



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

SECTION 8 TENANT NEWSLETTER

January 2012

Section 8 Department Achievements of 2011

High Performer

We are pleased to inform you that your Housing Authority (HACLA) expects to rank as a High Performer for the **fourth** consecutive year, subject to approval by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

HUD annually assigns each Housing Authority a an overall performance rating. High performer rating is achieved when a Housing Authority receives a SEMAP score of at least 90 percent.

SEMAP consists of indicators used by HUD to measure the performance of Housing Authorities. The indicators show whether the Housing Authority has helped eligible families to afford decent rental units at a reasonable cost as intended by Federal housing legislation.

SEMAP provides procedures for HUD to identify Housing Authorities' management capabilities and deficiencies in order to target monitoring and program assistance more effectively. Housing Authorities use the SEMAP performance analysis to assess and improve their own program operations.

Housing for Homeless Individuals

The Section 8 Department continues to address the housing needs of homeless individuals and families thru Special Programs in the City of Los Angeles. Our homeless resources include close to 10,000 units to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to help end homelessness in the City of Los Angeles. This commitment includes 1,429 project-based units since 2006. These units are located across the city.

Housing Assistance

HACLA administers the second largest Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) in the nation with an allocation of more than 46,000 vouchers.

In 2011, the Section 8 Department issued more than 3,700 vouchers to provide housing assistance to new participant families. As of today close to 1,800 families signed a lease for a new Section 8 assisted unit.

The Housing Authority will continue to work more effectively and efficiently to maintain its High Performer status.

Importance of Submitting Requests in Writing

Whether you are requesting your landlord to make repairs, or you would like a voucher to move, or you have had a change in your income, assets or family composition, it is important that you submit requests in writing. Written requests become a document of your efforts, and eliminate conflicts that may arise from the misunderstandings resulting from verbal conversations.

Be sure to address your request to the proper party, and retain dated copies of your requests for your own records. Any requests you make to the owner you need to send a copy to your Advisor.

The Housing Authority will be closed on the following days:

Monday, January 2, 2012 for New Year's Day

Monday, January 16, 2012 Martin Luther King Day

You can find the Tenant Newsletter online at:

http://www.hacla.org/tnt_news_1/

Utility Allowances

The Housing Authority annually updates its Utility Allowances to determine a tenant's utility burden. When a tenant moves into a new unit, the tenant cannot pay more than 40% of his/her adjusted income towards the rent plus the Utility Allowance. Current Utility Allowance Schedules are posted online at:

<http://www.hacla.org/utility/>

If you are living in an apartment building you may click on the Multi-Family Residential Housing Utility Allowances.

If you are living in a detached house, you may click on the Single-Family Residential Housing Utility Allowances.

Social Security

When the Housing Authority requests a current Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Verification, you must obtain a current SS/SSI benefit letter from the Social Security Administration (SSA) one of the following two ways:

1. By calling the Social Security toll free number (1800) 772-1213.

OR

2. By accessing SSA's website:

www.socialsecurity.gov

Requesting SS/SSI benefit letters online is free. The SSA will send you a letter within 10 business days of your request. The following are instructions on how to request the benefit verification letter from SSA's website:

- Go to www.socialsecurity.gov
- Click on "Service for people currently receiving benefits" on the left column.
- Click on "Request a proof of income letter."
- Click on "Start" located on the bottom right corner.
- Click on "I Agree" located on the bottom left corner.
- Complete the requested information.

Housing Authority employees are not authorized to contact the local SSA office directly or to refer you to the local SSA office to request SS/SSI verification of benefits through mail, fax or in person.

Important News About Trash Fees

Recently some Section 8 Tenants have found the cost of their Department of Water and Power (DWP) Electric bill to be increasing due to Trash Fees which are no longer discounted by the city at the same rate as they were in the past.

In some cases, owners have agreed on their Section 8 contract to pay for Trash Fees. Even though the trash fees appear on the tenant's DWP bill, the owner would be responsible to compensate the tenant for the fees if the owner agreed to pay for trash.

If you believe the owner is responsible for trash fees under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract and lease agreement you can do the following:

1. Contact your Section 8 Advisor. Your Advisor will review your file and any current documentation, for example a current utility bill, to verify the responsibility of utilities.
2. If your claim is supported, your Section 8 Advisor will contact the owner and provide a timeframe to pay overdue utility amounts for which they are responsible.
3. If the owner does not comply with owner responsibilities under the HAP contract, the owner's HAP will be placed on hold. However tenants must always continue to pay their portion of the rent.

Move Request Limitations

In the first year of occupancy under a Section 8 program assisted lease a participant family will not be allowed to move. Thereafter, a move at the family's request and voucher issuance may not occur more than once in any 12 month period.

Property Listings

Property listings are available online at: www.hacla.org, under "Property Listings." You can also call the toll free phone number at 1-877-428-8844 to receive printed listings.