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TENANT INFORMATION – INITIAL BRIEFING PACKET

This briefing packet contains the information you need to begin your participation in the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program. Read your packet carefully, and save this information for future reference. Please keep in mind that some of the information contained in this briefing packet may change over time. For current information, please visit our website at www.hacosantacruz.org.

This packet contains the following information:

- Term of Your Housing Choice Voucher
- Voucher Suspension Policy
- Things to Consider when Choosing a Unit to Lease
- Where you May Lease a Unit
- Subsidy Standards
- Security Deposit Information to Tenants
- Providing Tenant Information to Landlords
- How to Submit your Request for Tenancy Approval
- Reporting Changes to the Housing Authority
- Obligations of the Family
- Reasons for Termination of Housing Assistance
- Informal Hearing Procedures
- Fair Housing – It's Your Right

Also included for your review on the right side of this packet, are the following documents:

- Are You a Victim of Housing Discrimination?
- Housing Search Q&A
- Rental Referral List
- Santa Cruz County Resource Guide
- A Good Place to Live
- Protect Your Family from Lead Based Paint in your Home
- Tenant Resume
- Family Contact List
- How to Figure Out What You Pay in Rent
- Payment Standards and Utility Allowances
- Housing Plus Q&A
- Transfer Q&A
- Portability Q&A
- Special Needs Q&A
- Hearing and Appeals Q&A
- Violence Against Women Act Notice to Tenants and Applicants

The following documents are included on the left side of this packet, for you to share with your landlord.

- Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8 Program) Owner / Landlord Information
- Request for Tenancy Approval
- Landlord Introduction Q&A
- Sample HAP and Tenancy Addendum
- Optional Form to Request Tenant Information
- Inspection Q&A
- Inspection Checklist

If any of the information listed above is missing from your briefing packet, please contact the Housing Authority.

TERM OF YOUR HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER

Your Housing Choice Voucher is valid for sixty (60) calendar days. During the 60 days, you must find a suitable unit where the landlord is willing to participate in the program and you must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) located in this packet.

When you have found a unit you want to rent and the landlord is willing to participate in the Section 8 program, you must submit your Request for Tenancy Approval. This form must be completed and signed by you and the landlord. If the RTA is complete and meets all requirements, the Housing Authority will schedule a Housing Quality Standards Inspection on the unit. You will be notified as quickly as possible as to the results of the inspection. If the unit passes inspection, you and your landlord will sign a lease. The lease addendum will contain your portion of the rent.

The term of your voucher will be suspended once you submit your RTA. The suspension will be lifted when the Housing Authority notifies you whether the unit has been approved or denied. If you submit your RTA and either you or the landlord decide not to move forward with the tenancy, or if the unit is found to not meet program regulations, the suspension of your voucher term will be lifted.

If your Housing Choice Voucher is about to expire, you may submit a written request for an extension on the Housing Search Extension Request form, available on our website at www.hacosantacruz.org, or in our office lobby. Such requests must be received at least five (5) calendar days prior to the expiration date of your voucher. You must also include your completed Family Contact List (located in this packet). The Housing Authority will review each family's request to evaluate the efforts made to find a rental unit and any problems that are causing the delay in finding suitable housing. If an extension is allowed, the Housing Authority may grant one extension not to exceed a total of sixty (60) days. If your Housing Choice Voucher expires, your application for housing assistance through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program will be cancelled.

Warning: The Housing Authority has a limited amount of funding with which to administer the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Therefore, although you have been given a deadline by which to find a unit and begin participation in the program, the Housing Authority cannot guarantee that funding will be available to assist once you locate a unit. Therefore, it is in your best interest to find an acceptable unit as soon as possible, in order to maximize your chances of beginning your rental assistance.

VOUCHER SUSPENSION POLICY

If the Housing Authority determines that there is insufficient funding to enter into additional HAP contracts, and / or insufficient funding for the HAP contracts that are already in place, the Housing Authority will suspend vouchers in the following way. Prior to delaying or suspending the assistance of any applicants or participants (families under contract), the Housing Authority will first take any and all administrative steps available to remedy the situation.

1. Applicants who have been issued vouchers but have not yet leased a unit will have their vouchers suspended until such time as funding becomes available.
2. If funding is still insufficient, participants who are in the middle of a transfer and have not leased up in a new unit will have their transfer voucher suspended until such time as funding becomes available.
3. As a last resort, if funding is still insufficient, the Housing Authority will suspend the contracts of existing program participants beginning with the families most recently admitted to the program.

When funding becomes available, assistance will be restored in the following order:

1. Recently admitted families who had their contracts suspended (#3, above) will have their assistance restored first.
2. Participants who were in the middle of a transfer (#2, above) will have their assistance restored second.
3. Applicants who had been issued an initial voucher but had not yet leased up (#1, above) will have their assistance restored last.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A UNIT TO LEASE

Condition

Having a good place to live is important. You are free to choose any dwelling you like, as long as it meets certain HUD requirements known as Housing Quality Standards (HQS). Please read the enclosed brochure entitled "A Good Place to Live". It explains the purpose of HQS and the HQS inspection. If the unit fails inspection there will be only one chance for the landlord to bring the unit up to the HQS standards. The time on your voucher will continue to run. If repairs takes too long or if the unit fails a second inspection and your voucher has expired, your voucher will be cancelled, therefore, it is important that you select a rental that is in good condition.

Rent Reasonableness

The landlord must not charge more for the dwelling (unit) than rents charged for comparable units in the private market. Comparable rents are monitored by the Housing Authority and will be used to determine rent reasonableness. If the requested rent exceeds comparable rents, the rent is too high. You will need to negotiate a lower rent or find another unit.

Location

When selecting a rental unit, you should consider the safety of the neighborhood and whether the unit is close to public transportation, centers of employment, schools, shopping, etc. You can find out about areas of opportunity and services for you and your family on the Housing

Authority website under Community Resources at <http://www.hacosantacruz.org/links.htm>. There you will find a link to Great Schools that includes fee information on how parents can choose the best school for their children. You will also find a link to Career Centers with information on both job opportunities and funds that may be available for training.

Cost of Utilities/Energy Efficiency

Depending on your lease agreement, you may be responsible for payment of some or all of the utilities of your rental unit. To keep costs as low as possible, rental units should be energy-efficient. P. G. & E recommends that you consider items such as:

- Energy efficient appliances
- Heating source -- electric heat is the most expensive type of heat
- The following conservation measures should be considered:
 - ceiling insulation to R-19
 - caulking around windows, doors and anywhere air leaks in and out
 - weather-stripping around windows and doors
 - heat and cooling ducts wrapped with duct wrap or duct tape
 - energy-saver showerheads
 - insulation blanket around the water heater

WHERE YOU MAY LEASE A UNIT

One of the top priorities of HUD is to improve housing choices for low-income families. The Section 8 program does not restrict where in the city, county, state or country you may live. Without rental assistance, families with low incomes are often limited to high poverty areas. If you live in such an area, you now have the means to move and you are encouraged to do so.

Moving out of areas of high poverty or low opportunity offers significant advantages. Moving will allow you to select a unit within a neighborhood that offers the amenities you desire. Advantages of moving into a lower poverty neighborhood often include increased safety, improved schools for children, proximity to jobs or job opportunities, better quality housing, more responsive landlords, improved access to transportation, day care, and other neighborhood services.

Upon request by the landlord, the Housing Authority will add a rental unit to our Rental Referral list. This list is maintained by bedroom size and includes additional information about accessibility features, if such information is known by the Housing Authority. To assist you in your housing search, the Housing Authority has enclosed a current copy of the Rental Referral List. Updated copies of this list, as well as numerous other resources to assist you in your housing search, are located on our website at www.hacosantacruz.org. If you have special housing needs relating to a disability, and need assistance locating a unit that meets your needs, please call our program information center at the phone number listed on the front page of this informational packet.

Selecting the Location of Your First Section 8 HCV Unit

You may lease a unit anywhere in the jurisdiction of the HCV Voucher you have received, as explained orally in the briefing presentation.

If you are interested in leasing a unit in a different location, outside of the jurisdiction of the voucher you have received, please see the attached informational brochure regarding “portability” which is a term used for transferring your assistance to another location. Additionally the following is a list of neighboring housing agencies that you may contact if you are considering “porting out” of the area. Please note that there strict eligibility criteria regarding eligibility to “port out” of the jurisdiction.

