



HILLTOP HOUSE, INC.

**Tenant Selection Plan**

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Hilltop House, Inc. (“Hilltop”) is a Washington nonprofit corporation that owns a 124-unit independent-living retirement community in the heart of Seattle, Washington. Its mission is to provide quality affordable accommodations for older residents in a private and secure environment where they are offered opportunities to enhance a rewarding quality of life. Hilltop House provides a caring community where residents can independently age in place so long as safety permits.

**Equal Opportunity Facility:**

Hilltop House is an Equal Housing Opportunity provider organized to provide housing to low, very low and extremely low-income individuals, 62 years or older under the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program. Hilltop will make reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities that require accommodations consistent with applicable law. Residency is open to all qualified and eligible individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, color, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. Hilltop seeks to process all applicants in a fair and consistent manner.

Hilltop House does not offer any type of assisted living services such as housekeeping, cooking, bathing, dressing, medication monitoring, etc. If a resident requires assistance with such services, it is the sole responsibility of the resident, at all times, to obtain, supervise and manage such services.

**HUD Compliance:**

All potential eligible and qualified applicants will be considered in accordance with the HUD-approved Affirmative Fair Housing-Marketing Plan (AFHMP) (HUD Form 935.2) after complying with all admissions requirements in HUD Handbook 4350.3, including amendments. Hilltop will give preference to individuals and elderly families displaced by government action or a federally declared disaster.

**Rent Calculations:**

There are three types of rent calculations at Hilltop.

1. SPRAC (Senior Preservation Rental Assistance Contract). There are 76 units funded under SPRAC. Hilltop House uses the HUD Data Sets for the Seattle Metropolitan Area. All applicant's income must be at or below the 50% Area Medium Income (AMI) Under SPRAC a resident pays 30% of his/her income for rent.
2. Project-based Seattle Housing vouchers. Hilltop has 30 of these vouchers. Hilltop House uses the HUD Data Sets for the Seattle Metropolitan Area. All applicants' income must be at or below the 30% Area Medium Income (AMI) the tenant pays 30% of his/her income for rent.
3. Market rate. The remainder of the apartment rents are priced according to HUD guidelines. Tenants in these apartments will not pay more than the HUD guidelines, and not less than a minimum set by Hilltop. Hilltop staff will calculate the tenant's annual income and set the apartment rent at 40% of that calculation provided that 40% doesn't go below the minimum rent.

### **Eligibility:**

Prospective tenants applying for residency at Hilltop House must:

- Be 62 years of age or older, a family or couple with at least one member who is age 62 or older
- Meet HUD's financial criteria for rental assistance (50% of AMI or less for SPRAC or 30% of AMI or less for SHA) and be willing to pay rent calculated by HUD's rule (generally 30% of household income.)
- Maintain the apartment as tenant's only residence
- Disclose Social Security numbers for all household members and provide proof of the numbers reported
- Sign an Authorizations for Release of Information (HUD Form 9887/9887A) prior to receiving assistance and annually thereafter
- Provide verification of all financial information reported by household
- Have a household size appropriate for the available apartments
- Be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen entitled to receive assistance under Section 8, Section 236, Rent Supplement, Rental Assistance Payments and Section 202/08 programs

### **Non-Smoking Policy**

Hilltop House is a non-smoking facility.

Non-smoking means that any tenant entering into a lease does so with the full understanding and agreement that there is to be no smoking in any apartment or common area of Hilltop House. The Tenant is responsible for making sure that all guests and/or service providers are aware of this policy.

### **Application Procedures**

Applications may be picked up at Hilltop Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or upon request will be faxed, mailed or emailed. Appointments may be made to tour the facilities, answer questions relating to the tenant-selection process or life at Hilltop House.

Applications are used to determine initial eligibility as it relates to age, disability status, household composition and income/assets. Acceptance of the application does not constitute acceptance for admission. Acceptance for admission requires verification of application information, a face-to-face interview, and additional information and documents required by HUD. All completed applications returned to Hilltop are stamped according to the time and date received, and placed on the appropriate waiting list in chronological order. All preliminary eligibility requirements must be met and all sections of the application must be completed and signed before the applicant's name is placed on the wait list. An incomplete application will be returned.

Prior to being placed on the waiting list, Hilltop performs a civil, criminal and national sexual offender background check.

Applicants must designate the size apartment they are requesting on the application form.

Once your eligibility is determined, you will receive an acceptance or rejection letter. When acceptance on to the waitlist is determined, applicants go on to the waiting list based on the date and time that the initial completed application was received.

Acceptance to the wait list doesn't guarantee tenancy or unit offer. Final admission and apartment placement is subject to an admissions interview and the verification of all information and documentation as required by Hilltop and or HUD or SHA and all applicable federal and state laws regulations.

### **Waiting List Procedures:**

#### **A. Placement on the Waiting List**

Applicants are placed on the appropriate waiting list to the apartment size stipulated on their application. You may be on more than one waiting list. Waiting list seniority will be based on the date and time of the new application.

