

## **SUITES APARTMENTS - LONGMONT HOUSING AUTHORITY**

### **SUPPORTIVE HOUSING TENANT SCREENING PLAN**

**UPDATED JUNE 2024**

Suites Apartments, located at 2000 Sunset Way in Longmont, Colorado, is a low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) and supportive housing development owned and operated by the Longmont Housing Authority (LHA). The building consists of 82 studios, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units, with all units supported by federal project-based vouchers. The Longmont Housing Authority is the voucher administrator for 41 units (plus one non-subsidized employee unit) and Mental Health Partners (MHP) is the voucher administrator for 40 units.

Voucher management and supportive services have separate and distinct roles but understand one another's functions and communicate frequently. LHA and MHP are committed to providing quality affordable housing to extremely low-income, formerly homeless and/or disabled persons, and to providing a foundation for their continued growth and success. Supportive service providers should be committed to helping tenants retain that housing.

Suites Apartments uses a Housing First Model as well as Harm Reduction and Trauma-informed approach. Housing First embraces the idea that people participating in a Supportive Housing (SH) program should be given housing even if they are struggling with issues of chemical dependency, mental health, and/or other barriers to housing that might render them ineligible under more traditional models of housing.

#### **1. Core Elements of Housing First Include:**

- Acceptance of applicants regardless of their sobriety, any past or current use of substances, any completion of rehabilitation or treatment, or participation in any other supportive services.
- Applicants are seldom rejected solely on the basis of poor credit or financial history, employment readiness, poor or absent rental history, certain criminal convictions, or any other behaviors that are generally held to indicate a lack of "housing readiness."
- Supportive services emphasize engagement and problem solving over therapeutic goals. Services plans are highly tenant-driven without standardized or predetermined goals, and client choice is key.
- Use of alcohol or drugs in and of itself (without other lease violations) is not considered a reason for eviction.

The Suites is a low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) and Project-Based Voucher Supportive Services Community. Applicants seeking occupancy in this subsidized property must first qualify under the guidelines and eligibility of the Project-based Voucher program and be approved for a Project Based voucher. Applicants must also meet the general eligibility criteria herein.

#### **2. Limited English Proficiency (LEP):**

The Suites Apartments has established reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs, and other benefits. The Suites Apartments ensures meaningful communication with LEP applicants and residents and their authorized representatives.

Interpreters, translators, and other aids needed to comply with this policy shall be provided free of charge to the person being served, and residents and their families will be informed of the availability of such assistance. Language assistance will be provided through use of a contracted telephonic interpretation service, competent bilingual staff, staff interpreters, or formal arrangements with local organizations providing interpretation or translation services or technology.

### **3) Suites Apartments Eligibility Criteria:**

- Head of household is 18 years of age or older.
- Head of household has documented lawful presence in the United States.
- Household is extremely low-income (at or below 30% Area Median Income) or low-income (at or below 50% Area Median Income).
- Household is homeless (see definition in Suites Apartments Preferences section below).
- Applicants must qualify under the guidelines of the Project-based Voucher program.
- Student Eligibility

Developments with Federally Assisted Housing units are restricted from providing assistance to students enrolled in institutions of higher education, either full or part time, in some instances. No assistance should be provided to any individual who is enrolled as a student at an institution of higher education and who:

- Is under 24 years of age;
  - Is not a veteran of the U.S. Military;
  - Is unmarried;
  - Does not have a dependent child;
  - Is not a person with disabilities and was not receiving Section 8 assistance as of November 30, 2005;
  - Is not otherwise individually eligible, or has parents who, individually or jointly, are not eligible on the basis of income to receive Section 8 assistance.
- Applicants at all LHA owned and/or managed properties must pass a criminal background check and rental history screening based on the criteria below to be approved for residency.

#### **Criminal Background Check**

- Applicants may be denied residency if their criminal background includes criminal convictions within the last five (5) years involving crimes of physical violence against persons or property and any other certain criminal acts that would adversely affect other tenants, staff, or the property.
- Applicants may be denied residency if their criminal background includes convictions for possession or use of methamphetamine.

- Applicants may be denied residency if applicant or household with active restraining orders against Longmont Housing Authority staff or City staff that frequently visit the Suites as part of their normal work.
- Applicants may be denied residency if applicant or any household member has committed fraud in connection with any federal housing assistance program.

#### **Rental History Screening**

- Applicants may be denied residency if applicant or any household member has an eviction on their records related to criminal activity involving crimes of physical violence against persons or property and any other criminal acts including, but not limited to, drug-related criminal activity which would adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of other tenants or the property.
- Applicants may be denied residency if applicant or a household member owes money to any public housing authority for past due rents, evictions, damages, or fees.

#### **Mandatory Denial of Application (24 CFR 982.553)**

- Any household member that is currently required to register as a lifetime sex offender under any State registration requirement.
- Any household that has ever been convicted of a drug-related criminal activity for the manufacture, production, or distribution of methamphetamine.

#### **4) Suites Apartments Referral Sources:**

100% of project-based vouchers (41) managed by Longmont Housing Authority referrals will originate from the Suites/Briarwood waiting list.

100% of Division of Housing vouchers (40) managed by Mental Health Partners referrals will originate from the Homeless Solutions for Boulder County (HSBC) local case conferencing using its common coordinated entry screen and housing-focused case manager recommendations to identify individuals who would benefit from a Supportive Housing intervention.

#### **5) Suites Apartments Preferences:**

The following preferences are applicable to both LHA and MHP.