Housing Authority of the County of Alameda
22941 Atherton Street
Hayward, CA 94541-6613
(510) 445-8946

Housing Authority of the County of Monterey
123 Rico Street
Salinas, CA 93907
(831) 424-2892

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara
505 West Julian Street
San Jose, CA 95110
(408) 993-2974

Housing Authority of San Mateo County
264 Harbor Blvd. Bldg. A
Belmont, CA 94002
(650) 802-3300

Oakland Housing Authority
1619 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 874-1550

Housing Authority of the County of Merced
405 “U” Street
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 722-3501

Please remember that you may not have to move at all. If you like the unit you are currently living in, and your landlord is willing to participate in the Section 8 HCV Program, you may be able to begin receiving rental assistance for the unit in which you are already living.

SUBSIDY STANDARDS

The Housing Authority determines your voucher size based on your family composition and a set of subsidy standards. The subsidy standards determine voucher size in the following way. The household is assigned one bedroom for the head of household and their spouse or domestic partner. Additionally, the household is granted one additional bedroom for every two additional household members, regardless of age or sex. The standards must provide for the smallest number of bedrooms necessary to house a family while avoiding overcrowding. This method is only used to determine the voucher size assigned to the household. The household may distribute the total bedrooms among household members in any way they choose.

Subsidy standards may change over time. If you move to a different unit, we will re-determine your voucher size based on the current subsidy standards. Additionally, if you add or remove household members, we will apply current subsidy standards at your next annual reexamination to determine the voucher size your family is eligible for.

The Housing Authority may grant an exception to the subsidy standards if it makes a determination that the exception is justified by health, handicap, or other extreme circumstances on a case by case basis. Requests for exceptions to voucher size must be made in writing to the Housing Authority. Please see Special Needs Q&A for more information.

SECURITY DEPOSIT INFORMATION TO TENANT

The landlord may require you to give a security deposit. The landlord may collect a security deposit equivalent to that collected in the private market. You are responsible for the full amount of the security deposit. Be sure this amount is entered on your Request for Tenancy Approval form. Return of the security deposit upon the termination of your lease is between you and your landlord.

PROVIDING TENANT INFORMATION TO LANDLORDS

If requested, the Housing Authority must provide a prospective landlord information on the family's current address and the name and address of the family's current and prior landlord, if known. The landlord must request this information in writing.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL

When you have found a unit you would like to rent, the following is required:

- You have inspected the unit and it meets your approval (refer to booklet "A Good Place to Live").
- The landlord is willing to accept the Section 8 program.

Both you and the landlord are now ready to complete the Request for Tenancy Approval (copy enclosed in the packet). This form must be completed and signed by you and the landlord.

Once the form is complete, please mail or deliver to:

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz
2160 41ST Avenue
Capitola, CA 95010-2040

If the Request for Tenancy Approval is complete and meets all requirements, the Housing Authority will schedule a Housing Quality Standards Inspection on the unit. You will be notified

as quickly as possible as to the results of the inspection. If the unit passes inspection, you and your landlord will sign a lease. The lease addendum from the Housing Authority will contain your portion of the rent.

If there are problems with the Request for Tenancy Approval, if the unit does not pass inspection, or if the rent charged by the landlord is not determined to be reasonable, you will need to find another unit. You will be notified as quickly as possible whenever there are problems with your request.

You may pay your share of the first month's rent as soon as you receive official confirmation that:

1. the unit has passed inspection and
2. the Housing Authority has given you permission to move in and
3. the landlord has signed the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with the Housing Authority.

If the landlord allows you to move in before all three of the above have been accomplished, please be aware that if the landlord does not sign the HAP contract, you could be responsible for the full amount of the rent.

The Housing Authority will pay its share of the first month's rent after execution of the contract with the landlord and on the first of the month thereafter.

REPORTING CHANGES TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY

You are required to report all changes in your income, assets, or household composition to the Housing Authority, as outlined below. Additionally, you are required to provide any and all requested information to the Housing Authority in a timely manner. If you are late in providing documents, forms, or information to the Housing Authority, your assistance may be terminated.

Requesting Changes To Your Household Composition

The following rules apply when making any changes to your household composition.

Removing any Household Member: If any member of your household moves out, you must notify us in writing within 14 calendar days of the move out date.

Adding Adults: If you would like to add an adult to your household, you must request advance permission in writing, and receive written permission from the Housing Authority before the additional adult moves in. The Housing Authority will conduct its standard eligibility screening at that time.

The following adults may be added to the household (if approved in advance by the Housing Authority).

- The adult child of the head of household.
- The parent of the head of household.

The following adults may be added to the household (if approved in advance by the Housing Authority), but will NOT increase the family's voucher size.

- The spouse, registered domestic partner, or significant other of the head of household.

Adding Children: If you would like to add a child to your household, you must request advance permission in writing if possible, and receive written permission from the Housing Authority before the child moves in. The Housing Authority understands that in some cases it may not be possible to request advance permission for the addition of a child. In such cases, you **MUST** notify the Housing Authority within 14 calendar days of the addition of the child. However, the Housing Authority may not approve the request.

The following children may be added to the household.

- Birth child of head of household.
- Birth child of the spouse or registered domestic partner of the head of household.
- Children added through adoption, foster placement, or court awarded custody to the head of household or to the spouse or registered domestic partner of the head of household.

The following children may be added to the household, but will NOT increase the family's voucher size.

- Birth child of any existing household member, as long as the addition of that child does not cause overcrowding in the unit.

No other adults or children may move into the assisted unit, other than those specifically identified above.

Please be aware that if you fail to provide proper notification and / or request advance permission regarding any changes in your family composition, your housing assistance may be terminated, or you may be responsible for paying back any overpayment of subsidy caused by the unreported information or violation.

Reporting Changes to Your Income

You are required to notify the Housing Authority in writing within 14 calendar days of any change to the income of any household member. The following rules apply when reporting changes to your family income.

Increases in Family Income: If the income of any family member has increased, you must notify us in writing within 14 calendar days of the date of the increase. We will verify the information you have provided, and make any necessary changes to your rental assistance. It is important to note that we will no longer postpone increases to your portion of the rent. If you do not notify us in writing within 14 calendar days of the date of the increase, you will be required to pay a retroactive rent increase, effective the first day of the month following the date of the increase. Additionally, if you do not notify the Housing Authority of any changes to your family income within the required timeframe, your housing assistance may be terminated.

Decreases in Family Income: If the income of any family member has decreased, you must notify us in writing within 14 calendar days of the date of the decrease. We will verify the information you have provided, and make any necessary changes to your rental assistance. If you do not notify us in writing within 14 calendar days of the date of the decrease, your rent will not be lowered retroactively. Additionally, if you do not notify the Housing Authority of any changes to your family income within the required timeframe, your housing assistance may be terminated.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE FAMILY

Please be aware that if you fail to comply with any of the obligations outlined below, your housing assistance may be terminated, and / or you may be responsible for paying back any overpayment of subsidy caused by the unreported information or violation.

Obligations of the Family

A. When the family's unit is approved and the HAP contract is executed, the family must follow the rules listed below in order to continue participating in the housing choice voucher program.

B. The family must:

1. Supply any information that the Housing Authority or the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determines to be necessary including evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status, and information for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition.
2. Disclose and verify social security numbers and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
3. Supply any information requested by the Housing Authority to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.
4. Promptly notify the Housing Authority in writing when the family is away from the unit for an extended period of time in accordance with Housing Authority policies.
5. Allow the Housing Authority to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.
6. Notify the Housing Authority and the landlord in writing before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease.
7. Use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.
8. Promptly notify the Housing Authority in writing of the birth, adoption, or court awarded custody of a child.
9. Request Housing Authority written approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.

10. Promptly notify the Housing Authority in writing if any family member no longer lives in the unit.
11. Give the Housing Authority a copy of any landlord eviction notice.
12. Pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the landlord is not required to provide under the lease.

C. Any information the family supplies must be true and complete.

D. The family (including each family member) must not:

1. Own or have any interest in the unit (other than in a cooperative, or the landlord of a manufactured home leasing a manufactured home space).
2. Commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.
3. Commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program.
4. Engage in drug related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.
5. Sublease or let the unit or assign the lease or transfer the unit.
6. Receive housing choice voucher program housing assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other Federal, State or local housing assistance program.
7. Damage the unit or premises (other than damage from ordinary wear and tear) or permit any guest to damage the unit or premises.
8. Receive housing choice voucher program housing assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, unless the Housing Authority has determined (and has notified the landlord and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities.
9. Engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

REASONS FOR TERMINATION OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE

The Housing Authority may deny or terminate program assistance at any time for any of the following reasons:

- If the family violates any family obligations under the program.
- If any member of the family has been evicted from public housing.
- If any member of the family has been previously terminated from the Section 8 program.
- If any member of the family commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity.
- If any member of the family commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.
- If the family currently owes rent or other amounts to the Housing Authority or to another Housing Authority in connection with Section 8 or public housing assistance under the 1937 Act.