#### **B. Confirmation/Time of Wait**

Once placed on the wait list, the applicant is notified by mail. Other considerations affecting waiting time may include: availability of an ADA-modified apartment for a mobility disabled applicant, existence of individuals on the waiting list who have made a first refusal and HUD Income Targeting

requirements. Preference may be given to senior applicants having extenuating circumstances including (1) those who do not presently reside in HUD subsidized units and are no longer able to afford the market rent of their present unit, (2) who for medical reasons may not be able to return home.

**C. Annual Waitlist Purge**

Each applicant is required to confirm his/her desire to remain on the wait list by checking in every 6 months. It is the responsibility of the applicant to keep Hilltop informed of any changes in address, phone number or other pertinent information. Failure to update information will result in the applicant's name being removed from the waiting list. If removed from the list, an applicant may reapply by submitting a new application. Seniority date of the new application will be based on the date and time it is received.

**INTAKE AND ADMISSION PROCESS**

**A. Initial eligibility for tenancy**

When an apartment becomes available, the individual at the top of the wait list is contacted by phone to schedule a tour of the apartment and for an intake interview. Reasonable efforts are made to contact applicants who do not respond to the initial call. Following reasonable, unsuccessful attempts to inform an applicant of apartment availability, the applicant will remain on the list in the same chronological order allowing staff to proceed to next eligible applicant. Efforts to contact applicants are documented in their file. Failure to respond to reasonable efforts is considered a refusal. (See below.)

**B. Refusals**

Once contact is made, and the applicant is invited to proceed with the intake process, he/she has until the end of the following business day to schedule an intake appointment. If the applicant declines to proceed with the process or decides not to accept an apartment after completing the process, this is considered a "refusal." The first time an applicant declines, (or is unreachable following reasonable efforts), he/she shall remain in the same chronological order on the wait list and shall be designated "first refusal." A letter is sent to the applicant, confirming/advising of this "first refusal" status. The second time an applicant declines an apartment, that household will be removed from the wait list completely and must re-apply for future admissions consideration.

**C. Application Interview**

Prior to the admissions interview, the applicant is advised of items to bring to the interview, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Photo identification, i.e., driver's license, government issued picture i.d. or passport;
- (b) Social Security card;
- (c) Social Security benefit award letter;

- (d) Any retirement or pension award letter;
- (e) Bank statements (six months) for any checking accounts;
- (f) Current statement(s) of savings accounts, money market accounts, CD's or any other asset accounts;
- (g) Employment verification. If you are self-employed, please provide 1040 and Schedule C. If you have regular employment, provide either six paystubs or verification from your employer of how many hours you work and your rate of pay;
- (h) Proof of ownership of any real property and a statement showing the value of the property;
- (i) Health insurance payments;
- (j) Pet registrations, vaccination record and, where applicable, Service Animal verification.

During the admissions interview, the applicant will be signed up for the SPRAC funding, a Section 8 Project Based voucher (SHA) or will be determined to be granted admission by paying market rate rent.

**D. HUD Requirement for Criminal Background Check**

In keeping with HUD requirements, all applicants must authorize Hilltop to conduct a criminal background check. Criminal background checks are also required for any live-in aids. HUD prohibits acceptance of any applicant or live-in aide who is a lifetime registered sex offender. HUD also prohibits acceptance of any applicant or live-in aide who has any criminal conviction(s) for any crime of violence, theft, fraud, or illegal manufacture, distribution or use of a controlled substance. Hilltop House prohibits acceptance of any applicant or live-in aide with conviction for the above crimes within at least the last three years. Additionally, any applicant who participates in any criminal activity or alcohol abuse that constitutes a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals, or results in substantial physical damage to the property of others will not be accepted.

**E. Citizenship/Immigration Status Requirements**

Applicants are required to declare U.S. Citizenship or submit evidence of eligible immigration status for each household member seeking housing assistance.

**F. SCREENING/REJECTION CRITERIA**

Hilltop may reject an applicant whose background indicates that he/she will not satisfy the legitimate and uniformly applied requirements of tenancy.

**Reasons for Rejection Include:**

- The applicant fails to meet eligibility requirements for age and/or income.
- The applicant has a history of non-payment of rent, history of damaging facility property, a history of disturbing the quiet enjoyment of others, evidence of current illegal drug use, manufacture or distribution.
- Eviction for non-payment of rent within the last three years.
- Any crimes committed against persons or a felony listed on criminal background checks that is less than three years old, or that

demonstrates a pattern of violence against persons or a pattern of preying on vulnerable people.

- Any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.
- Any household member has been evicted from federally assisted housing for drug related criminal activity, for three years from the date of eviction.
- Any conviction for or related to the abuse of drugs and or alcohol.
- Any member of the household is currently engaging in illegal drug use.
- Any member of the household's abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol and or drugs will interfere with the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
- The applicant submitted false information on the admissions application or failed to cooperate in providing support or documentation as required.
- Current / previous landlord(s) reference indicating that current or pattern of abuse of alcohol and or drugs would disrupt the right to peaceful enjoyment of the property for existing residents.
- Failure to provide a current address and phone number.
- Failure to sign designated or required forms and/or documents.
- Household size (including live-in aide) is not appropriate for unit size.
- Applicant has pet and will not conform to pet rules/lease policy.

