



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

TENANT NEWSLETTER

October/November 2020

HACLA OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19

Effective March 12, 2020, the HACLA offices are closed to walk-in traffic until further notice to protect our clients and staff. We will be conducting all business by email, phone or mail, including annual reexaminations. If you need to submit documents, please email or mail them. Drop boxes are also available at all offices.

In response to the COVID-19 Emergency, HACLA adjusted program operations, as approved by HUD, where necessary to continue program operations while preventing the spread of COVID-19 and mitigating the risks posed to HACLA staff, applicant/participant families, and landlords.

HACLA has adopted the following temporary adjustments to program operations that could potentially affect you:

1. Income Verification
2. Inspections: Initial and Complaint
3. Inspections: Annual/Biennial
4. Voucher Term
5. Voucher Issuance Session
6. Income Exclusion
7. Absence from Unit

1. Income Verification. End Date: December 31, 2020

- Description: Allows HACLA to use tenant self-certification for both annual and interim reexaminations.
- Impact: If you are unable to provide written third party verification of your income, we will accept a written certification from you. Advisors will conduct streamlined interim reexaminations to verify only your reported income changes to adjust your tenant rent portion due to loss or decrease of income. If there is any missing documentation or clarification is required, S8 Advisors will contact you via phone or email. The streamline interim reexamination process allows self-certification of income changes over the phone or through email, if you do not have the documents available.

2. Inspections: Initial and Complaint. End Date: December 31, 2020

- Description: Allows HACLA to rely on landlord's self-certification that the unit complies with Housing Quality Standards (HQS).
- Impact: For all assisted units where a HAP contract was executed using HQS Self-Certification, the Housing Authority must conduct an HQS inspection as soon as reasonably possible but no later than the 1-year anniversary of the date of the owner's self-certification.

3. Inspections: Annual/Biennial

- Description: Allows HACLA to delay all annual/biennial inspections.
- Impact: All delayed inspections must be completed as soon as reasonably possible but no later than one year after the date the annual/biennial inspection would have been required absent the HUD waiver. For example, if your annual/biennial inspection was due April 2020 and it was delayed due to COVID-19, the inspection must be completed no later than April 2021.

4. Voucher Term. End Date: December 31, 2020

- Description: Allows HACLA to provide voucher extensions outside of Section 8 Administrative Plan policies.
- Impact: The voucher term for applicant/participant families will expire at the end of 270 cumulative calendar days. HACLA may provide a single 90-day extension after the end of 270 cumulative calendar days.

HACLA OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 (Continued)

5. Voucher Issuance Session. End Date: December 31, 2020

- Description: Allows HACLA to conduct voucher issuance sessions by webcast, video call, or expanded Request for Tenant Approval (RFTA) packets.
- Impact: Families must watch a video to receive a voucher.

6. Income Exclusion

- Description: The CARES stimulus payments received by applicant/participant families are excluded from your income calculations.
- Impact: The CARES stimulus payments will not be counted as income for your eligibility determination of housing assistance or annual reexamination.

7. Absence from Unit. End Date: December 31, 2020

- Description: The participant family can be absent from assisted unit for more than 180 consecutive days due to extenuating circumstances (hospitalization, extended stays at nursing homes, caring for family members).
- Impact: The Housing Authority will not make HAP payments beyond December 31, 2020 and the HAP contract will terminate on that date if the family is still absent from unit.
- You must inform your Advisor if you will be absent from the unit.

The following information relates to recent emergency orders taken by local, state, and Federal officials in response to the COVID-19

1. Eviction Moratorium
2. Rent Increase Moratorium

These are not HUD waivers. This information is provided for your reference only. If you have any questions, please seek legal counsel.

1. Eviction Moratorium

- **City of Los Angeles.** On March 23rd the Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti issued a temporary moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent for tenants who are unable to pay rent due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. A participant family cannot be evicted for non-payment of their tenant portion of the rent.

Impact: Any tenant portion of the rent missed during the eviction moratorium will accumulate and still be due.

For additional information, please go to: <https://hcidla2.lacity.org/covid-19/renter-protections>

- **Centers for Disease Control (CDC).** On September 4, 2020, the (CDC) issued a Notice and Order to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, the Order is a temporary halt in residential evictions. The Order applies to all tenants in the country who are subject to eviction for nonpayment of rent and who submit a Declaration available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/declaration-form.pdf>. The Order is in effect from September 4, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Under the Order, tenants cannot be evicted for nonpayment of rent, provided the tenant signs the Declaration. The Order does not relieve the tenants' obligation to pay rent and the tenants must continue to comply with terms under the lease.