- If the family has not reimbursed any Housing Authority for amounts paid to a landlord under a Housing Assistance Payment contract for rent, damages to the unit or other amounts owed by the family under the lease.
- If the family breaches an agreement with the Housing Authority to pay amounts owed to the Housing Authority or amounts paid to a landlord by the Housing Authority.
- If the family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward Housing Authority personnel.
- If any member of the family fails to sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
- If any member of the family fails to submit required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status.

INFORMAL HEARING PROCEDURES

When you may Request an Informal Hearing

The Housing Authority will give program participants an opportunity to request an informal hearing to consider whether the following determinations are in accordance with law, HUD regulations and/or Housing Authority rules, in the following cases:

1. The family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment.
2. The appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from the Housing Authority's utility allowance schedule.
3. The family unit size under the Housing Authority subsidy standards.
4. Termination of assistance for a participant family because of the family's action or failure to act.
5. Termination of assistance because the participant family has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under Housing Authority policy and HUD rules.

For information regarding how to request an informal hearing, please see the Hearing and Appeals Q&A, included in this packet.

FAIR HOUSING - IT'S YOUR RIGHT

Basic Facts About the Fair Housing Act: What Housing Is Covered?

The Fair Housing Act covers most housing. In some circumstances, the Act exempts landlord-occupied buildings with no more than four units, single-family housing sold or rented without the use of a broker, and housing operated by organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy to members.

What Is Prohibited?

In the sale and rental of housing: No one may take any of the following actions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or handicap:

- Refuse to rent or sell housing
- Refuse to negotiate for housing
- Make housing unavailable
- Deny a dwelling
- Set different terms, conditions or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling
- Provide different housing services or facilities
- Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale, or rental
- For profit, persuade landlords to sell or rent (blockbusting) or
- Deny anyone access to or membership in a facility or service (such as a multiple listing service) related to the sale or rental of housing.

In mortgage lending: No one may take any of the following actions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or handicap (disability):

- Refuse to make a mortgage loan
- Refuse to provide information regarding loans
- Impose different terms or conditions on a loan, such as different interest rates, points, or fees
- Discriminate in appraising property
- Refuse to purchase a loan or
- Set different terms or conditions for purchasing a loan.

In addition, it is illegal for anyone to:

- Threaten, coerce, intimidate or interfere with anyone exercising a fair housing right or assisting others who exercise that right
- Advertise or make any statement that indicates a limitation or preference based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap. This prohibition against discriminatory advertising applies to single-family and landlord-occupied housing that is otherwise exempt from the Fair Housing Act.

Additional Protection if You Have a Disability

If you or someone associated with you:

- Have a physical or mental disability (including hearing, mobility and visual impairments, chronic alcoholism, chronic mental illness, AIDS, AIDS Related Complex and mental retardation) that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Have a record of such a disability or
- Are regarded as having such a disability

Your landlord may not:

- Refuse to let you make reasonable modifications to your dwelling or common use areas, at your expense, if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing. (Where reasonable, the landlord may permit changes only if you agree to restore the property to its original condition when you move.)
- Refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing.

Example: A building with a "no pets" policy must allow a visually impaired tenant to keep a guide dog.

Example: An apartment complex that offers tenants ample, unassigned parking must honor a request from a mobility-impaired tenant for a reserved space near her apartment if necessary to assure that she can have access to her apartment.

However, housing need not be made available to a person who is a direct threat to the health or safety of others or who currently uses illegal drugs.

Requirements for New Buildings

In buildings that are ready for first occupancy after March 13, 1991, and have an elevator and four or more units:

- Public and common areas must be accessible to persons with disabilities
- Doors and hallways must be wide enough for wheelchairs

All units must have:

- An accessible route into and through the unit
- Accessible light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls
- Reinforced bathroom walls to allow later installation of grab bars and
- Kitchens and bathrooms that can be used by people in wheelchairs.

If a building with four or more units has no elevator and will be ready for first occupancy after March 13, 1991, these standards apply to ground floor units. These requirements for new buildings do not replace any more stringent standards in State or local law.

Housing Opportunities for Families

Unless a building or community qualifies as housing for older persons, it may not discriminate based on familial status. That is, it may not discriminate against families in which one or more children under 18 live with:

- A parent
- A person who has legal custody of the child or children or
- The designee of the parent or legal custodian, with the parent or custodian's written permission.
- Familial status protection also applies to pregnant women and anyone securing legal custody of a child under 18.

Exemption: Housing for older persons is exempt from the prohibition against familial status discrimination if:

- The HUD Secretary has determined that it is specifically designed for and occupied by elderly persons under a Federal, State or local government program or
- It is occupied solely by persons who are 62 or older or
- It houses at least one person who is 55 or older in at least 80 percent of the occupied units, and adheres to a policy that demonstrates an intent to house persons who are 55 or older.
- A transition period permits residents on or before September 13, 1988, to continue living in the housing, regardless of their age, without interfering with the exemption.

If You Think Your Rights Have Been Violated

The Housing Authority and HUD are ready to help with any problem of housing discrimination. If you think your rights have been violated, the Housing Discrimination Complaint Form is available for you to download, complete and return, or complete online and submit, or you may write HUD a letter, or telephone the HUD Office nearest you. You have one year after an alleged violation to file a complaint with HUD, but you should file it as soon as possible.

What to Tell HUD:

- Your name and address
- The name and address of the person your complaint is against (the respondent)
- The address or other identification to the housing involved
- A short description to the alleged violation (the event that caused you to believe your rights were violated)
- The date(s) to the alleged violation

Where to Write or Call:

Send the Housing Discrimination Complaint Form or a letter to:

San Francisco HUD Office
Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
600 Harrison Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94107-1300

Phone: (415) 489-6400

Fax: (415) 489-6419

If you are a person with disabilities, the Housing Authority and HUD also provide:

- A toll-free TTY phone for the hearing impaired. (HUD: 1-800-927-9275. Housing Authority TDD: 831-469-0122)
- Interpreters
- HUD tapes and braille materials
- Assistance in reading and completing forms

What Happens when You File a Complaint?

HUD will notify you when it receives your complaint. Normally, HUD also will:

- Notify the alleged violator of your complaint and permit that person to submit an answer
- Investigate your complaint and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe the Fair Housing Act has been violated
- Notify you if it cannot complete an investigation within 100 days of receiving your complaint

Conciliation

HUD will try to reach an agreement with the person your complaint is against (the respondent). A conciliation agreement must protect both you and the public interest. If an agreement is signed, HUD will take no further action on your complaint. However, if HUD has reasonable cause to believe that a conciliation agreement is breached, HUD will recommend that the Attorney General file suit.

Complaint Referrals

If HUD has determined that your State or local agency has the same fair housing powers as HUD, HUD will refer your complaint to that agency for investigation and notify you of the referral. That agency must begin work on your complaint within 30 days or HUD may take it back.

What if You Need Help Quickly?

If you need immediate help to stop a serious problem that is being caused by a Fair Housing Act violation, HUD may be able to assist you as soon as you file a complaint. HUD may authorize the Attorney General to go to court to seek temporary or preliminary relief, pending the outcome of your complaint, if:

- Irreparable harm is likely to occur without HUD's intervention
- There is substantial evidence that a violation of the Fair Housing Act occurred

Example: A builder agrees to sell a house but, after learning the buyer is black, fails to keep the agreement. The buyer files a complaint with HUD. HUD may authorize the Attorney General to go to court to prevent a sale to any other buyer until HUD investigates the complaint.

What Happens after a Complaint Investigation?

If, after investigating your complaint, HUD finds reasonable cause to believe that discrimination occurred, it will inform you. Your case will be heard in an administrative hearing within 120 days, unless you or the respondent want the case to be heard in Federal district court. Either way, there is no cost to you.

The Administrative Hearing:

If your case goes to an administrative hearing HUD attorneys will litigate the case on your behalf. You may intervene in the case and be represented by your own attorney if you wish. An

Administrative Law Judge (ALA) will consider evidence from you and the respondent. If the ALA decides that discrimination occurred, the respondent can be ordered:

- To compensate you for actual damages, including humiliation, pain and suffering.
- To provide injunctive or other equitable relief, for example, to make the housing available to you.
- To pay the Federal Government a civil penalty to vindicate the public interest. The maximum penalties are \$10,000 for a first violation and \$50,000 for a third violation within seven years.
- To pay reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

Federal District Court

If you or the respondent choose to have your case decided in Federal District Court, the Attorney General will file a suit and litigate it on your behalf. Like the ALA, the District Court can order relief, and award actual damages, attorney's fees and costs. In addition, the court can award punitive damages.