- Eligible households with a disabling condition.
- Eligible households with experiences of homelessness or experiencing long-term or chronic homelessness. Homelessness is defined as living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in temporary housing (e.g. transitional housing, bridge housing, or rapid-rehousing), or exiting an institution where the person temporarily resided.
- Eligible households that have received Rapid Re-housing services, and need ongoing supportive housing services.
- Eligible households that include a victim of domestic violence.

- Eligible households with high utilization of publicly funded systems as determined by MHP in conjunction with DOH.
- Eligible households with high utilization of Medicaid as determined by Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA).

#### **6) Suites Apartments Application Procedure for MHP**

- All prospective tenants for MHP voucher units must first be referred through Local Case Conferencing.
- Anyone who wishes to be considered for a Project-Based Voucher (PBV) unit at Suites Apartments must complete the appropriate Division of Housing (DOH)-designated PBV application.
- An applicant must submit a completed application to be considered for residency. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant to complete.
- All complete applications must meet one or more of the property preferences.
- Once the completed application is received, it will be forwarded to Mental Health Partners that is providing voucher administration services for DOH-issued Project-Based Vouchers for Suites Apartments.
- All MHP applications must be entered in DOH's Elite rental assistance database system by Mental Health Partners.
- Placement on the waiting list does not automatically guarantee eligibility for an apartment. Further screening as described in the eligibility criteria section will be completed at the time a unit becomes available.
- Once the Suites Community Manager is aware that a unit will be coming available, the Suites Community Manager will contact Mental Health Partners to let them know of the vacancy.
- Mental Health Partners will pull the next available applicant (or multiple applicants as allowed by DOH) off the waiting list, and arrange times to meet, and verify the information provided on the application.
- Once verified, Mental Health Partners will notify the Suites Community Manager that they may begin their screening process.
- If the applicant is deemed ineligible, the Suites Community Manager will supply a copy of the written denial to Mental Health Partners.
- If the applicant is deemed eligible by both the Suites Community Manager and Mental Health Partners, Mental Health Partners will contact the applicant and conduct a PBV briefing.

#### **7) Suites Apartments Application Procedure for LHA**

- Placement on the waiting list does not automatically guarantee eligibility for an apartment. Further screening as described in the eligibility criteria section will be completed at the time a unit becomes available.
- Anyone who wishes to be considered for a Project-Based Voucher (PBV) unit at Suites Apartments must complete the appropriate Longmont Housing Authority eligibility packet designated for the PBV program.
- An applicant must submit a completed application to be considered for residency. This includes submittal of all required documents. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant to complete.
- All complete applications must meet one or more of the property preferences.

- Once the completed application is received, it will be forwarded for a background check and rental history screening.
- Once the background check and rental history is approved the applicant will be referred to the Suites Community Manager for the eligibility screening process.
- If the applicant is deemed ineligible, the Suites Community Manager will supply a copy of the written denial to applicant.
- If the applicant is deemed eligible, the Suites Community Manager will contact the applicant and conduct a PBV briefing.

## **8) Notification of Denial**

Once applicant screening by both the Voucher Administrator and the Suites Community Manager have been completed and all materials have been verified and evaluated, any application not meeting the above criteria will be denied. Voucher Administrator and/or the Suites Community Manager must give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying assistance. The notice must contain a brief statement of the reason for the denial and must state that the applicant may request an informal review of the decision. The denying party must also send a copy of the denial to the non-denying party (MHP or LHA).

## **9) Appeal Process**

The applicant shall have ten (10) business days from the date of the denial letter to request, in writing, an informal review of the decision for denial and provide information showing mitigating circumstances related to the denial. Suites Apartments must schedule and send written notice of the informal review within ten (10) business days of the household's request. The informal review must be conducted by a person other than the one who made or approved the decision under review, or a subordinate of this person. Applicant must appear at the informal review. Suites Apartments will notify the applicant of the final decision, including a statement explaining the reason(s) for the decision. The notice will be mailed within 10 business days of the informal review to the applicant and his or her representative, if any, along with proof of mailing.

If the decision to deny is overturned as a result of the informal review, processing for admission will resume.

If the household fails to appear for their informal review, the denial of admission will stand, and the household will be notified.

## **10) Consideration of Circumstances/Reasonable Accommodations**

Suites Apartments' decision concerning denial of admission is subject to consideration of circumstances and reasonable accommodations. The policy of Suites Apartments is to consider all requests by individuals with a disability for reasonable accommodation in both policies and procedures that assist in providing an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the programs under which the project is funded.

Suites Apartments will consider all relevant circumstances when deciding whether to deny assistance based on a household's past history. Examples include, but are not limited to: seriousness of the case, the extent of participation or culpability of individual family

members, the length of time since the violation occurred, whether the culpable household member is participating in or has successfully completed a rehabilitation program or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully, and whether the applicant provides proof of payment to establish that past debts with public housing authorities have been cleared.

#### **11) Availability of Plan**

This Tenant Selection Plan is available to the public upon request. It can be requested at the Suites Community Manager's office during normal office hours.

#### **12) Modification of Plan**

Suites Apartments and Mental Health Partners will review this Tenant Selection Plan at least once annually to ensure that it reflects current operating practices, program priorities. If Suites Apartments or Mental Health Partners feels the plan needs to be modified in any way, a notice of such modification will be provided by mail to applicants on the waiting list. For this reason, the current Tenant Selection Plan in place at Suites Apartments will always be dated.