

Technical Guide for Determining Income and Allowances for the HOME Program

Anticipating Income

The HOME regulations at 24 CFR 92.203(d)(1) require that, for the purpose of determining eligibility for HOME assistance, a PJ must project a household's income in the future. To do so, a "snapshot" of the household's current circumstances is used to project future income. In general, a PJ should assume that today's circumstances will continue for the next 12 months, unless there is verifiable evidence to the contrary. For example, if a head of household is currently working for \$7.00 per hour, 40 hours per week, the PJ should assume that this family member will continue to do so for the next year. Thus, estimated earnings will be \$7.00 per hour multiplied by 2,080 hours, or \$14,560 per year.

This method should be used even when it is not clear that the type of income received currently will continue in the coming year. For example, assume a family member has been receiving unemployment benefits of \$100 per month for 16 weeks at the time of income certification. It is unlikely that the family member will continue on unemployment for another 52 weeks. However, because it is not known whether or when the family member will find employment, the PJ should use the current circumstances to anticipate annual (gross) income. Income would therefore be calculated as follows: \$100 per week x 52 weeks, or \$5,200.

The exception to this rule is when documentation is provided that current circumstances are about to change. For example, an employer might report that an employee currently makes \$7.50 an hour, but a negotiated union contract will increase this amount to \$8.25 an hour eight weeks from the date of assistance. In such cases, income can be calculated based on the information provided. In this example, the calculation would be as follows: • \$7.50/hour x 40 hours/week x 8 weeks = \$2,400 • \$8.25/hour x 40 hours/week x 44 weeks = \$14,520 • \$2,400 + \$14,520 = \$16,920.

Sources of Earned Income

In addition to hourly earnings, PJs must account for all earned income. In addition to the base salary, this will include annual cost of living adjustments (COLAs), bonuses, raises, and overtime pay. In the case of overtime, it is important to clarify whether overtime is sporadic or a predictable component of an employee's income. If it is determined that an applicant has earned and will continue to earn overtime pay on a regular basis, PJs should calculate the average amount of overtime pay earned by the applicant over the pay period the PJ is using to calculate income eligibility (3 months or 12 months). This average amount is then to be added to the total amount of projected earned income over the following 12-month period. Exhibit 2.1 provides a step-by-step explanation of the standard methodology for projecting annual income.

Exhibit 2.1 – Step-by-Step Methodology for Projecting Annual Income

Steps	Instructions
Step 1: Collect appropriate income documentation.	Appropriate documentation includes pay stubs, third-party verification, bank statements (checking and/or savings), or certified copies of tax returns. (These can be acquired by submitting an IRS Form 4506, "Request for Copy of Tax Form.")
Step 2: Calculate the applicant household's projected income based upon documentation.	This calculation must include hourly wage figures, overtime figures, bonuses, anticipated raises, COLAs, or other anticipated changes in income. Other specific inclusions must also be reflected in the calculation, depending upon which definition of annual income the PJ has elected to use for its program. Specific instructions for each of the three definitions of income under HOME are provided later in this guide.
Step 3: Compare the amount of projected income against current HOME income limits.	Once the PJ has calculated the household's income, based on its selected definition, it must compare the household's final projected figure to annual HOME income limits, which are adjusted according to household size. These limits are posted online at: www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/limits/income/index/cfm . This information is also available through the CPD office of your state or local HUD Field Office. Households whose projected annual income is less than the current HOME income limits are eligible for HOME assistance.