You may file suit, at your expense, in Federal District Court or State Court within two years of an alleged violation. If you cannot afford an attorney, the Court may appoint one for you. You may bring suit even after filing a complaint, if you have not signed a conciliation agreement and an Administrative Law Judge has not started a hearing. A court may award actual and punitive damages and attorney's fees and costs.

Other Tools to Combat Housing Discrimination:

If there is noncompliance with the order of an Administrative Law Judge, HUD may seek temporary relief, enforcement of the order or a restraining order in a United States Court of Appeals.

The Attorney General may file a suit in a Federal District Court if there is reasonable cause to believe a pattern or practice of housing discrimination is occurring.

For Further Information:

The Fair Housing Act and HUD's regulations contain more detail and technical information. If you need a copy of the law or regulations, ask Housing Authority staff or contact the HUD Office nearest you.

Housing Search Q&A

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

Jun 2021

Where to look for a place to rent:

- ✓ Visit our website for the Rental Referral list and links to more online resources
- ✓ Read rental ads in the newspaper every day.
- ✓ Contact property management companies that have many places for rent.
- ✓ Visit neighborhoods where you would like to live and look for "For Rent" signs

How to Find a Place to Rent with Your Voucher

How do I begin my housing search?

Your search for a place to rent is as important as a job search. You will get more information at the Briefing when you get a voucher, but here are some things to consider:

- ✓ Start early and search every day. It takes a focused effort to find a place to rent. You may only have 60 days.
- ✓ Gather landlord and job references to present to a landlord you'd like to rent from.
- ✓ Present yourself well. Dress neatly when you go to look at a rental, and show the landlord that you would make a good tenant by paying the rent on time and taking care of the place.
- ✓ Bring the landlord information packet we gave you to show to the landlord or property manager.
- ✓ Use our **Rental Property Search Form** to document every rental you look at, and the outcome of your application in case you need to request a voucher extension.

How much time do I have to find a place?

Usually you have 60 days from the date you got a voucher or vacated your unit to find a place to rent.

Do not make any commitment to rent until you have received your voucher and understand the terms and conditions. Remember that if funding is cut, **if you are searching for a rental your voucher could be frozen** for months or longer. Please do not wait until the expiration date to find a place to live!

Can I just stay where I am?

Absolutely! If you have just received a voucher, we encourage you to consider "leasing in place," or using your voucher to rent the home you already live in. You still have the option of moving later.

Start the process of renting with your voucher right away. If your landlord is not interested, or if your home does not pass inspection, you will need time to search for another place to rent.

If you already have a voucher and are interested in moving, read our Transfer Q&A for more details.



Questions? Call our Info Line at 454-5955
or visit us online at www.hacosantacruz.org.



2160 41st Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010 Open M-TH 8-4:30, Closed Fridays
For our business office or para información in español: 831 454-9455
Program rules are subject to change. Use this as general guidance only.

TDD: 831 475-1146

Housing Search Q&A cont'd

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista June 2021

More About Finding a Place to Rent with Your Voucher

What should I do when I find a place to rent?

When you find a place to rent, you and the landlord must complete the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) and return it to us.

If the landlord has any questions about the program, he/she can visit the Landlord section of our website call our Info Line.

We will review the RTA and, if needed, negotiate the total rent with the landlord.

We will also schedule an inspection. The unit must be vacant, and the power must be on, for us to inspect it. See our Inspection Q&A.

The landlord may conduct his/her own screening, charge you a market-rate security deposit, and use his/her own lease.

We recommend that you do not move in until the unit passes inspection, the lease is signed, and the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract is approved, or you could be responsible for the full rent amount.

What happens if I don't find a place to rent?

You have a limited time, usually 60 days, to find a place to rent. If you cannot find a rental, you may request an extension in writing. Otherwise, your voucher will expire and be issued to another family.

Do not wait until your voucher has expired to request an extension! You must make your request at least 7 days before the voucher expires.

There is no guarantee that your request for an extension will be approved. Our policy for extensions may change at any time. However, in general, extensions may be approved if:

- ✓ You have conducted a housing search and have a list of rentals you contacted to document your search, or:
- ✓ You are a person with disabilities and your doctor verifies that your disability prevented you from searching for housing or arranging help to find housing.

Can a landlord refuse to rent to me because I have a Housing Choice Voucher?

Yes. There is no law against refusing to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program.

However, federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race or color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or family status (including children.) Call our Info Line for information on how to file a discrimination complaint.



Need More Info?

Visit our website or call our Info Line for more resources, including:

- ✓ Family Contact List
- ✓ Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA)
- ✓ Extension Request Form
- ✓ Inspection Q&A
- ✓ New Landlord Q&A

Info Line: 831 454-5955

Website: www.hacosantacruz.org

Transfer Q&A

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

Oct 21

Tips for a smooth transfer:

- ✓ Make sure your lease allows you to move now.
- ✓ Give your landlord the proper written notice before you move.
- ✓ Pay your rent through the last day of your lease and leave your unit in good condition.
- ✓ Return the keys to your landlord and get a receipt.
- ✓ Notify us of your move-out date.

Information About Moving Within the Area

When can I transfer with my voucher?

Before you get ready to move with your voucher, make sure you meet the following conditions:

- ✓ You cannot move until you reach the end of the term of your lease. Check your lease to find out when you can move. If your lease term is not up but you and your landlord both agree to terminate the lease early, you would be allowed to move.
- ✓ You must repay the Housing Authority any money you owe. You cannot move until you are current with your payments.
- ✓ Remember that our subsidy standards may have changed since you were last issued a voucher. **If you move, your voucher size will be re-determined and you may be given a voucher with fewer bedrooms than you have now.**
- ✓ The Housing Authority does not get involved in disputes between the tenant and the landlord.

What if I want to move out of the area?

Moving to a new unit within the county (or city, in the case of Hollister or San Juan Bautista), is called a "transfer." The information on this Q&A only covers moving within the county.

If you want to move out of the area, that's called a "portable." It's a different process than a transfer. You are allowed to "portable" under certain conditions. Please see our Portable Q&A for more information.

What if I have already moved out?

If you have moved without notifying us, your voucher may be canceled. If you notified us before you moved out, you will only have 60 days from your move-out date to find a new place to rent and turn in a Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA.)

If you cannot find a place within 60 days, you can request an extension, but extensions may not be granted. If funding is cut while you are searching, your voucher could be "frozen" for weeks or months.



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Transfer Q&A cont'd

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

Oct 21

More About Moving Within the Area

What should I do when I'm ready to move?

Do nothing until you contact the Housing Authority. Do not move until you understand and comply with our transfer procedures . When you are ready to move, please start the process early and follow these steps carefully. If you don't, **you risk losing your voucher or having to pay the full rent yourself.**

- ✓ Send us a Transfer Request Form, available from our website, our office, or by calling our Info Line.
- ✓ When we get your **Transfer Request Form**, we will send you a Transfer Packet. It has all the information you need. It includes a letter that tells you what voucher size you will get if you move.
- ✓ When you find a new place to rent, you and your new landlord must fill out the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) form in your packet and send it to us.
- ✓ You must also send us a Vacate Date Certification Form, which is in the packet, to verify your move-out date.

What happens after I submit the paperwork to move?

This can be a lengthy process. After the Housing Authority has received the RTA and the Vacate Date Certification Form, the next steps will include:

- ✓ The Housing Authority will review the paperwork to make sure there is no overlap in dates between the old unit and the new one. **We cannot pay subsidy on two units at once.**
- ✓ We will perform a preliminary rent calculation. Your rent and utilities cannot exceed 40% of your monthly adjusted income.
- ✓ We will inspect the new unit.
- ✓ After the unit passes inspection, we will perform a final rent calculation to make sure the total rent is "reasonable" as compared to similar units.
- ✓ You and the landlord will sign a lease. The lease addendum will contain your rent amount.

What if there have been changes to my family's income or composition?

Sometimes people move because of a change of jobs or family members. To report changes, complete a **Change Report Form** or **Request for Approval to Change Household Composition Form**, available from our website or by calling our Info Line. **The form will explain the rules about who you can add to your household.**



Need More Info?

Visit our website or call our Info Line for more resources, including:

- ✓ Transfer Request Form
- ✓ Change Report Form
- ✓ Request for Approval to Change Household Composition Form
- ✓ Housing Search Q&A
- ✓ Portability Q&A

If you still have questions about transfers, you may ask to speak to a supervisor.

