SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY
APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY PROCESS FLOW

Pre-application

Our Pre-application form is accompanied by an Application Guide that informs applicants they will automatically be denied for criminal history. Some applicants may opt out of the process when they see this information.

Full application (submitted after selection from the waiting list)

We ask applicants if they have ever been arrested, and we require them to list all criminal offenses and dates. Some may opt out of the process after considering this request.

Application interview

Applicants are informed they can be denied for criminal history. We give them advice on how to demonstrate positive aspects of rehabilitation, and we tell them they will have the opportunity to dispute the accuracy of any information we cite as cause for denial. We encourage applicants who think they may be impacted by criminal history to submit evidence of mitigating circumstances in advance. Some applicants may opt out of the process at this point.

Housing Counselor Review

The Housing Counselor obtains the background report and carefully reviews it for criminal activity. If deniable criminal history is reported, the HC notes it in preparation for Secondary Review. In certain cases we may write to the applicant to request clarification, or request additional information from WSP.

Secondary Review

The Admissions Manager and Housing Counselor team meet weekly to review applications that are not approvable under the letter of policy, to consider the impact of any mitigating circumstances such as the passage of time since offenses last occurred, various attributes of rehabilitation, any superseding positive housing history, and any additional information thus far submitted by the applicant. Depending on the individual situation, applications may be approved or denied, or we may decide to ask for more information before making a final decision.

Denial of Application

A formal Notice of Adverse Action is issued to inform denied applicants in specific detail about the reasons their application has been denied. They are given the opportunity to request an Informal Hearing and to submit information which mitigates, clarifies, explains, or counters the information we cited as cause for denial. We meet with applicants on request to advise them about how to do this.

Pre-hearing file review

The Admissions Manager evaluates information submitted by the applicant in response to denial, to determine if it is substantial enough to rescind the denial. If determined insufficient, an Informal Hearing is scheduled.

Informal Hearing

The Informal Hearing is conducted by one of SHA's Property Management Administrators as Hearing Officer. A Housing Counselor is assigned to represent the Admissions Office, and the denied applicant appears, with or without representation, to plead their case. All available information is considered. The Hearing Officer has the option to uphold the denial, overturn it, or refer the case back to Admissions for additional work.