

5311 APPLYING UTILITY ALLOWANCES

5311.1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the simplified calculation of utility allowances for Housing Choice Voucher participants is to enable program participants, landlords, and PHA to be able to easily calculate a participant utility allowance utilizing one utility schedule. The new utility allowance is based on the lower of the bedroom size or voucher size, source of heating, electricity, and whether the participant is responsible for paying water and sewer usage. The utility consumption rates for the District of Columbia shall be reviewed annually and if there is a change of ten percent (10%) or more the simplified utility allowance schedule shall be adjusted accordingly.

5311.2 The utility allowance is calculated for each Family based upon DCHA's utility allowance schedule. The schedule is based on the average utility costs in the District of Columbia. The utility allowance schedule set by DCHA applies to all assisted program types.

5311.3 A DCHA established utility allowance schedule is used in determining Family Share and HAP. DCHA shall use the appropriate utility allowance as calculated by Section 5332.

5311.4 DCHA, under its MTW Authority, established its "Simplified Utility Allowance Schedule". The following provisions shall apply to calculating utility allowances:

- (a) DCHA shall use a simplified schedule to calculate utility allowances at the time of a Family's initial lease-up, periodic recertification, interim recertification, or when a family transfers to another unit pursuant to § 5333 -- Family Moves;
- (b) The utility allowance calculation for all participants shall be determined using one structure type selected by DCHA annually;
- (c) Generally, DCHA shall determine the structure type to by using the most commonly rented structure type based on the previous fiscal year;
- (d) At its discretion, DCHA may select a structure type larger or smaller than the most commonly rented structure type if it determines that selecting the most common structure type may cause a disproportionate number of hardships or disproportionate number of excessive allowances to Families;
- (e) Based on the structure type chosen, DCHA shall provide to all Families a flat allowance for tenant-paid gas and electric, an additional flat allowance if the unit is all electric, and an additional flat allowance if the participant is also responsible for water and sewer.

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- 5311.5 DCHA shall approve a utility allowance amount higher than shown on DCHA's schedule if a higher allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation for a Family member with a disability, in accordance with DCHA's procedures regarding reasonable accommodation.
- 5311.6 In the event of an interim recertification, DCHA shall use the utility allowance schedule in effect at the time of the family's last periodic recertification. Revised utility allowances shall be applied to a Family's rent and subsidy calculations at the first periodic recertification that is effective after the allowance is adopted.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 59 DCR 7890, 7895 (June 29, 2012); as amended by Final Rulemaking published at 61 DCR 1462 (February 21, 2014); as amended by Final Rulemaking published at 63 DCR 13165 (November 18, 2016).