

HOUSE NOTES

A Newsletter for Los Angeles County Section 8 Owners
Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles

July 2014 - 4th Quarter

Stay Informed



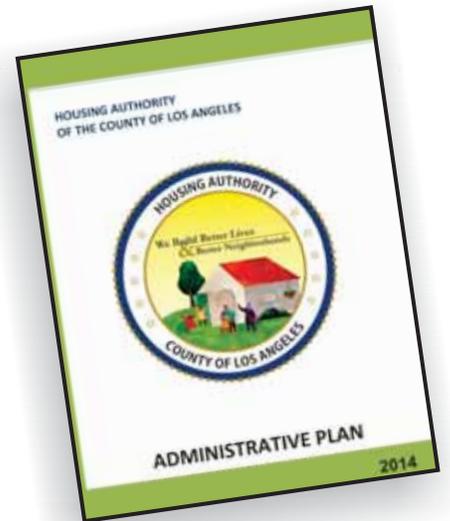
Section 8 Policy Changes: 2014 Administrative Plan

In July 2014, the following changes were implemented and released in the 2014 Administrative Plan. The Administrative Plan, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 25, 2014, outlines the policies that govern the administration of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

1. Passbook Savings Rate

When determining annual income for families who apply for or receive assistance under the HCV program, the Housing Authority considers annual income the greater of either: (1) actual income resulting from all net family assets; or (2) a percentage of the value of such assets based upon the current passbook savings rate as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), currently set at 2%, when a family has net assets in excess of \$5,000.

HUD requires the Housing Authority to, on a yearly basis, establish and monitor its own passbook savings rate based on the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) national savings rate. Therefore, the passbook savings rate for the Housing Authority's Fiscal Year 2014-2015 is 0.81%.



2. Homeless Families Referred for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Rental Assistance

The Housing Authority adopted HUD guidance to cease administration of set-aside programs, and instead instituted a Section 8 HCV program waiting list preference for homeless families referred by eligible organizations. Redirecting efforts to house the homeless by instituting a limited waiting list preference preserves the Housing Authority's partnerships with the various community-based organizations that will continue to seek and refer the homeless for housing assistance. Homeless families may contact any of the organizations that are under agreement with the Housing Authority to determine if they are eligible for referral to the Section 8 waiting list.

Instituting a limited waiting list preference for the homeless also requires the Housing Authority to determine eligibility for homeless applicants using the criteria presently used for HCV program applicants. The Housing Authority's standard criterion is to deny admission to applicants on parole or probation, and to review the past three years for all criminal background checks.

3. Incoming Portability Families

Previously, the Housing Authority had never specified the timeframe for porting families (families arriving from another Housing Authority) wishing to find housing within its jurisdiction. Now, the Housing Authority has specified the timeframe requiring that a porting family have a minimum of 45 days remaining on their voucher before it expires. Should the family arrive with less than 45 days remaining before the voucher expiration date, the family will be referred back to its Housing Authority to request an extension.

Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles

Main Office
700 W. Main Street
Alhambra, CA 91801

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1510
Alhambra, CA 91802

Phone (626) 262-4510
(800) 731-4663
TDD (855) 892-6095
Website www.hacola.org

Palmdale Office
2323 Palmdale Blvd, Suite B
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 575-1511

Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013

Initially passed in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) created the first U.S. federal legislation acknowledging domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes, and provided federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combating violence. On March 7, 2013, President Barack Obama signed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, which ensures the continuation and improvement of vital, lifesaving programs, and laws. As a result of the VAWA Reauthorization Act, the Housing Authority has implemented the following as of July 1, 2014:



- 1 The protections under VAWA have been extended to victims of sexual assault.
- 2 The Housing Authority is expanding protection for families by replacing the term “immediate family member” with “affiliated individual.” An affiliated individual is defined as “a spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child of that individual, or an individual to whom that individual stands in place of a parent, or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in the household of that individual.”
- 3 The Housing Authority is expanding protection by changing the definition of “violent acts” from “criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others” to “criminal activity directly related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against an affiliated individual or other individual.”
- 4 The Housing Authority is expanding its policy regarding the types of forms that victims may provide. Now, acceptable forms may include a record of an administrative agency or documentation from a mental health professional. Additionally, the victim is only required to provide the name of the perpetrator on HUD form-50066 if the victim knows the name of the perpetrator, and it is safe to provide it.
- 5 The Housing Authority is expanding the VAWA notification requirements to include applicants that are denied assistance, when a person is admitted, and when a tenant is notified of eviction/termination. HUD has not released the notification document yet. Once released, the Housing Authority will make it available in accordance with VAWA.

Rent Reasonable Adjustments



Requesting a Rent Increase May Subject You to a Contract Rent Reduction.



