



Housing for New Hope

*Preventing and Ending Homelessness
One Valuable Person at a Time*

Williams Square Apartments

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Durham, NC 27704

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TENANT SELECTION PLAN

This document outlines procedures for tenant selection at Williams Square Apartments so that applicants and other interested parties readily may understand the eligibility and selection criteria uniformly applied to all prospective tenants.

Williams Square Apartments are located at 501 East Carver Street, Durham, NC 27704. The Property Management office is located on the premises.

Williams Square Apartments are owned and operated by Housing for New Hope, Inc., a North Carolina 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness in the greater Durham area.

This document is to be prominently posted: (1) at the Property Management office; and (2) in any other meeting place where prospective applicants may be received.

This document, and any subsequent update or revision, is to be distributed: (1) to The Durham Center's Housing Specialist; and (2) to service providers who participate in application, referral and/or tenant selection processes on behalf of Williams Square Apartments applicants.

Target population.

Williams Square Apartments offer permanent supportive housing exclusively for single adults who 1) are chronically homeless¹ and 2) have annual income at entry of at least SSI² and not more than 30% of area median income³.

Up to sixteen (16) units are available on a priority basis to eligible individuals referred through the Targeting Program referral process managed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. For these units, qualifying annual income must be at least \$3,600 and not more than \$16,050, and income waivers are available for a limited number of applicants who have not yet completed the disability determination process.

¹ HUD defines a "chronically homeless" person as *an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either (1) been continuously homeless for a year or more, or (2) had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.*

² The minimum income at entry is equal to the individual "SSI federal payment amount" updated annually in January by the U. S. Social Security Administration. As of January 2011 the individual SSI federal payment amount is \$674 per month or \$8,088 per year; as of January 2012 the individual SSI federal payment amount is \$698 per month or \$8,376 per year (see "SSI Federal Payment Amounts": <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA/SSIamts.html>).

³ The maximum income at entry is equal to the individual "income limit at 30% of Durham area median income" updated at least annually by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As of December 1, 2011, the individual income limit at 30% of area median Durham income is \$1,204.17 per month or \$14,450 per year (see "Income limits": <http://www.huduser.org/datasets/il.html>).

Occupancy policy.

Williams Square Apartments are fully-furnished single-room efficiency units. For all twenty-four (24) units, the maximum household size is one person.

Williams Square Apartments are offered as permanent housing, meaning that tenants are entitled to continue their residency indefinitely, provided that all terms of the lease agreement are continuously satisfied.

The tenant's portion of monthly rent is based on thirty percent (30%) of the tenant's monthly income.

Application process and screening criteria.

1. Application.

Williams Square Apartments will accept applications of all persons who are reasonably expected to meet the eligibility criteria:

- Able to verify qualifying income (see ***Target population*** above);
- Able to verify homeless or chronically homeless status;
- Able to verify a disabling condition AND must have a well-documented service plan; and
- Able to live independently.

An approved Consumer/Community Support Worker (CSW) can obtain an application form on behalf of an applicant through The Durham Center or directly from the Property Management office.

An applicant may also apply directly to the Property Management office but must be able to demonstrate eligibility.

The following documents are required with any application:

- Copy of applicant's birth certificate or driver's license
- Copy of applicant's Social Security card
- Verification of Homelessness form
- Verification of Chronic Homelessness form (if applicable)
- Verification of Disability form
- Verification of Employment form (if applicable)

Whenever it is determined that an applicant is ineligible, the application will be returned promptly with a written explanation of the reason(s) for rejecting the application.

2. Waiting list.

Applications will be acted on in chronological order according to a written waiting list.

Whenever an application is received, Property Management staff will verify that the application and supporting documentation are complete, perform a preliminary review of eligibility and place the accepted applicant's name on the waiting list.

Whenever an apartment is available, Property Management staff will determine the next applicant on the waiting list who is still waiting to be served and proceed with screening for that applicant.