Info Line: 831 454-5955

Website: www.hacosantacruz.org

Portability Q&A

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista Oct. 21

Tips for an easy move:

- ✓ Make sure your lease allows you to move now.
- ✓ Give your landlord the proper written notice before you move.
- ✓ Pay your rent through the last day of your lease and leave your unit in good condition.
- ✓ Return the keys to your landlord and get a receipt. The Housing Authority will need proof of your move-out date.

Information About Moving to Another Area

Can I move to another Area with my voucher?

Under the Housing Choice Voucher program, families can move with their assistance to another area. This is called "portability" or "porting."

In order to move to another housing authority's jurisdiction, you must meet one of the following criteria:

- ✓ The head of your household or spouse must have lived in the jurisdiction of your current housing authority at the time that you put your name on the waiting list, OR:
- ✓ You must have lived in the jurisdiction of the Housing Authority that issued your voucher for at least one year after you began receiving housing assistance.

If you are interested in porting out to another area, please complete a Portability Request Form, available in our office lobby or our website. The Housing Authority will contact you to inform you if you are eligible to port.

What if I want to move to another unit in the same county?

Moving to a new unit within the county (or city, in the case of Hollister or San Juan Bautista), is called a "transfer." This is a different process than a "portable." If you want to transfer to another unit within the same county or city, please see our Transfer Q&A for more information.

The information on this sheet only applies to moving to another housing authority's jurisdiction.

What if I have already moved out?

Moving to another area can be a lengthy process and is only possible if the other housing authority is able to assist you. **Do not move without notifying us first.** If you have moved out, call the Info Line immediately. Your voucher could be canceled.

You will have 60 days from your move-out date to find a new place to rent, in this county or in another jurisdiction, **or you may lose your voucher.**



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Portability Q&A cont'd

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista Oct 21

More About Moving to Another County

What should I do when I'm ready to move?

When you are ready to move, please start the process early and follow these steps carefully. If you don't, **you risk losing your voucher or having to pay the full rent yourself.**

✓ Send us a completed **Portability Request form**, available from our website, our office, or by calling our Info Line.

✓ When we get your Portability Request Form, we will contact the housing authority where you wish to move and will find out if they are able to assist you.

✓ We will review your request and determine if you are eligible to 'port-out'. You will not be eligible to port if you have violated program rules, committed lease violations, or owe us money. We will send you a letter letting you know if your request has been approved.

✓ If approved, we will forward the documentation to the housing authority where you want to move.

What happens after I am approved to move to another housing authority's jurisdiction?

Once the Housing Authority has approved your request to 'port-out', use the contact information provided to contact the housing authority where you want to move to discuss topics such as:

- ✓ What they need from you.
- ✓ Requirements they have for voucher holders porting in.
- ✓ How their payment standards will affect your portion of rent.
- ✓ How their subsidy standards might affect your voucher size.
- ✓ If you will be re-screened for program eligibility under their policies.
- ✓ Help with a security deposit.
- ✓ What their policies for termination or denial of assistance are.

Every housing authority is different. Please review their requirements carefully.

✓ You will have a limited amount of time, usually 60 days, to find a place to rent.

✓ If you decide not to move with your voucher after all, or if you decide to move to a different housing authority's jurisdiction, you must let us know about your decision as soon as possible. If you select a different housing authority, the process must be repeated. Due to the time involved in the porting process, changes such as these may cause your voucher to expire.

✓ If you have already moved out of your unit, or if you have not leased up in a unit **you risk losing your assistance if you don't follow all the program deadlines.**

What if there have been changes to my family's income or composition?

If your income has changed, or if you will be adding or removing family members when you move, please notify the housing authority in the area where you plan to move.

Things to keep in mind:

Allow time for appointments at the receiving housing authority, rent approval and inspection of the unit you wish to move into.

Plan for extra expenses including: Living expenses during the move, security deposits, and moving expenses.

A lapse in housing might occur due to tight housing markets if you move from your old unit and have not secured a new unit to move into.



Need more Info?

Visit our website or call our Info Line for more resources, including:

- ✓ Portability Request Form
- ✓ Housing Search Q&A
- ✓ Transfer Q&A
- ✓ Inspection Q&A
- ✓ New Landlord Q&A
- ✓ Special Needs for Persons with Disabilities Q&A.

Housing Plus Q&A

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

Oct 21

Who the Housing Plus Program benefits:

- ✓ People moving from welfare to work.
- ✓ People who are already working, but plan to increase their earned income through raises, promotions, better jobs, or more hours at work.
- ✓ People who are attending college or job training to upgrade their skills and get a better job.
- ✓ People saving up to buy their own home, start a business, or meet other long-term financial goals.

Building a Solid Future for Your Family

What is the Housing Plus program?

The Housing Plus program is designed to help families in the Housing Choice Voucher program become more self-sufficient. Here's how it works:

- ✓ You sign a Contract of Participation that outlines your goals and your plan to reach those goals.
- ✓ As your family's **earned income** (wages and other income from work) increases, we put money aside in an account for you. The amount we put aside is based on your increase in earned income and other factors.
- ✓ When you reach your goal, we send you all the money in your account. **You must complete your goal within five years** to get the money.
- ✓ There is no other penalty to you if you don't reach your goal. In fact, **you have nothing to lose by joining the Housing Plus program.** This program was previously called the Family Self Sufficiency program (FSS).

What kind of goals would I have to meet to participate in Housing Plus?

There are two goals that **all families must meet** in order to participate:

- ✓ Everyone in the household must be off welfare assistance for one year before the Contract of Participation is complete.
- ✓ The head of household must seek and maintain suitable employment.

The rest of the goals are up to you.

Examples of goals that families set for themselves include:

- ✓ Completing a GED or getting a college degree.
- ✓ Completing a job training or welfare-to-work program.
- ✓ Getting a new job or a better job.
- ✓ Getting a raise or promotion at the job you already have.
- ✓ Learning about homeownership and buying a home.
- ✓ Starting a small business.



Questions? Call our Info Line at 454-5955
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Housing Plus Q&A cont'd

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

Oct 21

Getting Involved in the Housing Plus Program

What other program requirements are there?

In order to enroll in the program, you must sign a Contract of Participation.

Once a year, we will send you a form and ask you to update us on the progress you are making toward your goals. Also, you may request permission to make changes to your Contract goals.

Before you can receive the funds in your account, you must provide verification that you met your goals. This may include proof of income, proof that no one in the family receives welfare, and proof that you've met other goals like getting a college degree.

You must notify us when you reach your goal. There will be no additional funds deposited into your account after you reach your goal. The sooner you notify us, the sooner you can receive the money.

You will "graduate" and get your money automatically if your family's monthly income reaches a certain upper limit. This amount changes every year, and we can calculate it for you when you enroll.

What happens when I get the money in my account?

When you notify the Housing Authority that you have met your goals, we will review your file, request any verifications we may need, make sure you have met all program requirements, and then we will issue a check to you.

There are no restrictions or requirements regarding what you do with the money. Most families continue to receive assistance from the Housing Authority, and the funds that are paid out to you would be counted as an asset during your annual recertification.

Many families choose to use the money as downpayment on a home.

Housing Choice Voucher families may apply to use their voucher to help them make mortgage payments on a home of their own.

There are a limited number of special Homeownership Housing Choice Vouchers reserved for Public Housing families graduating from the Housing Plus program.

Refer to the Housing Programs Q&A for more information about housing opportunities that might be available to you.

Can I enroll now?

The Housing Authority has a limited number of slots for Housing Plus families. If you think you may be interested in enrolling, we encourage you to call now and check on availability.

Remember, you have nothing to lose by joining the Housing Plus program! If you plan to increase your earned income, this program can help you build a savings account for your future.



Need More Info?

Visit our website or call our Info Line for more information about program responsibilities, including:

- ✓ HCV Homeownership Q&A
- ✓ Housing Programs Q&A
- ✓ Annual Recertification Q&A
- ✓ Reporting Changes Q&A
- ✓ Transfer Q&A
- ✓ Special Needs Q&A

Info Line: 831 454-5955

Website: www.hacosantacruz.org

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Special Needs Q&A

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

March 21

What kind of assistance do you offer for persons with disabilities?

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz has special voucher programs for disabled persons meeting certain eligibility criteria. For a list of all special voucher programs, please visit our website at <https://hacosantacruz.org/waiting-lists/waiting-lists-for-all-programs/>. Additionally, if you are homeless or at risk of homelessness, please reach out to <https://smartpathsc.org/homeless/> or call 831-454-4122 or 2-1-1.

You might consider contacting the caseworker you have through the County or other Agency that is not the Housing Authority, to discuss options for you.

What other options might be available?

