

## **YWCA Madison Housing for Single Women and Families Screening Criteria**

*Screening Criteria will be accessible on YWCA Madison's website along with the housing application. Copies of screening Criteria will be offered to applicants during the application interview.*

Applicants must complete, sign and date a YWCA Madison Housing application.

Applicants must provide a complete housing history for a minimum of 1 year.

Housing history may include stays in emergency shelter, transitional housing, doubled-up situations, and/or living in an encampment. Third party verification will be requested for applicants who list any of the previously mentioned living situations on their housing history.

Applicants meet with staff to complete an application interview and sign releases of information for references.

Applicants must provide *at least* 1 reference; professional references are preferred however, personal references are also accepted, as long as the reference is not related to the applicant.

Criminal background information is requested on the YWCA application and will be verified, to the extent possible, through available public records.

YWCA Madison conducts tenant screening in accordance with all Federal and State laws and with local Madison General Ordinances.

Housing applications will be processed after applicants submit a complete application, meet with YWCA staff for an application interview, and complete an income certification appointment. YWCA staff process applications in the order they are received. To confirm your application has been received you can call (608) 257-1436 option 2. Please note that it could take 1-2 months from submitting an application to signing a lease.

### **Step 1: Reference Checks**

Housing, professional and personal references will be checked. An application may be denied for:

- Inconsistent or incomplete information.
- Failure to provide housing history, inaccurate, and/or falsifying information.
- Failure to provide housing references.
- Poor landlord, professional or personal references, including:
  - ◆ Past due rent, unless a satisfactory payment arrangement has been made.
  - ◆ Noise complaints, traffic, property damage, cleanliness concerns, theft, violence or threats of violence, harassing of other tenants, guests or landlord, or other lease violations.
  - ◆ Creating a fire hazard.
  - ◆ Evidence that the applicant is unable to live independently.
  - ◆ Evidence that the applicant is unable to get along with others, including racist remarks and/or other discriminatory behavior.
- Harassing behavior &/or engaging in aggressive/abusive language with YWCA Madison staff, residents, or building guests during the application process.
- Past history at YWCA Madison involving lease violations, shelter/housing handbook violations, past due rent at YWCA Madison, or other infractions of YWCA Madison rules.

When any of the above denial conditions apply, YWCA Madison staff may consider extenuating circumstances and/or evidence provided by references that the applicant has made a sincere effort to rectify a past problem.

Staff may stop processing an application if the applicant has failed to maintain contact when asked to.

It is the applicant's responsibility to update their contact information, if it changes, with staff.

## **Step 2: Criminal Background Check**

If the applicant passes the first stage of the screening process, a criminal background check will be conducted.

Past criminal conviction record for offenses that bear a substantial relationship to tenancy, such that a reasonable person would have a justifiable fear for the safety or property of the YWCA, its employees, or other tenants may lead to denial. For example:

- Criminal activity involving violence to persons such as murder, child abuse, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, battery, aggravated assault, assault with a deadly weapon.
- Criminal activity involving violence to or destruction of property, such as arson, vandalism, theft, burglary, criminal trespass to a dwelling.
- Manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance.
- Operating a drug dwelling
- Possession with intent

Convictions are only considered if less than 2 years have passed since the date of the conviction(s). Mitigating factors are considered on a case by case basis. Please note: No time limit applies if the offense must be reported under the Sex Offender Reporting Requirements.

### **Step 3: Section 42 Eligibility**

The applicant's income and assets will be verified to determine eligibility for Section 42 housing.

- Maximum income and rent limits apply
- Income limits are determined by HUD
  - based on size of household

An application may be denied for:

- Monthly income is less than the YWCA monthly rent, unless the applicant can show the ability to pay for at least the first three months.
- Annual income is greater than the current qualifying income; 60% of the County Median Income.
- Full-time student status restrictions apply.

Monthly rental rates are set amounts based on unit size and not based on income, unless in a Project Based Section 8 unit or if a tenant has an individual Section 8 voucher as stated in the HAP contract.

### **Step 4: Notification**

If approved, the applicant will be notified by phone. The applicant will either set up a time to look at the apartment/SRO and sign a lease or will be placed on a chronological waitlist if there are no units available. As units become available, our leasing agent will contact applicants on the chronological waitlist to place into

housing. If an applicant denies an available unit, the unit will be offered to the next person on the list. An applicant will need to re-complete the Section 42 income paperwork when more than 120 days passes from the date of Section 42 intake.

If denied, the applicant will be notified by mail of the reason for the denial. Applicants may appeal a denial in writing, within 30 days of the housing program denial.

All final approvals are pending Section 42 completion and approval.

## **Step 5: Appeal Process**

An applicant may appeal the denial in writing, within 30 days of the denial. Appeals are reviewed and decided upon by the Chief Executive Officer. The final decision will be available to the applicant in writing or by phone. Decisions of the Chief Executive Officer will be final.

Denied applications, with reasons for the denial, will be kept on file a minimum of 2 years. Applicants who have been denied housing may not reapply for a period of 6 months.

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### *Violence Against Women and Justice Department Reauthorization Act of 2013*

The Violence Against Women and Justice Department Reauthorization Act of 2013 protects qualified tenants and family members of tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking (collectively “domestic violence”) from being evicted or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of such violence against them.

Protections:

The Landlord (YWCA Madison, Inc.) may not consider incidents of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking as serious or repeated violations of the lease or other “good cause” for termination of assistance, tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of abuse.

The Landlord (YWCA Madison, Inc.) may not consider criminal activity directly relating to abuse, engaged in by a member of a tenant’s household or any guest or other person under the tenant’s control, cause for termination of assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights if the tenant or an immediate member of the tenant’s family is the victim of threatened victim of threat abuse.

The Landlord (YWCA Madison, Inc.) may request in writing that the victim, or a family member on the victim’s behalf, certify that the individual is a victim of abuse and that the Certification of Domestic

Violence, Dating Violence or Stalking, From HUD-91066, or other documentation as noted on the certification form, be completed and submitted within 14 business days, or an agreed upon extension date, to receive protection under the VAWA. Failure to provide the certification or other supporting documentation with the specified timeframe may result in eviction.