New Policy: Requesting a Voucher to Move

Are you thinking about moving but concerned about what will happen if you cannot find a suitable unit before your voucher expires? Have you wondered if you will lose your voucher and rental assistance? Can your landlord force you to move since you gave a notice that you planned to move? The information below will help answer those questions.

How to request a voucher to move
Effective July 1, 2018, as approved by the Community Development Commission/Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (CDC/HACoLA) Board of Commissioners (Board), you may contact your case manager and request a voucher to move without the required written tenancy termination notice. The CDC/HACoLA has now made your move more convenient and hassle-free.

When to submit your notice to move
Under the new policy, the agency must receive the notice no later than the date you turn in the Request for Tenancy Approval for the new unit or the date of a Request for Portability transfer. Once you have found a unit, you are required to give both the owner and the CDC/HACoLA a written tenancy termination notice to vacate the current unit.

Benefits of the agency’s new move procedure
The benefits of the new move policy are simple. If you decide to stay in the current unit, or if you fail to find another unit, the CDC/HACoLA will simply cancel your voucher. You and your family will not be displaced. In addition, if the voucher time limit expires, you will not lose your rental assistance. If you have any questions regarding the new move policy, please contact your assigned case manager.

New Policy: Biennial Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections

Beginning July 1, 2018, with Board approval, the agency will begin conducting HQS inspections at least biennially (within 24 months) for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. This means instead of inspecting your unit annually (within 12 months), the agency will begin scheduling and inspecting its assisted units biennially (within 24 months) for the HCV program. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gave public housing agencies the discretion to make changes to the HQS inspection schedule for units receiving continued housing assistance payments through the HCV program.

Families receiving rental assistance from the following programs will continue to have their units inspected annually: the Continuum of Care; Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS; Moderate Rehabilitation; Preservation; Project Based Vouchers (PBV); Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VAS), and VASH PBV Programs.
Important Updates for the HCV Program

During the week of April 9, 2018, the HCV program resumed application and eligibility activities. These activities were suspended in April 2017 when HUD determined the agency’s HCV program to be in a financial shortfall due to anticipated funding reductions in Housing Assistance Payments (HAP). This designation affected the agency's HCV funding and mandated the implementation of cost-saving measures to manage the funding cuts.

Effective the week of April 9, 2018, the CDC/HACoLA is no longer denying a family's request to move to a “higher cost unit,” or “higher cost area."

FIVE-YEAR AND ANNUAL AGENCY PLAN: Fiscal Years 2018-2022

The Five-Year and Annual Agency Plan (Agency Plan) is a strategic planning document that housing authorities are required to submit to HUD each year. Prior to submission to HUD, the Agency Plan was adopted by the Board on March 17, 2018. (At that time, the Board also adopted the two new policies announced in this newsletter.) On April 17, 2018, the CDC/HACoLA submitted its Agency Plan to HUD.

The Agency Plan, which was approved by HUD on May 7, 2018, outlines the CDC/HACoLA’s current operating procedures, regulatory and discretionary policies, and future goals for the Section 8 and Public Housing Programs.

What is in the Five-Year Plan?
The Five-Year Plan requires the agency to review current operations and identify goals for the next five years. The goals that are adopted must be measurable. This year, the CDC/HACoLA adopted the Fair Housing Goals from its comprehensive Fiscal Year 2016-17 Assessment of Fair Housing Study/Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.

The Five-Year Plan includes the following goals:

1. Improve the Availability and Quality of CDC/HACoLA Housing;
2. Promote Self-Sufficiency and Provide Supportive Services;
3. Reduce Homelessness in Los Angeles County; and
4. Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.

What is in the Annual Plan?
The Annual Plan contains key policy elements and financial resources, as well as the CDC/HACoLA’s progress towards meeting its set goals. Examples include:

2. Admission’s policies for Public Housing and Section 8;
3. Criminal Background and Screening Policies; and
4. Rent Policies.

The CDC/HACoLA invites you to familiarize yourself with its Agency Plan. You may find the Agency Plan online at https://www.hacola.org/about-us/public-housing-administration.
Effective June 1, 2018, the CDC/HACoLA increased its Payment Standards to the following:

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<th>Bedroom Size</th>
<th>SRO</th>
<th>0-bdr</th>
<th>1-bdr</th>
<th>2-bdr</th>
<th>3-bdr</th>
<th>4-bdr</th>
<th>5-bdr</th>
<th>6-bdr</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payment Standard</td>
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<td>$1,663</td>
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<td>$2,837</td>
<td>$3,207</td>
<td>$3,577</td>
<td>$3,947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Payment Standards are established by HUD Fair Market Rents. The Payment Standards are the maximum amount CDC/HACoLA can pay landlords for gross rent (rent plus utilities) and is determined by the number of bedrooms authorized by each family. The agency must use the smaller of the number of bedrooms in the rental unit or the number of bedrooms on the voucher to determine the Payment Standard. For example, if a family locates a two-bedroom unit with a three-bedroom voucher, the two bedroom Payment Standard must be used. The new, higher Payment Standards increase housing options for voucher holders searching for housing in the extremely competitive Los Angeles County rental market.

**Seeking Section 8 Volunteers! 2019 Annual Plan**

Have you ever wondered why the CDC/HACoLA operates the way it does? Do you wish you could share your concerns or ideas about their rules and policies? Here is your opportunity to learn the answers to these questions and have your input heard. The CDC/HACoLA is recruiting Section 8 program volunteers for its Resident Advisory Board (RAB) Committee that will assist with the 2019 Annual Plan process.

The RAB provides the opportunity for Section 8 participants to present input on matters that affect them, including new policies and plans. After all, who else can speak to what you need, what you want, and what will assist you and your family the most? As a RAB Committee member, all you have to do is attend a minimum of one meeting each year that takes place in October/November. Should you wish to volunteer in this year’s committee, you may email AssistedHousingCompliance@hacola.org, or call (626) 586-1991, and express your interest. Be sure you provide your name, contact phone number, and any questions you may have. A CDC/HACoLA representative will contact you with details about your role as a RAB Committee member.

**Upcoming Housing Commission Meetings**

The Housing Commission (Commission) is an advisory body to the CDC/HACoLA. The Commission reviews housing matters before they are scheduled for the Board agenda. The Commission meets the fourth Wednesday of each month at 12 noon at various CDC/HACoLA facilities. Upcoming meetings dates and locations are listed below.

**August 22, 2018**
CDC/HACoLA Headquarters
700 W. Main Street
Alhambra, CA 91801
(626) 586-1504

**September 26, 2018**
South Bay Gardens
230 E. 130th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90061
(310) 532-8498

Please note: meeting locations are subject to change. Please confirm the location prior to the date of the meeting by calling (626) 262-4510 or (800) 731-4663.
Family Self-Sufficiency Corner

The HCV program operates a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program. The FSS Program is a five-year voluntary program designed to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency by providing services ranging from case management and referrals to supportive social services such as: Childcare, Credit Counseling, Education, Homeownership Workshops, Job Preparation, Mentoring, Money Management, Transportation, and Vocational Training.

As of April 2018, the FSS coordinators also perform routine Section 8 case management duties for their program participants. Instead of having an FSS coordinator and a separate Section 8 case manager, the FSS coordinator will handle the annual reexamination and other Section 8 case management duties as well.

For more information about the FSS Program, please contact the Alhambra Office at (626) 262-4510 ext. 16044, or the Antelope Valley Office at (661) 575-1511 ext. 11503. You may also inquire via email at fssprogram@hacola.org.