

12/09

experience with local preferences?

We have 2 local preferences – one is to give a preference to adults 55 or older or near elderly, and that's worked out great. That's the age we see the most desperate – out of work or can't work and too young for social security and it takes way too long to get disability – and then you still don't have medical insurance for 2 years.

The second preference is for victims of domestic violence. We have a new program at the shelter that helps these victims get funds for utilities, rent, deposits, for 6 months, but they have to attend counseling, financial counseling, etc. Great program.

I've heard of working preferences, but have never adopted that one. We don't have issues that would make us adopt it. Most of residents who don't work attend college.

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We use them, but I don't like them. Wish we could, but that is not in the plan.

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Several years ago, I used a Working Preference for our Section 8 Program. The idea was we would be able to serve more client. It did not work out that way. Clients would loose/Quit their job after being housed. Eliminated the preference. Encountered no problem.

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We had 2 local preferences when I started working here, one for working individuals living in the community and one for vets. We dropped them both and now work on strictly a first-come-first-serve basis. We encountered problems also, which is why we dropped them. First, we had people who would get a job just to get an apartment and quit the job as soon as they got in. Second, only vets were getting in. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for helping vets, but the word got out and it seemed that every vet in the county wanted an apartment. It was also hard to explain to people who had patiently waited for their turn on the waiting list, they would call one time and we would tell them they were number 5, for example, and then the next time they called they may be number 8. They didn't understand why they got moved down the list. When we would explain our local preference policy, they would get upset and think we were discriminating in some way. So, the Board decided several years ago to just do away with all preferences and go by the list. That has worked much better for us, people don't get upset because they are always the number they were the last time they called (or even up higher on the list), we don't have people moving in with good jobs and then quitting their job just because they got in, etc.

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We use the standard paying 50% or more of income for rent or displaced. We feel that this catches the neediest groups. -----

We removed all preferences several years ago. The preferences did no work well for us. We did not have any problems dropping the preferences. We had more problems by having the preferences.