The Property Management office will communicate regularly with individuals and agencies engaged in application and referral activities regarding Williams Square Apartments vacancies and the status of applications that remain on the waiting list.

Accepted applications will be removed from the waiting list after six months.

3. Property Management screening.

The Property Management office will review all information provided with the application, verify and document applicant income and homeless status, evaluate applicant ability to live independently, and conduct background and reference checks as needed.

Applicant interviews are scheduled and conducted at the discretion of the Property Management office to assist in these efforts. During the interview, an applicant may be asked to clarify or supplement information provided in the application in order to properly document eligibility. A property tour/intro may be done either at this time or after application approval.

A criminal background report will be obtained for every applicant. Reference checks may include former landlords or others as appropriate. An applicant credit check is not required.

4. Housing Selection Committee review.

Whenever the Property Management office has verified applicant eligibility, the applicant will be scheduled for interview by The Durham Center's Housing Selection Committee ("the Committee").

- The Committee is available to meet weekly for applicant interviews.
- The Property Management office will contact the Committee Lead the week of the scheduled appointments to inform the Committee of the interview schedule.
- The Property Management office will attempt to contact the applicant's CSW a day or two prior to the appointment as a reminder of the scheduled interview.

During the interview, the Committee will review information provided with the application, determine whether sufficient support services are in place and evaluate applicant ability to live independently.

Immediately following the interview, the Committee will make a decision on the application:

- The application will be approved and sent on to the Property Management office for final processing; or
- The application will not be initially approved, however recommendations will be given for strengthening the application (*i.e.*, more/different supportive services) and applicant will be encouraged to reapply once the Committee's concerns have been addressed; or
- The application will be denied and the Committee will attempt to assist the applicant and CSW with referrals for other residential options.

5. Background/reference checks, final processing and move-in.

Whenever the Committee approves an application, the Property Management office will proceed immediately with any remaining steps to finalize the application process:

- If the property tour/intro was not previously done it may be done at this time.
- Any remaining background and/or reference checks will be completed. A criminal background report will be obtained for every applicant; any of the following convictions will result in automatic denial:
 - Murder; arson; sex offense; other felony within the past 12 months.
- Any outstanding documentation supporting the applicant's eligibility will be obtained.

As soon as these steps have been satisfactorily completed, the Property Management office will contact the CSW to arrange move-in.

If the application is denied due to criminal background or reference checks, the Property Management office will advise the applicant and CSW in writing about reasonable accommodation procedures and provide contact information for The Durham Center.

Housing for New Hope is sensitive to the special needs of the population served at Williams Square Apartments and seeks to remain flexible in administering policies related to the use of criminal background and reference checks. Histories of non-payment are not uncommon, and applicants often have had some prior experience with the criminal justice system. Housing for New Hope also offers reasonable accommodation as an alternative for applicants who do not initially meet the standard admission criteria (see ***Requests for reasonable accommodation ...*** below).

Nondiscrimination.

Housing for New Hope is unconditionally committed to equal opportunity and non-discrimination in all of its work on behalf of homeless people. Housing for New Hope's programs are offered to all similarly situated persons⁴ regardless of their race, color, religion, gender, family status, sexual orientation, disability or national origin.

Requests for reasonable accommodation and/or modification of an apartment unit, or a policy or procedure.

Housing for New Hope strives to provide permanent supportive housing that is safe, usable and affordable for all tenants. Disabled or handicapped persons who require special physical arrangements, prospective applicants who believe they may not meet minimum admission criteria, or persons who believe their application was denied due to past history may request reasonable accommodation and/or reasonable modification. The application includes a form request for reasonable accommodation. Additional information on reasonable accommodation and/or modification requests is available at the Property Management office. Whenever a written request for reasonable accommodation and/or modification is received, the Property Management office will evaluate the request and provide a written response within ten (10) business days.

⁴ The phrase "similarly situated persons" is used here only to acknowledge that certain programs are designed to serve people with defined common needs, and funding for such programs is often conditioned on serving those persons exclusively or on a priority basis.