the unit for longer than 14 consecutive calendar days but no more than 60 days. Temporary absences are permitted under Pensacola Housing’s voucher program, provided that:

1. The head of household informs Pensacola Housing of the absence;
2. The household’s utility accounts remain in service;
3. The household continues to pay their tenant rent portion in a timely fashion, and comply with all other lease requirements; and
4. The absent persons are still using the assisted unit as their residence, and have not taken occupancy elsewhere.

It is strongly recommended that the household inform their landlord of temporary absences as well. Income of persons temporarily absent will continue to be counted as household income for the purposes of calculating tenant rent and subsidy.

If a household member is temporarily absent and in the military, all military pay and allowances (except hazardous duty pay when exposed to hostile fire and any other exceptions to military pay that HUD may define) is counted as income.

Except for absences due to medical reasons, in most cases Pensacola Housing will not approve absences from the unit lasting more than 60 days, and will conduct an interim reexamination removing any household member who will be absent for that long. If the entire household is absent for longer than 60 days, Pensacola Housing will terminate the HAP contract and the family’s voucher program participation. If participation is terminated, the family will have the right to request an informal hearing.

In accordance with 24 CFR 982.312 (a), Pensacola Housing will not approve any absence from the unit lasting more than 180 consecutive calendar days, even in the case of absence due to medical reasons or other absences approved by Pensacola Housing. The owner must reimburse Pensacola Housing for any HAP paid for the period after the termination.

17.1.1 Absence Due to Medical Reasons

If any family member leaves the household to enter a facility such as a hospital, nursing home, or rehabilitation center, Pensacola Housing will seek advice from a reliable qualified source as to the likelihood and timing of their return. If the verification indicates the family member will be permanently confined to a nursing home, the family member will be considered permanently absent. If the verification indicates the family member will return in less than 180 consecutive days, the absence will be treated as a temporary absence.

In accordance with 24 CFR 982.312 (a), any absence from the unit lasting more than 180 consecutive calendar days, even absences due to medical reasons, will be considered permanent, and Pensacola Housing will conduct an interim reexamination to remove the absent member from the household.

If the person who is determined to be permanently absent is the sole member of the household, Pensacola Housing will terminate the HAP contract. If the absence was approved, the family will be invited to contact Pensacola Housing to request a moving voucher.

17.1.2 Absence Due to Full-Time Student Status

Students who attend a school more than 50 miles away from the subsidized unit are not considered members of the household for the purpose of determining subsidy.

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.

However, full-time students who were part of the family but who now live away from home during the school year and are no longer on the lease may visit for up to 150 days per year without being considered in violation of the guest policy. See also Sections 17.3 and 17.4 below.

17.1.3 Absence Due to Incarceration

Any member of the household will be considered permanently absent if he or she is incarcerated for 60 consecutive days, and Pensacola Housing will conduct an interim reexamination to remove the absent member from the household.

If the person who is determined to be permanently absent is the sole member of the household, Pensacola Housing will terminate voucher program participation. If participation is terminated, the family will have the right to request an informal hearing.

17.1.4 Absence Due to Court Order

If a member of the household is subject to a court order that restricts him or her from the home, the person will be considered permanently absent.

17.1.5 Absence of Children Due to Placement in Foster Care

If the family includes a child or children temporarily absent from the home due to placement in foster care, Pensacola Housing will determine from the appropriate agency when the children are expected to be returned to the home. If the time period is greater than 12 months from the date of removal, the family voucher size will be lowered at the next annual reexamination.

17.1.6 Absence of the Entire Family

Participants are required to notify Pensacola Housing before they move out of a unit and to give Pensacola Housing information about any family absence from the unit.

In cases where the family has moved out of the unit without adequate notice to Pensacola Housing and the owner, Pensacola Housing will terminate assistance in accordance with the termination procedures contained in this Administrative Plan.

If the entire family is absent from the assisted unit for more than 60 consecutive days without notifying Pensacola Housing, or if Pensacola Housing otherwise determines that the unit has been vacated or abandoned, the unit will be considered to be vacated and assistance will be terminated.

In order to determine if the family is absent from the unit, Pensacola Housing may investigate the situation by taking action, including but not limited to the following:

1. Contacting the landlord and asking the landlord to determine occupancy status;
2. Telephoning the family at the unit;
3. Writing letters to the family at the unit; and
4. Verifying whether utilities are in service.

17.2 Caretaker for Children

In a household with children where all adults are absent from the household, if the family, or an appropriate agency, has identified another adult who is willing to move into the assisted unit to care for the children, Pensacola Housing will approve the adult addition to the household provided the new household member meets all of Pensacola Housing's eligibility requirements and is willing to assume the responsibilities of a voucher program Head of Household.

When Pensacola Housing approves a person to reside in the unit as caretaker for the child/children, the individual will be required to complete all program application requirements, and the individual's income will be counted. Pensacola Housing will work with the appropriate service agencies and the landlord to provide a smooth transition in these cases.

17.3 Visitors/Unauthorized Residents in Unit

Any adult not included on HUD Form 50058 who has been in the unit more than 14 consecutive days without Pensacola Housing approval, or for a total of 30 days in a 12-month period, will be considered to be living in the unit as an unauthorized household member. In extenuating circumstances, a participant may request an extension of these time periods, which Pensacola Housing will consider on a case-by-case basis.

Use of the unit address as the visitor's current residence for any purpose that is not explicitly temporary shall be construed as permanent residence. Examples include voter registrations, judgments, court or police records, state wage records, utility records, and postal records. Statements from neighbors and/or the landlord may also be considered in making the determination.

If an unauthorized individual is found to be residing in the assisted unit, Pensacola Housing will terminate the family's assistance, since prior approval was not requested for the addition to the household. The family may request an informal hearing.

17.4 Visiting Minors and College Students

Minors and college students who were part of the family but who now live away from home during the school year and are no longer on the lease may visit for up to 150 days per year without being considered a member of the household or an unauthorized guest.

In a joint custody arrangement, if the minor is in the household fewer than 181 days per year, the minor will be considered to be an eligible visitor, not an unauthorized household member.

17.5 Break-up of the Household

If a household breaks up, Pensacola Housing will make a determination regarding which household member will retain the voucher, taking into consideration the following factors:

1. Who is the head of household and did the head of household remain in the unit;
2. The interest of minor children, or of ill, elderly, or disabled family members;
3. Whether assistance should remain with the household members who remained in the unit; and
4. Whether household members were forced to leave the unit as a result of actual or threatened physical violence by another member of the household.

If a court determines the disposition of property between members of the assisted family in a divorce or separation under a settlement of judicial decree, Pensacola Housing will be bound by the court's determination of which household members continue to receive assistance on the program.

Because of the great number of possible different circumstances under which a determination might have to be made, Pensacola Housing will make determinations on a case-by-case basis. Pensacola Housing will issue a determination within 14 business days