When you apply for or begin receiving assistance from the Housing Authority, our staff can help with special needs such as:

- ✓ Authorizing someone else to speak to us, receive mail, or sign papers on your behalf.
- ✓ Requests for extensions of important deadlines if the delay was related to a disability.
- ✓ Requests for a live-in aide, which is a person that is required by your disability to live in your home and assist you.
- ✓ Requests to rent a unit from a relative if you are unable to find another unit with the special features you require.

Other options, continued:

- ✓ Requests for an extra bedroom to store oversized medical equipment or provide extra space related to the disabilities.
- ✓ Other special needs

How Do I Make a Request?

Complete the appropriate Special Request Form, which you can download from our website, or call our Info Line (# below) to request a form or to make your request verbally if you cannot complete the form.

Make your request as early as possible so that processing time will not interfere in your housing needs.

Be specific about what you are asking for.

Once we get the request, we will send a form directly to your health care provider or social worker to verify the need. Please make sure that person is aware of your needs and understands how important it is to provide as much detail as possible on our form and return it quickly. Your health care provider or social worker cannot give the form to you—he or she must send it directly to us.

When will I know if my request has been approved?

This depends on how long it takes your health care provider or social worker to respond. Most requests take over 30 days to process. We will send you a letter notifying you of our decision.

Approving a special request can result in you receiving more rental assistance that would otherwise be used to help another family.

For this reason, we require thorough documentation of the need and we will verify that the accommodation is being used.

Questions? Call our Info Line at 454-5955 or visit us online at www.hacosantacruz.org



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Special Needs Q&A cont'd

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

March 21

More Information for Persons with Disabilities

What are the requirements for live-in aides?

- ✓ A live-in aide (LIA) cannot be someone who would normally live with you as part of your family or support you financially. A LIA is an employee who you hire to provide care.
- ✓ Your health care provider or social worker must verify that you need a LIA to perform essential tasks related to your disability during nighttime hours. The Housing Authority will confirm this need.
- ✓ You may not charge rent to a LIA.
- ✓ A LIA does not have any rights to the voucher and is not considered part of the assisted household.
- ✓ A LIA's income is not counted as part of your household income.
- ✓ A LIA must live with you full-time and document that he/she does not have another residence.
- ✓ You do not need our approval for daytime help, only for a LIA to live with you.

What are the requirements for renting from a relative?

You are only allowed to rent from a relative if:

- ✓ Your health care provider or social worker verifies that you need special features due to a disability, and
- ✓ You complete a Housing Search Form to show that you tried to find another unit and that your needs can be met only by your relative's unit.

How can I get a larger unit or an extra bedroom?

Granting extra bedrooms mean that you get more rental assistance that could otherwise help another family. Extra bedrooms are approved in limited situations for:

- ✓ Large medical equipment
- ✓ Certain conditions that make it impossible for two people to share a room.

If you are searching for a unit, do not assume that your request will be approved!

Continue your housing search. You might not get an extension on your voucher simply because you were waiting for approval of your request.

When can I get an extension of my voucher expiration date?

Extensions due to a disability are only granted if your health care provider or social worker documents the dates when your disability prevented you from searching for a rental. There is no guarantee that extensions will be granted. **If you do not lease up by the deadline, you could lose your voucher.** Continue your housing search and document every unit you contact.



Need More Info?

Visit our website or call our Info Line for more resources, including:

- ✓ Special Needs Request Form
- ✓ Live-in Aide Request Form
- ✓ Housing Search Form
- ✓ Authorization to Act on Tenant's Behalf Form
- ✓ Housing Search Q&A

Info Line: 831 454-5955

Website: www.hacosantacruz.org

Hearings & Appeals Q&A

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

Oct 21

Tips for filing an appeal:

- ✓ If you receive a denial or decision letter, be sure to respond by the deadline.
- ✓ Put your response in writing.
- ✓ **If you need help with your appeal due to a disability or limited English skills**, please call the Housing Authority and ask for help.
- ✓ You may request a copy of the appropriate hearing or grievance procedure.

Learn More About Your Appeal and Hearing Rights

How can I appeal a Housing Authority decision?

Many of the decisions made by the Housing Authority can be appealed. Examples of decisions you may appeal include:

- ✓ A decision to deny assistance to an applicant.
- ✓ A determination of the family's income, which is used to calculate the amount of rent a family will pay.
- ✓ A determination of the utility allowance that applies to the family
- ✓ A determination of a family's unit size (number of bedrooms) **for participants**.
- ✓ A decision to terminate program assistance for a family.
- ✓ Termination or denial decisions due to criminal or drug-related activity are subject to a special appeal process to safeguard the confidentiality of such records.

Under what circumstances would I not be eligible to appeal a Housing Authority decision?

The informal hearing process is not available to you for the following situations.

- ✓ Discretionary administrative determinations by the PHA.
- ✓ General policy issues or class grievances
- ✓ A determination of the family unit size **for applicants**.
- ✓ An PHA determination not to approve an extension or suspension of a voucher term.
- ✓ A PHA determination not to grant approval of the tenancy.
- ✓ An PHA determination that a unit is not in compliance with HQS (Housing Quality Standards), including overcrowding determinations.
- ✓ A determination by the PHA to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against the owner under a HAP contract.



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Hearings & Appeals Q&A p.2

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

Oct 21

More About Grievances and Discrimination Complaints

What are the steps for filing an appeal?

The process varies depending on the program, but in general, the steps are:

- ✓ The family requests an appeal by the deadline.
- ✓ Housing Authority staff will contact the family and offer a meeting, by phone or in person, to help resolve the problem.
- ✓ If the family does not want a meeting, or if the issues is not resolved or if the nature of the issue requires it,, an informal hearing will be scheduled.
- ✓ Before the hearing, the family has a right to review their file and any documents related to the determination.
- ✓ The family may bring a representative or advocate with them to the hearing.
- ✓ The Hearing Officer will be someone who was not directly involved with the decision.
- ✓ At the hearing, the family and the Housing Authority staff will present information to the Hearing Officer.
- ✓ The Hearing Officer will issue a written decision after the hearing.

What if I believe a landlord has discriminated against my family?

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents of legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18), and handicap (disability).

If you think that a landlord, property manager, or other housing provider has discriminated against you, you have the right to file a complaint with the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

The Housing Authority can give you the form and provide assistance in filing a fair housing compliant, or visit this website to obtain a form:

www.hud.gov/complaints/housediscrim.cfm

You may also call toll-free 1 (800) 669-9777 to file a complaint.

What if I believe the Housing Authority has discriminated against me on the basis of disability?

You have a right to file a grievance if you think the Housing Authority has discriminated against you on the basis of disability.

To file a grievance at any time, submit your request to the Housing Authority in writing, to the attention of "504 Coordinator."



Need More Info?

Visit our website or call our Info Line to get more resources, including:

- ✓ Special Needs Q&A
- ✓ Program Fraud Q&A
- ✓ Waiting List Q&A
- ✓ Housing Authority Programs Q&A
- ✓ Program Eligibility Q&A

Info Line: 831 454-5955

Website: www.hacosantacruz.org

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz

Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence Against Women Act¹

To all Tenants and Applicants

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. VAWA protections are not only available to women, but are available equally to all individuals regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal agency that oversees that Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, Project Based Voucher and Low Income Public Housing is in compliance with VAWA. This notice explains your rights under VAWA. A HUD-approved certification form is attached to this notice. You can fill out this form to show that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and that you wish to use your rights under VAWA.

Protections for Applicants

If you otherwise qualify for assistance under Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, Project Based Voucher and Low Income Public Housing, you cannot be denied admission or denied assistance because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Protections for Tenants

If you are receiving assistance under Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, Project Based Voucher and Low Income Public Housing, you may not be denied assistance, terminated from participation, or be evicted from your rental housing because you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Also, if you or an affiliated individual of yours is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking by a member of your household or any guest, you may not be denied rental assistance or occupancy rights under Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, Project Based Voucher and Low Income Public Housing solely on the basis of criminal activity directly relating to that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Affiliated individual means your spouse, parent, brother, sister, or child, or a person to whom you stand in the place of a parent or guardian (for example, the affiliated individual is in your care, custody, or control); or any individual, tenant, or lawful occupant living in your household.

Removing the Abuser or Perpetrator from the Household

The Housing Authority may divide (bifurcate) your lease in order to evict the individual or terminate the assistance of the individual who has engaged in criminal activity (the abuser or perpetrator) directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

¹ Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

² Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

The Housing Authority chooses to remove the abuser or perpetrator, the Housing Authority may not take away the rights of eligible tenants to the unit or otherwise punish the remaining tenants. If the evicted abuser or perpetrator was the sole tenant to have established eligibility for assistance under the program, the Housing Authority must allow the tenant who is or has been a victim and other household members to remain in the unit for a period of time, in order to establish eligibility under the program or under another HUD housing program covered by VAWA, or, find alternative housing.

