

# LENNOX CHASE APARTMENTS

**2534 Lake Wheeler Road, Raleigh, NC 27603**

## **Application Processing Procedures and Resident Selection Criteria**

Lennox Chase is a 37-unit studio apartment community developed by DHIC, Inc. to serve individuals with very low incomes. Lennox Chase, a smoke-free environment, will offer supportive services to residents on-site and coordinate follow-up services offered by local agencies that refer residents to the apartment community. Individuals who live at Lennox Chase will often come with barriers that have kept them out of permanent housing in the past, but they will also bring the resilience and resourcefulness necessary to overcome those barriers.

DHIC has worked with Wake County Human Services (WCHS) and representatives from referral agencies to plan a community that will help individuals make the successful transition from homelessness, transitional housing programs and overcrowded, costly or substandard housing. DHIC has hired Community Management Corporation (CMC) as the property manager responsible for processing applications and managing Lennox Chase on a day-to-day basis. WCHS will provide a Housing Specialist to coordinate referrals from agencies and follow-up services. Applicants with Section 8 vouchers, Shelter + Care vouchers or transitional rental assistance are welcome if the applicant meets other tenant selection criteria.

DHIC, and its management agent, Community Management Corporation, and their respective employees are committed to Equal Housing Opportunities for all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, handicap, national origin or familial status. The following application procedures are the result of deliberate planning to serve the needs of residents and ensure their success in a supportive apartment community.

---

### **Application Processing at Lennox Chase**

**Overview:** Applications for Lennox Chase will be taken by CMC on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants will either be referred by a Sponsor Agency or contact Lennox Chase directly to apply. An application must be completed in full, dated and signed by the applicant. Web-based applications may be available for completion prior to a visit by the applicant to the property. CMC will note on the application the date and time the completed application is received. An application-processing fee of \$25 will be charged to each applicant. Initial leases cover a period of 12 months and automatically rollover into a month-to-month lease after initial term expiration.

**Role of Management Company:** Initial contact will be with CMC who will:

- Answer inquiries about Lennox Chase accommodations
- Collect application fees (\$25) and take applications from potential residents
- Secure release forms from applicants for verifications and information sharing
- Secure criminal and credit background checks and past rental histories
- Secure documentation regarding income, assets and other program eligibility requirements
- Manage waiting lists
- Determine whether applicant meets selection criteria
- Advise applicants in writing of determination of eligibility for residency at Lennox Chase
- Refer applicants to Housing Specialist if applicant does not meet criteria

**Preferences/Waiting Lists:** Lennox Chase has a preference to serve homeless individuals or those coming from housing or treatment programs. Approved applicants will be placed on a waiting list with a preference for homeless individuals. The term "homeless" includes persons without a fixed nighttime residence, persons living in a shelter or in a transient residence that provides temporary quarters, and persons staying in a place not designed or ordinarily used for sleeping. Waiting lists will be one year in length, and the application and verifications are valid for 120 days. Once an applicant is nearing 120 days a phone call will be made to update the verifications and the applicant will sign the application stating that no changes have occurred.

**Step 1: Preliminary Approval/Waiting List:** Upon receipt of an application, the On-Site Manager will review the information provided by the applicant in his/her application to confirm eligibility based on the program guidelines as established by the NC Housing Finance Agency, i.e. age, income limitation, and family composition. Upon completion of such review, the applicant will be notified of his/her status. **If preliminarily eligible**, the applicant is notified that "based on the information provided: the applicant appears to be eligible for housing subject to verification of the information provided on the application. This notification also advises that the applicant is being placed on the waiting list. If determined ineligible, the applicant is notified of the reason(s) for such ineligibility and is referred to the Housing Specialist to determine eligibility for a Reasonable Accommodation or Second Chance. There is no Reasonable Accommodation or Second Chance for income limitations.

**Step 2: Tenant Verifications/Selection Criteria:** Prior to anticipated occupancy, CMC will begin screening the application to determine if the applicant meets basic eligibility requirements and other tenant selection criteria. **If favorable**, the applicant will be contacted and a personal interview will be arranged. During this interview, the manager and applicant will review the application to update for any changes in circumstances and complete third-party verification forms consistent with the application processing procedure. Upon receipt of the verifications from all third parties, a determination for approval will be made.

The following selection criteria will be used for Lennox Chase:

**Pet Policy:** No pets will be allowed at Lennox Chase, with the exception of service animals.

**Household Size:** Occupancy limited to households consisting of one person. Units are studio apartments without separate bedrooms.

**Income Verification:** Depending on the unit, prospective tenant can have gross annual income no greater than 30, 35 or 50% of area median and prospective tenant must have sufficient income to afford rent. For the purposes of minimum income qualification, rental vouchers will be considered as part of the applicant's income. As of 2003, the income limits and minimum income requirements are as follows:

Number of Apartments	Income Target	Maximum Income	Minimum Income	Rent*	Deposit*	Total Cost at Move-In
6	30%	\$16,800	\$11,790	\$398	\$398	\$796
9	35%	\$19,600	\$12,480	\$411	\$411	\$822
21	50%	\$28,000	\$13,050	\$450	\$450	\$900

**\*Water, Sewer and Electricity are included in rent and will not require an additional deposit.**

Residents will enter Lennox Chase at the 30, 35 or 50% income level and pay different rents based on these income levels. A resident initially approved at the 30% income level will continue to pay the applicable rent at 30% income level until the tenant's income exceeds 50% of the median income. At this point, the rent for such tenants will be adjusted upward to the rent that corresponds to 50% of median income.

