The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) currently has about 1,400 families searching for rental housing. Many have reported that they are experiencing difficulty finding available rental housing. For this reason, HACoLA is requesting that families remain in their units and consider moving only when necessary. Families looking to move should be patient and consider surveying the area they wish to move to in advance. Families should also consider having at least two or three units in mind before issuing their landlord a notice to vacate.

HACoLA doesn’t want you and your family unnecessarily displaced without a home. As a reminder, if you vacate your assisted unit without proper notice to your landlord and HACoLA, you will be in program violation, which may lead to the termination of your rental assistance. HACoLA is your partner in helping you remain up-to-date on your rental assistance matters.

Quality Control Inspections

Because Quality Matters

Has your unit been selected for a Quality Control (QC) inspection? No need to worry. Quality Control inspections are simply a way of ensuring that the quality of our inspectors’ work meets guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). They also make sure that there is consistency among inspectors in meeting those guidelines.

If your unit is selected for a QC inspection, both you and your landlord will be contacted and an appointment will be scheduled. Once the inspection is completed, if deficiencies are found, a letter will be sent to you and your landlord outlining the deficiencies and the timeframe for which the deficiencies need to be corrected.

Don't Lose Your Assistance

HACoLA staff will help you maintain your Section 8 assistance for as long as you and your family qualify for the program. However, each month, families continue to lose their Section 8 vouchers. Families who are terminated for violating the program rules may be required to repay money and face legal prosecution, depending on the situation and violation. So, please be aware.

Below is a list of reasons why families lose their assistance:

• Not responding to requests for paperwork;
• Not keeping inspection appointments;
• Moving and leaving unit in dirty and damaged condition;
• Not reporting family changes such as income, or providing false and misleading information;
• Allowing people to live in the assisted unit without first getting approval from HACoLA;
• Drug related/criminal activity by any family member or guest; and
• Not paying utility bills thus causing utilities to be disconnected.

Please help us to preserve your housing assistance by cooperating with requests and fulfilling your requirements for keeping your Section 8 rental assistance in good standing.

Who is Responsible for Paying the Utilities?

It is crucial that you inform HACoLa each time you and your owner agree to switch any utility and/or appliance responsibility (i.e. gas, electricity, water, etc.) that is indicated on your lease agreement.

A recent review of our records has shown that utility and appliance responsibility is constantly shifted between landlords and tenants through verbal agreement and without notification to HACoLA. In addition, we have discovered numerous discrepancies in utility and appliance designation between HACoLA’s Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract and the most current lease agreement on file.

At the time of a request for tenancy approval, you and the owner are required to submit the lease agreement, along with the utility and appliance designation, that will govern the tenancy.

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Who is Responsible for Paying the Utilities?

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At the execution of the new contract, and at every subsequent recertification, a utility allowance is applied to your total portion of the rent for utilities and/or services directly paid by you (the tenant). Because the utility allowance contributes to the portion of the rent that is paid to the owner by HACoLA and by you, we must execute a new HAP contract and adjust our payment to the owner each time there is a switch in utility or appliance responsibility. HACoLA case managers will be diligently checking for utility and appliance inconsistencies in the HAP contract and lease agreement at each annual recertification. If a discrepancy in utility and/or appliance responsibility is found, you will be required to update your lease agreement and the owner will be required to execute a new HAP contract with HACoLA.

Join the Family Self-Sufficiency Program

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program is a voluntary program that is designed to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency by providing services ranging from case management to referrals for social services, such as:

- Childcare
- Credit Counseling
- Education
- Homeownership Workshops
- Job preparation
- Mentoring
- Money Management
- Transportation
- Vocational Training

The biggest incentive for families participating in the FSS Program is the escrow account. As families report wage increases, their rent is adjusted. With each adjustment, the family may qualify to have a portion of their rent credited towards an interest-bearing escrow savings account each month. FSS participants must successfully achieve all goals established in the FSS Contract of Participation and graduate from the FSS Program in order to be eligible to receive escrow funds.

HACoLA currently has open enrollment for the FSS Program in both the Alhambra Office and Antelope Valley Office. To get more information about the FSS Program, please contact Alhambra Office (626) 586-1597 or Antelope Valley Office (661) 575-1522.

PUBLIC NOTICE: HACoLA has prepared a draft of its Annual Plan for 2015. The Annual Plan informs the government and the public about HACoLA’s policies and its progress toward meeting program goals. In order to complete the Annual Plan, HACoLA must provide the public 45 days to review and comment on the proposed plan. The draft plan is available online at www.hacola.org and in the lobbies of our Alhambra and Antelope Valley administrative offices. The public comment period begins on 12/26/2014, and ends on 2/10/15. If you wish to comment on the Annual Plan, you may contact Dawn Owens at (626) 586-4510, or by email at assistedhousingcompliance@hacola.org.