For additional information, please go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/eviction-moratoria-order-faqs.pdf>

Local, State, and Federal emergency orders (Continued)

2. Rent Increase Moratorium

- Description: A Los Angeles City Ordinance temporarily prohibits all rent increases for rental units subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO). On March 30th, the Mayor halted rent increases on occupied rental units that are subject to the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)
- End Date: The City Ordinance will remain in effect for one year following the expiration of the COVID-19 emergency. After this date the Landlord can submit a rent increase request. Rent increases are not retroactive and do not accumulate during the one year period.
- Impact: The Housing Authority will not approve rent increases for assisted units subject to RSO, unless HCIDLA approves an exception.
- For additional information, please go to: <https://hcidla2.lacity.org/covid-19/renter-protections>

REMOTE VIDEO INSPECTIONS

In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure to landlords, applicant/participant families and HACLA staff, a Remote Video Inspection (RVI) will be conducted. An RVI is an alternative to an on-site regular Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection and is performed remotely with the Housing Authority Inspector directing the inspection from the office with the tenant serving as the Proxy inspector. The Proxy inspector must be 18 years old or with an adult to perform the RVI. The Housing Authority is able to visually inspect the unit using technology such as video streaming.

A smart phone with camera and 4G wireless connectivity is required. 3G may not provide the speed and clarity required to complete the inspection. GoToMeeting, Zoom and WhatsApp are available platforms for use to conduct the RVI. The selected platform must be downloaded prior to the scheduled inspection time. For additional information, visit our website at <http://hacla.org/rvi>

If your assisted unit is scheduled for RVI, you will receive an inspection notice with additional information.

CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTER

To improve the quality of service received by the Housing Authority, on April 25, 2019, the Board of Commissioners approved the replacement and expansion of the telephone and contact center system to manage the high volume of calls received the Housing Authority. This included the implementation of a centralized Customer Contact Center (CCC). The CCC will have a **single telephone number** that will be published for use by all applicant and participant families and the general public.

The role of the CCC will be to provide general assistance and explain Section 8 program requirements and policies.

The first phase of the CCC will be implemented mid-October by calling all participant families to remind you about your upcoming annual reexamination.

Join HACLA on Twitter @hacla1938. www.twitter.com/hacla1938

ONLINE REEXAMINATIONS

To ensure that Section 8 is using technology platforms to improve customer service and better assist participant families as required by HACLA's Vision Plan Strategy No. 5, the Section 8 Program implemented a **free online service** system call MyHousing. The Housing Authority will conduct Annual Reexaminations online using the MyHousing website available at <http://hacla.myhousing.com/Account/Login>.

MyHousing will allow you to complete your **annual reexamination** 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from any smartphone, mobile device, or computer with Internet access. You will need to register on MyHousing to complete your annual reexamination. **Only the head of household needs to register to MyHousing.**

You can also watch a video posted online at <https://vimeo.com/438655964> with instructions on how to register.

You will receive an annual reexamination notice from the Housing Authority with additional information, including due dates, when it is time for you to start your online reexamination.

Before you begin your MyHousing registration process, please make sure that you have:

- **A valid email address.** You must have a valid e-mail address to complete your annual reexamination using MyHousing. To create an email account, go to gmail.com or yahoo.com or get help at your local library. HACLA does not endorse these email services. You can access these sites through any smartphone, mobile device or computer with Internet access. If you do not have Internet access, you may complete your MyHousing registration at locations throughout the City, such as your local public library, that offer free use of their computers.
- The name of the head of household, his/her date of birth, and his/her HACLA Client ID.

STAY INFORMED

S8 strongly encourages you to be informed about any updates on policies and procedures that may impact your S8 assistance. **Provide your e-mail address** to your Advisor. This will give you a faster way to be informed about any HACLA news. Your e-mail address will be maintained as confidential information, it will be used for S8 communications only and it will not be disclosed to third parties.

SECTION 8 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Section 8 Advisory Committee is an opportunity for **participant families** in the Section 8 program to provide the Housing Authority with input on Section 8 policies, procedures, and practices, as well as to learn about changes and challenges to the Section 8 program. The meetings take place on a quarterly basis. If you would like to participate in the upcoming meetings, please email S8Advisory@hacla.org. You will receive further information regarding meeting dates, times, and locations. The schedule will be posted online.

You participation is voluntary and will not affect your Section 8 program participation

Tenant Newsletter is available online: <http://www.hacla.org/s8formspolicies>