

# YWCA Housing for Single Women and Families Screening Criteria

This document is accessible on YWCA Madison's [website](#) along with our [housing application](#). Copies of screening criteria will be offered to applicants during the application interview.

## Step 1: Housing Eligibility

Applicants must submit a complete YWCA Madison Housing application.

Applicants must have income and/or demonstrate an ability to be able to pay rent in full throughout the duration of the lease.

Applicants must provide a complete housing history for a minimum of 2 years.

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. Any third party verifications that are not completely filled out (ie: list N/A or the reference not being able to verify what is being asked) will be considered insufficient.

Applicants must meet with staff to complete an application interview. The following will be accomplished during the application interview:

- An overview of amenities and services available for the program of interest.
- Tour of unit(s) available.
- Gain consent to process application information by signing release(s) of information.

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.

## Step 2: 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.

- Examples include: income from employment, SSI, SSDI and/or public benefits such as W2.
- 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 3: Reference Checks**

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. Housing, professional and/or personal references will be checked by property management. An application may be denied for:

- Inconsistent or incomplete information.
- Failure to provide housing history and/or providing inaccurate or falsified information.
- Poor landlord, professional or personal references, including: Past due rent, unless a satisfactory payment arrangement has been made.
  - ◆ Noise complaints, visitor and guest issues/traffic, property damage, cleanliness concerns, theft, violence or threats of violence, harassment of other tenants, guests or landlord, or other lease violations.
  - ◆ Creating a fire hazard.
- 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 evidence provided that the applicant has made a sincere effort to rectify a past problem. Examples of such effort(s) include a letter of explanation from the applicant or an advocacy letter on behalf of the applicant.

If an applicant is denied during this process, they will be notified both verbally and written. It is the applicant's responsibility to update their contact information, if it changes, with staff.

### **Step 4: Criminal Background Check**

If the applicant passes Steps 1-3, 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 YWCA Madison, its employees and/or tenants may lead to denial. Examples of offenses that would bear substantial relationship to tenancy include:

- 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 that requires an individual to be placed on the National Sex Offender Registry.
- 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.

An application will be denied if:

1. Less than 4 years have passed since the date of any criminal felony conviction(s).
2. Less than 2 years have passed since the date of any criminal misdemeanor conviction(s).

*Please note - No time limit applies if the offense must be reported under the Sex Offender Reporting Requirements.*

## **Step 5: Notification**

If approved, the applicant will be notified by phone. Staff will offer the applicant an appointment to sign their lease. If no units are available at the time of approval, the applicant will be placed on a chronological waitlist and will be notified as soon as a unit becomes available. 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 if more than 120 days have passed 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 denial decision.

All final approvals are pending Section 42 completion and approval.

## **Step 6: Appeal Process**

An applicant may appeal the denial in writing within 30 days of the denial. Appeals are reviewed and decided upon by YWCA Madison's Housing Director and Operations Director. The final decision will be available to the applicant in writing. Decisions of the Housing and Operations Director 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.