**Income Stability:** Prospective tenants must have verifiable employment, and must have been employed at least 3 months prior to application. If the applicant does not work due to a disability, applicant must have a stable source of income such as SSI/SSDI. If the applicant is sponsored by a Sponsor Agency, the Sponsor Agency must verify adherence to any savings plan required by the Sponsor Agency for the period that the applicant received the Sponsor Agency's services.

**Rental History:** Prospective tenants must have no evictions in the year prior to application. References from prior landlords must not reveal destruction of rental property or disruptive behavior or excessive noise that interferes with the quiet enjoyment of the premises, and must reveal satisfactory housekeeping ability. If the applicant is sponsored by a Sponsor Agency, the Sponsor Agency must verify satisfactory housekeeping ability for the period that the applicant received the Sponsor Agency's services.

**Student Status:** Full-time students, as defined under Section 42 of the IRS Code, cannot live at Lennox Chase.

**Credit History:** Credit check must not reveal rent owed to past landlords, unless applicant can verify participation in a payment plan with the landlord. An applicant who has declared bankruptcy in the last four years must have re-established credit and remained current for a least one year. If applicant has NO credit, non-traditional credit histories such as utility or cell phone payments will be reviewed to assess fiscal responsibility. Sponsor agencies must verify demonstrated ability to manage funds and meet obligations as required during the period that the applicant received the Sponsor Agency's services, if applicable.

**Criminal Background:** All criminal histories will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Factors considered will include but not be limited to:

- Time between application and offense(s)
- Pattern of charges and convictions, as well as open cases
- Weapons
- More than one felony
- Time after confinement
- Successful completion of treatment, probation, etc. and/or compliance with post-release programming
- Offenses related to property/tenant/staff safety
- Whether applicant was convicted of a registerable offense and whether applicant has been registering

**Step 3: Final Approval** Applicants who have met all criteria listed above will be notified by the On-Site Manager, who will conduct an orientation to familiarize the applicant with Lennox Chase. Prior to move-in, the applicant will meet with Lennox Chase's Housing Specialist to have the opportunity to develop a Supportive Housing Plan and learn about available services and activities.

Decisions on offering an applicant residency will be made by the management company, CMC. The decisions will be based on objective criteria:

- Does the applicant meet eligibility criteria?
- Are the reference checks, credit check, and criminal background check satisfactory?
- If not, is there a recommendation and plan provided by the Housing Specialist?
- Is the information provided consistent between application and reference/background checks?

**Grievance Process:** If screening indicates an unfavorable rental, income stability, credit, police or reference check, the applicant will be notified of the reason(s) in writing for such ineligibility and the applicant will have 14 days to contact either 1) CMC regarding any suspected errors in processing the application or to apply for a Reasonable Accommodation, or 2) the Housing Specialist to determine eligibility for a Second Chance.

### **Outreach and Sponsorship**

Lennox Chase is intended to serve as a key component in the housing continuum providing permanent supportive housing to those who have had a history of homelessness or living in inadequate living environments. Lennox Chase will maintain a waiting list with preference given to homeless individuals. Accordingly, outreach concerning available apartments at Lennox Chase will include notification to Sponsor Agencies. It is expected that many residents will be sponsored by social services programs located in Wake County.

The Sponsor Agency will play key role in:

- Providing information necessary to determine that prospective resident is prepared to meet the responsibilities and obligations of tenancy
- Assisting in transition from structured social services program to independent living at Lennox Chase
- Providing follow-up services during period of transition and when tenant is at risk

The primary responsibility for coordination with Sponsor Agencies will belong to the Housing Specialist with DHIC's support.

- Briefings and tours will be provided for program directors and case managers.
- Information on eligibility criteria and follow-up requirements for referring organizations will be provided
- Support services providers will be encouraged to outreach to program graduates who have been placed in marginal housing in the community (such as rooming houses)

Services providers sponsoring residents will be informed of their responsibility to transition clients to Lennox Chase:

- Sponsor Agencies will have responsibility for assuring that clients have furnishings, etc. to set up housekeeping;
- Case Managers will agree to keep referred consumers in their active caseload for a minimum term (3-6 months) after consumer has become a resident at Lennox Chase
- Sponsor Agencies will agree to provide follow-up services to their consumers who require them

Sponsor Agencies must provide evidence of applicant's ability to succeed in permanent supportive housing. This should include a sound reference that verifies the applicant's consistency in participating in Sponsor Agency's programming, adherence to program rules and ability to manage finances. If the applicant is sponsored by a Sponsor Agency, the Sponsor Agency must verify satisfactory housekeeping ability and adherence to any savings plan required by the Sponsor Agency for the period that the applicant received the Sponsor Agency's services.