#### **G. NOTIFICATION OF REJECTION**

Applicants who do not meet the screening criteria will be notified in writing why they will not be accepted as a tenant. They will be given an opportunity to meet with the Administrator to discuss any questions they may have regarding the screening criteria or to present additional information relevant to the screening process.

#### **H. ACCEPTANCE OF AN APARTMENT**

Upon completion of the intake interview, the applicant will be offered a specific apartment if all HUD and Hilltop's requirements have been met. Final acceptance for admission is subject to the outcome of the second criminal background check. Upon offer and acceptance of a unit if the background check is older than 60 days, a new background check will be run.

Once an apartment is offered, the applicant has until the end of the following business day to accept or decline the apartment. Declining the offer of an apartment constitutes a "refusal." Rent begins upon the day the lease is signed and executed.

An orientation meeting will be scheduled to coincide with the date that the apartment is ready for occupancy. The orientation meeting is used to finalize and sign all required documents, meet with staff and inspect the apartment. Upon completion of the inspection and signing of the inspection report, the

new tenant will receive the keys and move into the apartment anytime thereafter.

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT**

In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the owner/agent will not penalize victims of domestic violence, stalking, dating violence or rape. The Violence Against Women Act was promoted to make the lives of victims of abuse easier and to prevent homelessness.

1. A potential tenant who certifies that s/he was a victim of domestic violence may be allowed to be admitted even with poor credit and prior landlord evaluations if s/he can show these negative factors were caused by domestic violence
2. It assures that victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, etc. can have access to the criminal justice system without facing eviction
3. Where someone is abusive to other members of the household, only the abuser may be evicted
4. Tenants in assisted housing facing violence may be allowed early lease termination for a matter of safety.

Victims must certify their status as victims and that the incident in question was a bona fide incident of domestic violence by presenting appropriate documentation from the owner/agent. Nothing prevents a victim who has committed a crime or violated a lease from being denied, evicted or terminated.

## **OCCUPANCY STANDARDS**

Unit occupancy is limited to two persons per unit.

## **ENTERPRISE INCOME VERIFICATION (EIV) SYSTEM**

Hilltop House uses EIV which is an internet-based data system containing employment and income individuals participating in HUD's rental assistance programs. This information comes from the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services and the (HHS) National Directory of New Hires (NDNH). This information is used for tenants in order to verify social security numbers and correct reporting of income for all household members. EIV is also used to determine if applicants are currently receiving HUD rental assistance at another property.

Applicants (during the verification of information process) and tenants (annually) are required to sign form HUD-9887, Notice and Consent for Release of Information, and form HUD-9887-A, Applicant's/Tenant's Consent to the Release of Information. This gives consent for HUD and Hilltop to obtain information, to verify this information, and to determine eligibility for HUD rental assistance. Failure to sign the consent forms may result in the denial of assistance or termination of assisted housing benefits.

As part of the applicant screening process, Management will run an EIV Existing Tenant Search for all household members. This report checks to see whether any household member is currently living in another Public & Indian Housing or Multifamily site. If that is the case, Management will coordinate Move-Out/Move-In dates with the current property so that HUD will not be paying double subsidy.

### **LIVE-IN AIDES/ATTENDANTS**

Live-in Aides/Attendants must be screened for drug abuse and other criminal activity prior to initial occupancy. Live-in Aides/Attendants must pass all screening criteria except for the criteria regarding the ability to pay rent on time because s/he is not responsible for rental payments. Live-in Aides/Attendants will be required to provide identification and proof of SSN in order to conduct the screening. The tenant may request a reasonable accommodation to have a Live-In Aide. Once the request is made, Hilltop House will follow the internal policies.

Each Live-in Aide/Attendant shall be required sign a Resident Assistant – Live-in Aide Agreement stating that they will follow House Rules and have no pets or guests and that they will immediately vacate the tenant's unit if and when the support services are no longer needed by the tenant or the tenant vacates the apartment for any reason.

### **UNIT TRANSFER POLICY**

Residents may request to be placed on additional waiting lists at the discretion of the Executive Director. The resident requesting the transfer will be placed chronologically on the waiting list by date and time the request was approved. When the specific type of apartment becomes available, the resident will be notified and given the opportunity to move. If the resident refuses the available apartment, s/he will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list. If a resident receiving a subsidy is transferred and desires to keep the subsidy, s/he must move into an apartment that is eligible for the same type of subsidy. Residents who have a documented a Reasonable Accommodation for transferring will have first priority.

If an applicant who is on multiple waiting lists accepts an offered unit they must do one of the following:

- Remove themselves in writing from all other waiting lists at Hilltop House;
- Sign acknowledgement that upon acceptance of the offer of the unit, their original place on any remaining waiting lists will be altered. They will be moved to the bottom of the remaining waiting lists based on the date and time of the acceptance of the initial unit (i.e. date and time of the lease signing).