In removing the abuser or perpetrator from the household, the Housing Authority must follow Federal, State, and local eviction procedures. In order to divide a lease, the Housing Authority may, but is not required to, ask you for documentation or certification of the incidences of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Moving to Another Unit

Upon your request, the Housing Authority may permit you to move to another unit, subject to the availability of other units, and still keep your assistance. In order to approve a request, the Housing Authority may ask you to provide documentation that you are requesting to move because of an incidence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If the request is a request for emergency transfer, the housing provider may ask you to submit a written request or fill out a form where you certify that you meet the criteria for an emergency transfer under VAWA. The criteria are:

- (1) You are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.** If your housing provider does not already have documentation that you are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your housing provider may ask you for such documentation, as described in the documentation section below.
- (2) You expressly request the emergency transfer.** Your housing provider may choose to require that you submit a form, or may accept another written or oral request.
- (3) You reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your current unit.** This means you have a reason to fear that if you do not receive a transfer you would suffer violence in the very near future. **OR**
You are a victim of sexual assault and the assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period before you request a transfer. If you are a victim of sexual assault, then in addition to qualifying for an emergency transfer because you reasonably believe you are threatened with imminent harm from further violence if you remain in your unit, you may qualify for an emergency transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises of the property from which you are seeking your transfer, and that assault happened within the 90-calendar-day period before you expressly request the transfer.

The Housing Authority will keep confidential requests for emergency transfers by victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the location of any move by such victims and their families. The Housing Authority's emergency transfer plan provides further information on emergency transfers, and THE HOUSING AUTHORITY must make a copy of its emergency transfer plan available to you if you ask to see it.

Documenting You Are or Have Been a Victim of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking

The Housing Authority can, but is not required to, ask you to provide documentation to "certify" that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Such request from The Housing Authority must be in writing, and the Housing Authority must give you at least 14 business

days (Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays do not count) from the day you receive the request to provide the documentation. The Housing Authority may, but does not have to, extend the deadline for the submission of documentation upon your request.

You can provide one of the following to the Housing Authority as documentation. It is your choice which of the following to submit if the Housing Authority asks you to provide documentation that you are or have been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

- A complete HUD-approved certification form given to you by the Housing Authority with this notice, that documents an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The form will ask for your name, the date, time, and location of the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and a description of the incident. The certification form provides for including the name of the abuser or perpetrator if the name of the abuser or perpetrator is known and is safe to provide.
- A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial, or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency that documents the incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Examples of such records include police reports, protective orders, and restraining orders, among others.
- A statement, which you must sign, along with the signature of an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, a medical professional or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom you sought assistance in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse, and with the professional selected by you attesting under penalty of perjury that he or she believes that the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking are grounds for protection.
- Any other statement or evidence that the Housing Authority has agreed to accept.

If you fail or refuse to provide one of these documents within the 14 business days, the Housing Authority does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

If the Housing Authority receives conflicting evidence that an incident of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking has been committed (such as certification forms from two or more members of a household each claiming to be a victim and naming one or more of the other petitioning household members as the abuser or perpetrator), the Housing Authority has the right to request that you provide third-party documentation within thirty 30 calendar days in order to resolve the conflict. If you fail or refuse to provide third-party documentation where there is conflicting evidence, the Housing Authority does not have to provide you with the protections contained in this notice.

Confidentiality

The Housing Authority must keep confidential any information you provide related to the exercise of your rights under VAWA, including the fact that you are exercising your rights under VAWA. The Housing Authority must not allow any individual administering assistance or other services on behalf of the Housing Authority (for example, employees and contractors) to have access to confidential information unless for reasons that specifically call for these individuals to have access to this information under applicable Federal, State, or local law.

The Housing Authority must not enter your information into any shared database or disclose your information to any other entity or individual. The Housing Authority, however, may disclose the information provided if:

- You give written permission to the Housing Authority to release the information on a time limited basis.
- The Housing Authority needs to use the information in an eviction or termination proceeding, such as to evict your abuser or perpetrator or terminate your abuser or perpetrator from assistance under this program.
- A law requires the Housing Authority or your landlord to release the information.

VAWA does not limit the Housing Authority's duty to honor court orders about access to or control of the property. This includes orders issued to protect a victim and orders dividing property among household members in cases where a family breaks up.

Reasons a Tenant Eligible for Occupancy Rights under VAWA May Be Evicted or Assistance May Be Terminated

You can be evicted and your assistance can be terminated for serious or repeated lease violations that are not related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking committed against you.

However, the Housing Authority cannot hold tenants who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to a more demanding set of rules than it applies to tenants who have not been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The protections described in this notice might not apply, and you could be evicted and your assistance terminated, if the Housing Authority can demonstrate that not evicting you or terminating your assistance would present a real physical danger that:

- 1) Would occur within an immediate time frame, and
- 2) Could result in death or serious bodily harm to other tenants or those who work on the property.

If the Housing Authority can demonstrate the above, the Housing Authority should only terminate your assistance or evict you if there are no other actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate the threat.

Other Laws

VAWA does not replace any Federal, State, or local law that provides greater protection for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. You may be entitled to additional housing protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking under other Federal laws, as well as under State and local laws.

Non-Compliance with the Requirements of This Notice

You may report a covered housing provider's violations of these rights and seek additional assistance, if needed, by contacting or filing a complaint with HUD's San Francisco Local Office, 415.489.6401 or CA_Webmanager@hud.gov

For Additional Information

You may view a copy of HUD's final VAWA rule at [Final Rule: Violence Against Women Act 2013 \(VAWA 2013\)](#). Additionally, the Housing Authority must make a copy available to you if you ask to see them. For questions regarding VAWA, please contact the Housing Authority at 831.454.9455.

For help regarding an abusive relationship, you may call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1.800.799.7233 or, for persons with hearing impairments, 1.800.787.3224 (TTY). You may also contact 2-1-1.

For tenants who are or have been victims of stalking may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, Victims Services at 831.454.2400.

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, Victims Services at 831.454.2400.

Attachment: Certification form HUD-5382

**CERTIFICATION OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
DATING VIOLENCE,
SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING,
AND ALTERNATE DOCUMENTATION**

**U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development**

OMB Approval No. 2577-0286
Exp. 06/30/2017

Purpose of Form: The Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) protects applicants, tenants, and program participants in certain HUD programs from being evicted, denied housing assistance, or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against them. Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Use of This Optional Form: If you are seeking VAWA protections from your housing provider, your housing provider may give you a written request that asks you to submit documentation about the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

In response to this request, you or someone on your behalf may complete this optional form and submit it to your housing provider, or you may submit one of the following types of third-party documentation:

- (1) A document signed by you and an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim service provider, an attorney, or medical professional, or a mental health professional (collectively, “professional”) from whom you have sought assistance relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or the effects of abuse. The document must specify, under penalty of perjury, that the professional believes the incident or incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking occurred and meet the definition of “domestic violence,” “dating violence,” “sexual assault,” or “stalking” in HUD’s regulations at 24 CFR 5.2003.
- (2) A record of a Federal, State, tribal, territorial or local law enforcement agency, court, or administrative agency; or
- (3) At the discretion of the housing provider, a statement or other evidence provided by the applicant or tenant.

Submission of Documentation: The time period to submit documentation is 14 business days from the date that you receive a written request from your housing provider asking that you provide documentation of the occurrence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Your housing provider may, but is not required to, extend the time period to submit the documentation, if you request an extension of the time period. If the requested information is not received within 14 business days of when you received the request for the documentation, or any extension of the date provided by your housing provider, your housing provider does not need to grant you any of the VAWA protections. Distribution or issuance of this form does not serve as a written request for certification.

Confidentiality: All information provided to your housing provider concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shall be kept confidential and such details shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of your housing provider are not to have access to these details unless to grant or deny VAWA protections to you, and such employees may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) consented to by you in writing in a time-limited release; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING**

1. Date the written request is received by victim: _____

2. Name of victim: _____

3. Your name (if different from victim's): _____

4. Name(s) of other family member(s) listed on the lease: _____

5. Residence of victim: _____

6. Name of the accused perpetrator (if known and can be safely disclosed): _____

7. Relationship of the accused perpetrator to the victim: _____

8. Date(s) and times(s) of incident(s) (if known): _____

9. Location of incident(s): _____

In your own words, briefly describe the incident(s):

This is to certify that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection, and that the individual named above in Item 2 is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. I acknowledge that submission of false information could jeopardize program eligibility and could be the basis for denial of admission, termination of assistance, or eviction.