Sponsor Agencies must agree to provide follow-up services to clients they sponsor to ease the transition into permanent housing and help when difficulties arise. The purpose of Lennox Chase is to help individuals maintain permanent housing. Residents will not be required to receive services, but Sponsor Agencies will be required to offer them.

### **Reasonable Accommodation and Second Chance Policy**

Although the Fair Housing Amendments Act generally requires applicants to be given equal treatment and prohibits discrimination against anyone with respect to the protected classes, there are certain limited circumstances when the Act requires a housing provider to treat persons with disabilities differently to enable them to have equal access to, or enjoyment of, housing and other housing-related programs. Specifically, the Fair Housing Amendments Act requires housing providers to provide "reasonable accommodations" to persons with disabilities. This means an owner may have to modify rules, policies, practices, procedures and/or services to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the housing. In addition, the Fair Housing Amendments Act contains specific accessibility requirements that apply to the design and construction of new multifamily housing built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991.

**Eligibility for Reasonable Accommodation** is based on the Federal Fair Housing definition of disabled. Under Federal law, a person with a disability is any person who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
2. Has a record of such an impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such impairment.

The definition does not include any individual whose current use of alcohol or drugs prevents the individual from participating in the housing program or activities, or whose participation, by reason of such current alcohol or drug abuse, would constitute a direct threat to property or the safety of others.

The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction and alcoholism. For purposes of qualifying for low-income housing, this does not include a person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence [24 CFR Part 8.3, and HUD Handbook 4350.3, (Exhibit 2-2)].

The property contains three (3) units that have been specifically designed to accommodate persons with mobility impairments requiring special features for wheelchair accessibility and use.

**Eligibility for Second Chance** is reserved for those who do not meet Reasonable Accommodation criteria, but have worked on issues that have interfered with maintaining permanent housing in the past. Many prospective residents will not meet the Selection Criteria for tenancy. They may have unacceptable credit or criminal backgrounds or histories of evictions. However, it is understood that a primary purpose of Lennox Chase is to afford a 'Second Chance' to individuals that have experienced troubling circumstances and have made concerted efforts to address and resolve former problems.

Individuals who do not meet the Selection Criteria for tenancy will be referred by CMC to the WCHS Housing Specialist. Whether to meet with the Housing Specialist is completely the option of the prospective tenant, however, those who do not wish to will not be able to take advantage of the Second Chance policy.

The Housing Specialist in an interview(s) with the prospective tenant will:

- Identify the past history that led to the problem
- Identify the steps that the individual has taken to resolve the problem and its underlying causes
- Obtain evidence that the individual has made a clear commitment to change
- Work with the individual to develop a plan that will remain in force during the individual's residency at Lennox Chase and that will minimize the possibility of a recurrence of the problem

Based on the above information, the Housing Specialist may issue a recommendation to CMC that it waive the criteria that prevented tenancy from being offered. No individual will be offered tenancy in Lennox Chase without being interviewed and screened by CMC. As appropriate, prospective residents will be encouraged by sponsoring agencies and CMC to meet first with the WCHS Housing Specialist and with the support of the Housing Specialist, develop a Supportive Housing Plan.

**If the applicant does not qualify for a Reasonable Accommodation or Second Chance, CMC will notify the applicant in writing.**

### **Supportive Housing Plan**

- It is expected that many residents at Lennox Chase will develop an individualized Supportive Housing Plan with help from their sponsor agency and the Housing Specialist.
- The purpose of the Supportive Housing Plan is to 1) continue the resident's work of addressing any issues that are barriers to maintaining permanent housing, 2) ensure that the resident is successful in maintaining his/her apartment at Lennox Chase and 3) support the resident's preparation for any future housing scenarios.
- The Resident will be the primary force in the development and implementation of his/her Plan, which will both build his/her individual strengths, such as leadership development or computer skills, and provide support in meeting needs such as recovery and legal issues.
- The Housing Specialist and the sponsor agency, with the resident's help, will identify suitable sources of services and opportunities that will build on strengths and meet the needs of the resident. To the extent that the sponsor agency can provide services and opportunities directly to the resident, it will do so.
- Once services and opportunities are identified in the community, the sponsor agency and Housing Specialist will help the resident to facilitate and maintain links to providers.
- The Housing Specialist will develop a schedule for meeting with resident and his/her sponsor agency to review and update the Supportive Housing Plan.

The interview with the Housing Specialist will review (as applicable):

- The individual's history of homelessness, its causes, the number of times they were homeless, and resources they drew upon when they were homeless.
- The medical, psychiatric and substance use history of the individual.
- History of violence, criminal activity, incarceration.
- The support network and leisure activities of the individual.
- Prior financial problems.
- Education and employment.
- Daily living skills and community living skills.

The interview will seek to identify the individual's goals in each of the above areas, the actions that have been taken to achieve these goals, and actions that the individual is willing to commit to. After the final determination regarding residency has been made, the Housing Specialist will work with the resident to develop his/her Supportive Housing Plan and provide support in carrying out the plan.