



# Section 8 Landlord 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 your tenants:

1. Inspections: Initial and Complaint
2. Inspections: Annual/Biennial
3. Voucher Term
4. Absence from Unit

### 1. Inspections: Initial and Complaint

- Description: For lease in place and occupied units, HACLA can rely on landlord's self-certification that the unit complies with Housing Quality Standards. For previously inspected units with an open abatement or complaint, HACLA can rely on landlord's self-certification along with the tenant's signature confirming that cited deficiencies were corrected in compliance with Housing Quality Standards.
- End Date: December 31, 2020.
- 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 for vacant tenant-based program units.  
Note: On-site HQS inspection will continue for vacant units.

### 2. 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.

## HACLA OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 (Continued)

### 3. Voucher Term

- Description: Allows HACLA to provide voucher extensions outside of Section 8 Administrative Plan policies.
- End Date: December 31, 2020.
- 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.

### 4. Absence from Unit

- 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).
- End Date: December 31, 2020.
- 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.
- The participant families must inform their Advisor if they 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 pandemic.

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 assistance from counsel.**

### 1. Eviction Moratorium

- **City of Los Angeles.** On March 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 non-payment 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>

## 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 30<sup>th</sup>, 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>

## NEW VOUCHER PAYMENT STANDARD

The Section 8 Voucher Payment Standard (VPS) is the most the Housing Authority can pay for rent on the family's behalf (the contract rent can never be higher than the comparable rents determined by the third party vendor). The VPS depends on the S8 family's Voucher Bedroom Size.

The Voucher Payment Standards have changed as follows:

Voucher Bedroom Size	SRO	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Voucher Payment Standard	\$1,026	\$1,369	\$1,765	\$2,263	\$2,735	\$2,982	\$3,429	\$3,876

The new VPS will be used effective October 1, 2020 for new admissions and families moving. The new VPS will be used at your tenant's upcoming annual re-examination, starting with re-examinations effective January 1, 2021 or later.

## HACLA CARES

In recognition of added difficulties of making units available for Section 8 applicant and participant families to rent units while stay-at-home orders or social distancing practices are in effect, the Housing Authority is offering landlord incentives.

The incentives will be available to all Section 8 landlords, both at the time of initial contract or if the participant family moves to a new assisted unit.

- *Signing Bonus.* A \$2500 signing bonus to the landlord upon the execution of HAP contract for a Section 8 applicant or participant family.
- *Move-In Assistance.* A security deposit paid directly to the landlord on behalf of the Section 8 family. The maximum amount will be up to two-times the contract rent.

These incentives will be available until December 31, 2021 or until the program is exhausted. For more information contact HACLA at [HIP@hacla.org](mailto:HIP@hacla.org) or (213) 252-1619

## REMOTE VIDEO INSPECTIONS

You must report address and telephone number changes even if you are receiving your Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) via direct deposit by calling (213) 252-8708

Comply with Fair Housing Laws. Owners can visit the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) website at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

Property listing service is available online at:

<http://www.hacla.org/propertylistings>. Basic property listing service is free of charge. Monitor your listings and remove any outdated listings that are unavailable. Login regularly to update or list new vacancies.

If you suspect anyone of committing fraud, you can call (800) 461-9330 or file a report online at: [www.convercent.com/report](http://www.convercent.com/report). Your name will remain anonymous.

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 for all annual/biennial inspections. 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 them about their upcoming annual reexamination.

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