Before owners decide to request a rent increase, here is an important regulatory fact that should be considered: The Section 8 HCV program is governed by the Code of Federal Regulations, specifically title 24, part 982 – Tenant Based

Assistance: Housing Choice Voucher Program. Section §982.507 stipulates that the Housing Authority must redetermine the reasonable rent before approving any

increase, and that the rent to owner must never exceed the reasonable rent most recently determined or redetermined by the Housing Authority.

This means, when an owner requests a rent increase, the unit's contract rent will be compared to similar unassisted rental units in the area to determine the reasonable rent. The Housing Authority requests a rental market survey report from a third party vendor, GoSection8.com. GoSection8.com is a vendor that provides an unbiased report of market rents that are listed near the unit. If the current contract rent exceeds market rents, the contract rent for the unit must be reduced.

Accessibility Online, Anytime, Anywhere – the Housing Authority's Online Owner Portal



The Housing Authority only accepts owner address changes, direct deposit enrollments, or other changes submitted via the online owner portal.

The Housing Authority is your partner in helping you remain up-to-date on your rental assistance matters. The Housing Authority's online portal, accessible via the www.hacola.org website, allows you to perform tasks such as submitting income and family composition changes, as well as contacting your case manager with the click of a few buttons. You have 24/7 access to important forms, as well as inspections reports.

Registering only takes a moment and it's free! If you have yet to register, you may do so by going to www.hacola.org and select the Section 8 Owner Portal menu option. You will need your vendor identification number, and the last four digits of your social security number or tax ID number. Be sure to use your preferred e-mail account to receive notifications.

Clearing Inspection Deficiencies via Self-Certification

Did You Know That You Can Certify That You Fixed Unit Deficiencies?

Each year, the Housing Authority conducts an annual Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection of your unit to ensure that it is in compliance with minimum health and safety standards. The Housing Authority permits owners the option to clear owner-related non-emergency deficiencies by submitting a certification along with proof that confirms the deficiencies have been corrected rather than have an in-person follow-up inspection. Please note that this option is only available for owner-related non-emergency deficiencies. The Housing Authority will continue to conduct in-person follow-up inspections to clear tenant-related deficiencies.



Examples of proof that should be submitted include picture(s) of the corrected item and/or an invoice or receipt detailing the repair. The certification and proof must be submitted before the date of the scheduled follow-up inspection. Once received, a Supervisor will review the certification and proof to determine if an in-person follow-up inspection is needed to clear the owner deficiencies. Owners will be contacted to discuss the outcome of the clearance submitted.

One Call Now System



Soon the Housing Authority will launch the One Call Now System. The One Call Now System will allow the Housing Authority to send urgent text, e-mail, and/or recorded messages, such as upcoming inspection appointment dates and program advisories. By using this system, the Housing Authority will be able to improve communication while reducing the delays associated with the need to print and distribute notices.

Keep in mind that you reserve the right of opting out of this system; however, doing so may cause you to miss urgent notices about your Housing Authority matters. The One Call Now System takes the security and privacy of your personal information (i.e. phone numbers, e-mail addresses) very seriously. Information is never sold or shared – you will not receive any unsolicited calls as a result of using this service.



**HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**
P.O. Box 1510
Alhambra, California 91802

Presorted
STANDARD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Alhambra CA
Permit No 279

Quality Control Inspections - Because Quality Matters

Has your unit been selected for a Quality Control (QC) inspection?

No need to worry. QC inspections are simply a way of ensuring the quality of our inspectors' work meets guidelines established by 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 tenant 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 the tenant outlining any deficiencies found and the time frame for the deficiencies to be corrected.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

In accordance with California Law (The Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act of 2010), the Housing Authority requires that Carbon Monoxide detection devices be installed and operational to pass a unit's HQS inspection.

In accordance with California Law, Carbon Monoxide detectors are required as follows:

Any unit having a fossil fuel burning (ex. natural gas) heater or appliance, fireplace, or an attached garage, must have a Carbon Monoxide detection device installed. Placement of the device should be as follows:

1. There must be one centrally located outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. Each detector shall be located on the wall or ceiling. Any other location is only acceptable if specified in the installation instructions that accompany the device. If there are distinctly separate sleeping areas in the unit, there must be a detector for each sleeping area.
2. There must be at least one Carbon Monoxide detector on each level of the unit.
3. Carbon Monoxide detectors cannot be installed directly above, or next to, a fuel burning appliance.
4. If the device is a combination Carbon Monoxide device and smoke detector, the combined device must emit an alarm or voice warning in a manner that clearly differentiates between a Carbon Monoxide alarm warning and a smoke detector warning.



For additional information about Carbon Monoxide detectors and their proper placement, you may visit:
http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_carbonmonoxide.php.

House Notes is a publication of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, which is dedicated to building better lives and better neighborhoods. For questions regarding this newsletter, please contact House Notes editor, Dayana Zavala, at the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, Assisted Housing Division P.O. Box 1510, Alhambra, CA 91802 or at Dayana.Zavala@hacola.org.