HARRIS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY (HCHA)

COVID-19 Waivers adopted by HCHA

**Family Income and Composition; Delayed and Annual Examinations**

HCHA will temporarily delay annual reexaminations of HCV families. HCHA will comply with the alternative requirement regarding increases in payment standards under the HAP contract terms. HUD will allow PHAs to forgo third-party income verification requirements. HCHA will consider self-certification as the highest form of income verification to process annual reexaminations.

**Family Income and Composition; Annual Examination – Income Verification requirements**

HCHA will forgo third-party income verification requirements for annual reexaminations, HCHA will consider self-certification as the highest form of income verification to process annual reexaminations. The participant must complete a self-certification form.

**Family Income and Composition; Interim Examinations**

HCHA will forgo third-party income verifications and will consider self-certification as the highest form of income verification for interim reexaminations. The Participant must complete a self-certification form.

**Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) Monitoring**

HUD is waiving mandatory Earned Income Verification (EIV) monitoring requirements.

**Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections**

HCHA will delay Housing Quality Standard (HQS) inspections temporarily. HCHA must inspect the units as soon as reasonably possible, when it is safe to do so. HCHA retains the right to conduct an inspection and the use of the waivers does not relieve owners of their responsibility to maintain the unit in accordance with HQS.

**Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Pre-HAP Contract Inspections, PHA Acceptance of Complete Units**

HCHA will rely temporarily on the owner’s certification that the owner that has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life-threatening conditions exist in the unit. However, HCHA will conduct an HQS inspection as soon as reasonably possible. If there’s a requirement under the Agreement to enter into a Housing Assistance Payment (AHAP) contract for newly constructed or rehabilitated projects, the PHA may choose to allow the owner to certify that the PHA requirement has been met. The waiver may also apply to PHA-owned units, if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

**Initial Inspection: Non-Life-Threatening Deficiencies (NLT) Option**

HCHA may now provide 60 days to correct non-life-threatening failing conditions.

**Biennial Inspections**

HCHA will temporarily delay Biennial Inspections; but will complete as soon as reasonably possible.

**Interim Inspections**

If an HQS reported deficiency is life-threatening, the PHA must notify the owner of the reported life-threatening deficiency and the owner must correct it within 24 hours of the PHA notification or provide documentation that
the deficiency does not exist. For non-life-threatening deficiencies, the PHA must notify the owner within 30 days and the owner must either make the repair or document that the deficiency does not exist within 30 days of the PHA notification. The PHA is not required to conduct an on-site inspection to verify the repairs have been made, but may rely on alternative verification methods (photos, tenant certification, etc.).

PBV Turnover Unit Inspections

HCHA may rely on the owner’s certification that the owner has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life-threatening conditions exist in the unit.

PBV HAP Contract – HQS Inspections to Add or Substitute Units

HCHA may rely on the owner’s certification that the owner has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life-threatening conditions exist in the unit. The PHA may add other conditions.

HQS Quality Control Inspections

HCHA is temporarily waiving its supervisory quality control inspections.

HQS Space and Security

HCHA is waiving the requirement for an initial HQS inspection before commencing monthly homeownership assistance payments. The family is still required to obtain an independent professional inspector and the PHA is still required to review the independent inspection and has discretion to disapprove the unit because of the contents of the inspection report.

Homeownership Option – Initial HQS Inspection

HCHA is waiving the requirement that a PHA’s administrative plan must be formally adopted by a PHA’s board. A PHA may revise an administrative plan without board approval though any revisions must be formerly adopted as practicable following.

Administrative Plan

HCHA will conduct briefings by other means such as webcast, video call, ex expanded information packet. HCHA must ensure that the method of communication for the briefing effectively communicates with each family member, including those with vision, hearing, and other communication-related disabilities and those with persons with limited English proficiency.

Information When Family Is Selected – PHA Oral Briefing

HCHA may now execute a HAP contract after 60 days after the beginning of a lease and make HAP back to the beginning of the lease term. The HAP contract must be executed no later than 120 days from the beginning of the lease term.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absence from Unit</td>
<td>HCHA is temporarily waiving the requirement that a voucher family may not be absent from a unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days. The PHA has discretion whether to continue the HAP contract in this situation and not terminate due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, extended stays at nursing homes, or caring for family members).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Payment Standard under HAP contract term</td>
<td>HCHA is waiving the requirement that if a payment standard is increased during the term of a HAP contract, the increased payment standard shall not be effective until the family’s first regular reexamination. Instead, the increased payment standard may be effective at any time (e.g., interim reexamination, owner rent increase) after the effective date as long as it is not later than then family’s first regular reexamination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Allowance Schedule – Required Review and Revision</td>
<td>HCHA is waiving the requirement to review the schedule of utility allowances and revise the allowance if there has been a change of 10 percent or more in the utility rate since the last time the utility allowance schedule was revised. PHAs may delay the review and update of utility allowances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership Option – Homeownership Counseling</td>
<td>HCHA is waiving briefing and counseling sessions to permit families to purchase a home without fulfilling the normally applicable pre-assistance homeownership counseling requirements, though HUD encourages families to continue the sessions that can be accomplished in accordance with social distancing directives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Unification Program (FUP) Youth Age Eligibility to Enter HAP Contract The</td>
<td>HCHA is waiving the requirement that FUP youth must be not more than 24 years of age (not yet reached their 25th birthday) and is replacing it with the requirement that FUP youth be not more than 25 years of age (not yet reached their 26th birthday).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>