

# PUBLIC HOUSING FAQs

## 1. WHAT IS PUBLIC HOUSING?

Public Housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low and moderate income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Alachua County Housing Authority's Public Housing comes in a number of sizes and types, from duplex units to single family units. These units are owned and operated by the Alachua County Housing Authority (ACHA). Rent in these units is set for each family based on their anticipated annual adjusted income along with other factors. ACHA Public Housing program houses more than 250 families throughout Alachua County. We have units in the following cities:

- **Alachua**
- **Archer**
- **Gainesville**
- **Newberry**
- **Waldo**

## 2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Public Housing is limited to families and individuals who does not exceed the low-income limit (80% of median area income *see Income Limits below*).

ACHA determines your eligibility based on:

1) annual gross income; 2) family size as defined by regulation and ACHA's policy; 3) U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status; 4) family's income not exceeding 80% of HUD's area income limits 5) Provides a Social Security Number for all eligible family members declaring eligibility for the program 6) Meets or exceeds the standards for the criminal background check 7) Meets the criteria that the head of household is of legal age to execute required contracts\* 8) Meets or exceeds the tenant Selection and Suitability Criteria as set forth in the ACHA Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP)

If you are eligible, ACHA will check your background through a series of standard screening tests designed to protect the safety of our current residents and property. At minimum, we screen 1) criminal history; 2) credit as it relates to your rental history, including evictions; and 3) references from past landlords. Based on this screening, ACHA will deny admission to any applicant whose habits and practices may be expected to have a detrimental effect on other residents or on the public housing environment.

The following Income Limits are in effect for the Alachua County area. These limits are based on the number of family members who will be residing with you in public housing. To qualify for the Public Housing program, your gross annual income cannot be higher than the low-income limits (80% of median area income) as listed below.

## FY 2024 HUD INCOME LIMITS

### FAMILY SIZE

INCOME LIMIT CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>EXTREMELY LOW</b>	\$20,050	\$22,900	\$25,820	\$31,200	\$36,580	\$41,960	\$47,340	\$52,720
<b>VERY LOW (50%)</b>	\$33,350	\$38,150	\$42,900	\$47,650	\$51,500	\$55,300	\$59,100	\$62,900
<b>LOW (80%)</b>	\$53,400	\$61,000	\$68,650	\$76,250	\$82,350	\$88,450	\$94,550	\$100,650

*\*Effective 04/01/2024 subject to change Annually*

### 3. WHERE IS THE APPLICATIONS OFFICE LOCATED?

The ACHA Public Housing Program office is located at 703 NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Gainesville, Florida 32601.

### 4. HOW DO I APPLY?

If you are interested in applying for Public Housing, you may apply online. If you require any reasonable accommodations to complete the application process or are in need of information in an accessible format, please contact the Public Housing Intake Coordinator at (352) 372-2549 Ext. 535 or by coming into the local office as listed above. This application process will place you on our waiting list when it is open. Translation of the application is available upon request for non-English speaking applicants or in-person for those individuals with limited literacy.

### 5. ONCE I APPLY, WHAT IS THE APPLICATIONS PROCESS?

The applications process follows the steps below (Note: this is only intended as a summary of the process and may not be all-inclusive) when the waiting list bedroom for a specific bedroom size is open:

- a. Pre-application - the family fills out a pre-application in order to be placed on the waiting list.
- b. Waiting List - the family is placed on the waiting list according to application date and time, bedroom size, and accessibility needs.
- c. Family is then sent BY MAIL a Supplement to Application for Federally Assisted Housing form(HUD-92006) & Authorization for the Release of Information/Privacy Act Notice (HUD-9886) to return to our office (address listed above)
- d. Selection - the rate of selection is based on vacancy rate. During times of high vacancies, families will be selected from the waiting list faster than during times of low vacancy rates. Families at the top of the waiting list will be selected in blocks to fill

current vacancy needs. Once a family has been selected, they will be notified by mail. They will also be advised in their selection letter of the next steps they need to take in order to continue the application process. If a family fails to respond to the selection, their file will be closed per the ACHA ACOP.

