

(i) *Enforcement and amendment.* The Use Agreement will be enforceable by interested parties to be specified in the Agreement, which will include HUD, the PAE, project tenants, organizations representing project tenants, and the unit of local government. The Use Agreement must require the party bringing enforcement action to give the owner notice and a reasonable opportunity to cure any violations.

(j) *Modifications.* HUD will retain the right to approve modifications of the Use Agreement agreed to by the owner without the consent of any other party, including those having the right of enforcement. The owner must post prominently on project property notice of any modifications approved by HUD.

(k) *Owner obligation to accept project-based assistance.* Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, the owner of the project must accept any offer of renewal of project-based assistance if the offer is in accordance with the terms and conditions specified in the Restructuring Plan.

[65 FR 15485, Mar. 22, 2000, as amended at 65 FR 53900, Sept. 6, 2000]

§ 401.410 Standards for determining comparable market rents.

(a) *When are comparable market rents required?* The Restructuring Plan must establish restructured rents for project-based assistance at comparable market rents unless the PAE finds that exception rents are necessary under § 401.411.

(b) *Comparable market rents defined.* Comparable market rents are the rents charged for properties that the PAE determines to be comparable properties (as defined in section 512(1) of MAHRA, but also excluding section 202 or section 811 projects assisted under part 891 of this title). For purposes of section 512(1), other relevant characteristics include any applicable rent control and other characteristics determined by the PAE. The PAE may make appropriate adjustments when needed to ensure comparability of properties.

(c) *Methodology for determining comparable market rents.* If the PAE is unable to identify at least three comparable properties within the local market, the PAE may:

(1) Use non-comparable housing stock within that market from which adjustments can be made; or

(2) If necessary to go outside the market, use comparable properties as far outside the local market as it finds reasonable, from which adjustments can be made.

(d) *Using FMR as last resort.* If the PAE is unable to identify enough properties under paragraph (c) of this section, comparable market rents must be set at 90 percent of the Fair Market Rents for the relevant market area.

§ 401.411 Guidelines for determining exception rents.

(a) *When do exception rents apply?* (1) The Restructuring Plan may provide for exception rents established under section 514(g)(2) of MAHRA for project-based assistance if the PAE determines that project income under the rent levels established under § 401.410 would be inadequate to meet the costs of operating the project as described in paragraph (b) of this section and that the housing needs of the tenants and the community could not be adequately addressed.

(2) In any fiscal year, the PAE may not request HUD to approve Restructuring Plans with exception rents for more than 20 percent of all units covered by the PRA, except that HUD may approve a waiver of this 20 percent limitation based on the PAE's narrative explanation of special need.

(b) *How are exception rents calculated?*

(1) Exception rents must be set at a level sufficient to support the costs of operating the project. The PAE must take into account the following cost items:

(i) Debt service on the second mortgage under § 401.461(a) or a rehabilitation loan included in the Restructuring Plan;

(ii) The operating expenses of the project, as determined by the PAE, including:

(A) Contributions to adequate reserves for replacement;

(B) The costs of maintenance and necessary rehabilitation;

(C) Other eligible costs permitted under the section 8 program;

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(iii) An adequate allowance for potential operating losses due to vacancies and failure to collect rents, as determined by the PAE;

(iv) A return to the owner to the extent permitted by § 401.461(b)(3)(ii)(A); and

(v) Other expenses determined by the PAE to be necessary for the operation of the project.

(2) The exception rent must not exceed 120 percent of the Fair Market Rent for the market area, except that HUD may approve an exception rent greater than 120 percent of Fair Market Rent, based on a narrative explanation of special need submitted by the PAE, subject to the 5 percent limitation in section 514(g)(2)(A) of MAHRA.

§ 401.412 Adjustment of rents based on operating cost adjustment factor (OCAF) or budget.

(a) *OCAF*. (1) The Restructuring Plan must provide for annual adjustment of the restructured rents for project-based assistance by an OCAF determined by HUD.

(2) *Application of OCAF*. HUD will apply the OCAF to the previous year's contract rent less the portion of that rent paid for debt service. This paragraph applies to renewals of contracts in subsequent years which receive restructured rents under either section 514(g)(1) or (2) of MAHRA.

(b) *Budget-based*. Rents will be adjusted on a budget basis instead of OCAF only upon owner request, subject to HUD approval.

§ 401.420 When must the Restructuring Plan require project-based assistance?

The Restructuring Plan must provide for the section 8 contract to be renewed as project-based assistance, subject to the availability of funds for this purpose, if:

(a) The PAE determines there is a market-wide vacancy rate of 6 percent or less;

(b) At least 50 percent of the units in the project are occupied by elderly families, disabled families, or elderly and disabled families; or

(c) The project is held by a nonprofit cooperative ownership housing cor-

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poration or nonprofit cooperative housing trust.

§ 401.421 Rental Assistance Assessment Plan.

(a) *Plan required*. For any project not subject to mandatory project-based assistance under § 401.420, the PAE must develop a Rental Assistance Assessment Plan in accordance with section 515(c)(2) of MAHRA to determine whether assistance should be renewed as project-based assistance or whether some or all of the assisted units should be converted to tenant-based assistance.

(b) *Matters to be assessed*. The PAE must include an assessment of the impact of converting to tenant-based assistance and the impact of renewing project-based assistance on:

(1) The ability of the tenants to find adequate, available, decent, comparable, and affordable housing in the local market;

(2) The types of tenants residing in the project (such as elderly families, disabled families, large families, and cooperative homeowners);

(3) The local housing needs identified in the applicable Consolidated Plan developed under part 91 of this title;

(4) The cost of providing assistance, comparing the applicable payment standard to the rent levels permitted by §§ 401.410 and 401.411;

(5) The long-term financial stability of the project;

(6) The ability of residents to make reasonable choices about their individual living situations;

(7) The quality of the neighborhood in which the tenants would reside; and

(8) The project's ability to compete in the marketplace.

(c) *Conversion may be phased in*. Any conversion from project-based assistance to tenant-based assistance may occur over a period of not more than 5 years if the PAE decides the transition period is needed for the financial viability of the project.

(d) *Reports to HUD*. The PAE must report to HUD on the matters specified in section 515(c)(2)(C) of MAHRA at least semi-annually.

[65 FR 15485, Mar. 22, 2000, as amended at 65 FR 53900, Sept. 6, 2000]