



Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency Rental Assistance Department

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April 23, 2020

To: All Program Participants and Partners

From: Norman Deep, Director of Rental Assistance

Subject: HUD Waivers in Response to COVID-19

On March 18, the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) implemented alternative procedures in response to COVID-19 in order to continue providing rental assistance on behalf of our applicants, participating families and partners. While closing our office to the public and having employees work from home, we have maintained the vast majority of our day-to-day operations via mail, email, fax or phone and continued to serve our participating families and owners with limited impact or disruption. [See this notice](#) that was sent to all participants first on March 18 and then with an update on March 23.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has since issued waivers available to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs). Pursuant to the authority provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Public Law 116-136), HUD is waiving and establishing alternative requirements for numerous statutory and regulatory requirements for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. These waivers provide administrative flexibilities and relief to MDHA in response to the COVID-19 national emergency. The use of these waivers is primarily short-term and at the discretion of MDHA. For the full notice, please see [PIH Notice 20-5](#).

As required by the notice, MDHA is notifying all families and owners of those waivers to be adopted by MDHA and any impact it may have on any applicant, participant or participating owner. Some waivers apply to both the Public Housing (PH) and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs as noted. Those pertaining to Housing Quality Standards (HQS) apply to the inspection requirements for the HCV program.

PH and HCV 1: The MDHA Annual Plan submission deadline is moved from July 15 to Oct. 18, and significant amendments can be implemented without the amendment process prior to July 31. There will be no known impact on participating families and landlords.

PH and HCV 6: Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) contracts of participation can be extended for up to two years if done before Dec. 31. This impacts current FSS participants whose contract extension will be expiring during the waiver period.

PH and HCV 7: This waives certain specified public notice requirements for opening or closing waiting lists through July 31. If MDHA opens any waiting list during the waiver period, MDHA does not have to advertise in the local newspaper, but must promote by including the information on the general phone number's voicemail and post on the Agency's website. MDHA will also advertise via social media, seek television and radio spots and conduct outreach through our numerous advocacy partners. This impacts those wishing to apply for rental assistance.



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HQS 1: Initial HQS inspections will be waived if owner provides certification that there are no life-threatening conditions through July 31, but MDHA must conduct validating inspection by Oct. 31. MDHA is adopting this waiver, but only for occupied units. We have implemented an HQS Certification form for owners to submit for this purpose. We are continuing to conduct initial inspections on vacant, move-in ready units.

HQS 6: If a tenant reports that the unit does not meet HQS, MDHA normally would have to inspect the unit within 24 hours or 15 days. Under the waiver, the MDHA inspection is waived if the owner either corrects the deficiency or provides photos or other evidence that the deficiency did not exist. This waiver expires July 31. MDHA is adopting this waiver in an effort to limit conditions in which an inspector would have to enter an occupied unit and impacts both families and owners.

HQS 9: This waives quality control HQS inspections through Oct. 31. MDHA is adopting this waiver in an effort to limit conditions in which an inspector would have to enter an occupied unit, and it impacts both families and owners.

HQS 10: This waives limits on persons per sleeping room if a family wants to add a family member for existing leases only (not new leases). The waiver will be for the duration of the lease or April 10, 2021, whichever is longer. MDHA is adopting this waiver to allow for special circumstances that may arise in an overcrowded situation occurring due to COVID-19 during the waiver period.


HCV 1: Amendments to Administrative Plan can be made without Board approval, but Board must ratify between June 30 and July 31. MDHA is adopting this waiver to allow for any special circumstances that may arise due to COVID-19 during the waiver period.

HCV 2: Oral briefings of new HCV recipients can be done through other means through July 31. MDHA is adopting this waiver in an effort to limit person-to-person contact. Briefings will be conducted via mail, email and phone. This impacts incoming portability clients and newly approved applicants from a waiting list.

HCV 3: Voucher terms can be extended, even if the current Administrative Plan does not provide for such, through July 31. MDHA is adopting this waiver in an effort to provide maximum search time for families searching for a unit during the waiver period.

HCV 4: Housing Assistance Program Contracts (HAP Contracts) can be entered into within 120 days (vs. 60) of the beginning date of the lease term. This waiver ends on July 31. MDHA is adopting this waiver in an effort to allow for extra time and effort that may be needed for initial leasing to be completed.

HCV 10: Family Unification Program (FUP) participants can be put under contract up to age 26 (rather than 25) through Dec. 31. MDHA is adopting this waiver in an effort to provide maximum search time for FUP families who may be nearing age 25 searching for a unit during the waiver period.

 If you need assistance with language interpretation or other services, please call 615-252-6500. MDHA provides equal opportunity and does not discriminate based upon race, color or national origin in access to or in operation of any program or services provided by MDHA.