Signature _____ Signed on (Date) _____

Public Reporting Burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response. This includes the time for collecting, reviewing, and reporting the data. The information provided is to be used by the housing provider to request certification that the applicant or tenant is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The information is subject to the confidentiality requirements of VAWA. This agency may not collect this information, and you are not required to complete this form, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget control number.

TENANT RESUME

Name _____
 Street Address _____
 City, State _____
 Phone _____

CURRENT INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION/HISTORY

Name _____
 Length of Employment _____
 Job Title/Employer _____
 Salary _____

Name _____
 Length of Employment _____
 Job Title/Employer _____
 Salary _____

Name _____
 Length of Employment _____
 Job Title/Employer _____
 Salary _____

Name _____
 Length of Employment _____
 Job Title/Employer _____
 Salary _____

FAMILY INFORMATION

Name	Age	Relationship	Occupation

PETS: (describe)

RENTAL HISTORY

Dates: From: _____ To: _____
 Address: _____
 Landlord Name: _____
 Reason For Moving: _____

Dates: From: _____ To: _____
 Address: _____
 Landlord Name: _____
 Reason For Moving: _____

Continued on next page

RENTAL HISTORY (continued)

Dates: From: _____ To: _____

Address: _____

Landlord Name: _____

Reason For Moving: _____

Dates: From: _____ To: _____

Address: _____

Landlord Name: _____

Reason For Moving: _____

CREDIT/FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CRIMINAL HISTORY

HOUSEKEEPING INFORMATION

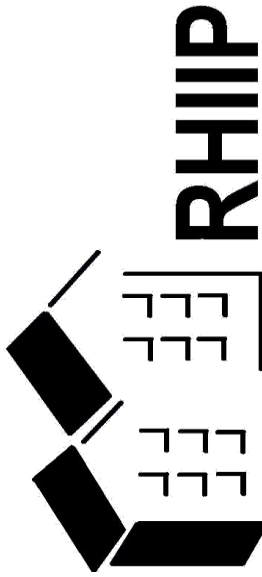
WHY A LANDLORD SHOULD RENT TO US

PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH)



RENTAL HOUSING INTEGRITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

What You Should Know About EIV

A Guide for Applicants & Tenants of Public Housing & Section 8 Programs

What is EIV?

The Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system is a web-based computer system that contains employment and income information of individuals who participate in HUD rental assistance programs. All Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) are required to use HUD's EIV system.

What information is in EIV and where does it come from?

HUD obtains information about you from your local PHA, the Social Security Administration (SSA), and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

HHS provides HUD with wage and employment information as reported by employers; and unemployment compensation information as reported by the State Workforce Agency (SWA).

SSA provides HUD with death, Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) information.

What is the EIV information used for?

Primarily, the information is used by PHAs (and management agents hired by PHAs) for the following purposes to:

1. Confirm your name, date of birth (DOB), and Social Security Number (SSN) with SSA.
2. Verify your reported income sources and amounts.
3. Confirm your participation in only one HUD rental assistance program.
4. Confirm if you owe an outstanding debt to any PHA.
5. Confirm any negative status if you moved out of a subsidized unit (in the past) under the Public Housing or Section 8 program.
6. Follow up with you, other adult household members, or your listed emergency contact regarding deceased household members.

EIV will alert your PHA if you or anyone in your household has used a false SSN, failed to report complete and accurate income information, or is receiving rental assistance at another address. **Remember, you may receive rental assistance at only one home!**

EIV will also alert PHAs if you owe an outstanding debt to any PHA (in any state or U.S. territory) and any negative status when you voluntarily or involuntarily moved out of a subsidized unit under the Public Housing or Section 8 program. This information is used to determine your eligibility for rental assistance at the time of application.

The information in EIV is also used by HUD, HUD's Office of Inspector General (OIG), and auditors to ensure that your family and PHAs comply with HUD rules.

Overall, the purpose of EIV is to identify and prevent fraud within HUD rental assistance programs, so that limited taxpayer's dollars can assist as many eligible families as possible. EIV will help to improve the integrity of HUD rental assistance programs.

Is my consent required in order for information to be obtained about me?

Yes, your consent is required in order for HUD or the PHA to obtain information about you. By law, you are required to sign one or more consent forms. When you sign a form HUD-9886 (*Federal Privacy Act Notice and Authorization for Release of Information*) or a PHA consent form (which meets HUD standards), you are giving HUD and the PHA your consent for them to obtain information about you for the purpose of determining your eligibility and amount of rental assistance. The information collected about you will be used only to determine your eligibility for the program, unless you consent in writing to authorize additional uses of the information by the PHA.

Note: If you or any of your adult household members refuse to sign a consent form, your request for initial or continued rental assistance may be denied. You may also be terminated from the HUD rental assistance program.

What are my responsibilities?

As a tenant (participant) of a HUD rental assistance program, you and each adult household member must disclose complete and accurate information to the PHA, including full name, SSN, and DOB; income information; and certify that your reported household composition (household members), income, and expense information is true to the best of your knowledge.

Remember, you must notify your PHA if a household member dies or moves out. You must also obtain the PHA's approval to allow additional family members or friends to move in your home prior to them moving in.

What are the penalties for providing false information?

Knowingly providing false, inaccurate, or incomplete information is **FRAUD** and a **CRIME**.

If you commit fraud, you and your family may be subject to any of the following penalties:

1. Eviction
2. Termination of assistance
3. Repayment of rent that you should have paid had you reported your income correctly
4. Prohibited from receiving future rental assistance for a period of up to 10 years
5. Prosecution by the local, state, or Federal prosecutor, which may result in you being fined up to \$10,000 and/or serving time in jail.

Protect yourself by following HUD reporting requirements. When completing applications and reexaminations, you must include all sources of income you or any member of your household receives.

If you have any questions on whether money received should be counted as income or how your rent is determined, ask your PHA. When changes occur in your household income, contact your PHA immediately to determine if this will affect your rental assistance.

What do I do if the EIV information is incorrect?

Sometimes the source of EIV information may make an error when submitting or reporting information about you. If you do not agree with the EIV information, let your PHA know.

If necessary, your PHA will contact the source of the information directly to verify disputed income information. Below are the procedures you and the PHA should follow regarding incorrect EIV information.

Debts owed to PHAs and termination information reported in EIV originates from the PHA who provided you assistance in the past. If you dispute this information, contact your former PHA directly in writing to dispute this information and provide any documentation that supports your dispute. If the PHA determines that the disputed information is incorrect, the PHA will update or delete the record from EIV.

Employment and wage information reported in EIV originates from the employer. If you dispute this information, contact the employer in writing to dispute and request correction of the disputed employment and/or wage information. Provide your PHA with a copy of the letter that you sent to the employer. If you are unable to get the employer to correct the information, you should contact the SWA for assistance.

Unemployment benefit information reported in EIV originates from the SWA. If you dispute this information, contact the SWA in writing to dispute and request correction of the disputed unemployment benefit information. Provide your PHA with a copy of the letter that you sent to the SWA.

Death, SS and SSI benefit information reported in EIV originates from the SSA. If you dispute this information, contact the SSA at (800) 772-1213, or visit their website at: www.socialsecurity.gov. You may need to visit your local SSA office to have disputed death information corrected.

Additional Verification. The PHA, with your consent, may submit a third party verification form to the provider (or reporter) of your income for completion and submission to the PHA.

You may also provide the PHA with third party documents (i.e. pay stubs, benefit award letters, bank statements, etc.) which you may have in your possession.

Identity Theft. Unknown EIV information to you can be a sign of identity theft. Sometimes someone else may use your SSN, either on purpose or by accident. So, if you suspect someone is using your SSN, you should check your Social Security records to ensure your income is calculated correctly (call SSA at (800) 772-1213); file an identity theft complaint with your local police department or the Federal Trade Commission (call FTC at (877) 438-4338, or you may visit their website at: <http://www.ftc.gov>). Provide your PHA with a copy of your identity theft complaint.

Where can I obtain more information on EIV and the income verification process?

Your PHA can provide you with additional information on EIV and the income verification process. You may also read more about EIV and the income verification process on HUD's Public and Indian Housing EIV web pages at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/bhprogrms/bhfrtip/liv/cfn>.

The information in this Guide pertains to applicants and participants (tenants) of the following HUD-PIH rental assistance programs:

1. Public Housing (24 CFR 960); and
2. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), (24 CFR 982); and
3. Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation (24 CFR 882); and
4. Project-Based Voucher (24 CFR 983)