- e. Standard Screening -This process involves an in-depth examination of the family's history in order to determine their suitability for housing within ACHA. ACHA will conduct local and national criminal background check on household members to the extent allowed by Florida State law. Additional screening on credit as it relates to rental history (including evictions). Based on this screening, ACHA will deny admission to any applicant whose habits and practices may be expected to have a detrimental effect on other residents or on the public housing environment. These standard screening procedures are intended to protect the safety of our current residents and property.
- f. Interview & Placement- Once an applicant passes the preliminary screening and has reached the number one (1) position of the waiting list for the size unit in which they qualify, they will then receive an unit offer letter for the first available unit for that particular bedroom size. At this point staff will schedule a time and date for interview for every family who passes standard screening and or qualifies for such. At interview, the staff member will then determine what documents will be needed such as: income verification; landlord references; marriage license; proof of citizenship; etc. If there are any documents required by the agency that an applicant does not bring with them at the time of interview, they will be given a reasonable amount of time to return with these documents per the ACHA ACOP. The staff member will give the applicant a check list of items needed with a deadline date to return their paperwork. Once all paperwork has been returned and verified, and the applicant is found eligible, the file will then be placed in a ready pool. Applicants will then be offered vacancies as they become available. Units are offered based on oldest application date and how long a person's file has been complete.

## **6. WHAT IF I NEED TO MAKE CHANGES TO MY APPLICATION INFORMATION?**

All changes to application information must be made in writing. You may complete these update on <https://alachuaco.housingmanager.com>. If you have changed your mailing address, family members, income etc., you may update this change on the above listed portal, you may fill out a change form at our office or send a letter by mail requesting the change (please include your social security number so we can easily identify your records). If we require additional documentation of this change, we will advise you of what is required.

## **7. WHEN WILL I BE NOTIFIED?**

All official notification will be made by mail. Once your name is reached on the waiting list, ACHA staff will mail a selection letter to you. This will advise you of the next step in the application process. If, at any time, it is determined that you are ineligible, ACHA staff will mail a denial letter to you, telling you why you have been denied and advising you of how you may request an informal hearing.

## 8. HOW LONG IS THE WAITING LIST?

The length of the waiting list varies depending on the number of vacancies we have each month and how many people are applying for housing. The waiting list also varies depending on which bedroom size you qualify for. Generally speaking, on average you can expect to wait the following amount of time from the date you put in your application:

- 1-2 Bedrooms: 2-5+ years from the date of application
- 3 Bedrooms: 2-4 years from date of application
- 4-5 Bedrooms: 2-5 years from the date of application

*Subject to change as dependent on factors outside of the control of ACHA*

## 9. ARE THERE ANY LOCAL PREFERENCES?

NO. There are no Local Preferences for the ACHA Public Housing Waiting List at this time.

## 10. WHAT IF I NEED EMERGENCY HOUSING?

The Alachua County Housing Authority cannot provide emergency housing. If you are in the Alachua County area and are in need of emergency housing, you may want to contact the following agencies...

### SHELTERS

- **GRACE Marketplace** 3055 NE 28<sup>th</sup> Drive, Gainesville, FL 32609 **Phone** (352)792-0800
- **St. Francis House** 413 S Main Street, Gainesville, FL 32601 **Phone** (352)378-9079
- **Salvation Army** 639 E University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 **Phone** (352)376-1743

### Women's Services/Shelters

- **Peaceful Paths** 2100 NW 53<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Gainesville, FL 32653 **Phone** (352)377-8255
- **Arbor House** 413 S Main Street, Gainesville, FL 32601 **Phone** (352)378-9079

### Social Services

- **Alachua County Social Services** (352) 264-6750
- **SWAG Family Resource Center** (352) 505-6823
- **Catholic Charities Gainesville** (352)372-0294
- **Central Florida Community Action Agency** (352) 373-7667

## 11. GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING BEDROOM SIZE

Bedroom size is determined by the number, generation, and sex of the members of your family \*

## 12. HOW IS RENT DETERMINED?

Your rent, which is referred to as the Total Tenant Payment (TTP) in this program, would be based on your family's anticipated gross annual income less deductions, if any. ACHA will

exclude from annual income the following allowances: \$480 for each dependent; \$400 for any family whose head or spouse is elderly or a person with a disability; and some medical deductions for families headed by an elderly person or a person with disabilities. Based on your application, ACHA will determine if any other deductions should be subtracted from your annual income. Annual income is the anticipated total income from all sources received from the family head and spouse, and each additional member of the family 18 years of age or older. *Note, additional factors may apply.*

**Income-Based Rents** The monthly Total Tenant Payment amount for a family shall be an amount, as verified by the PHA, which does not exceed the greatest of the following amounts (rounded to the nearest dollar):

1. 30% of the family's monthly adjusted income (Monthly Adjusted Income is annual income less deductions, and divided by 12 months);
2. 10% of the family's monthly income
3. or ACHA's Minimum TTP of \$50.