



Sonoma County Community Development Commission
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April 16, 2020

To: All Interested Parties

From: Martha Cheever, Housing Authority Manager

Re: Regulatory Waivers for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Mainstream Voucher Program and the Family Unification Program

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, PIH Notice 2020-05, issued on April 10, 2020, set forth regulatory waivers to provide flexibilities to Housing Authorities during the pandemic. The Sonoma County Housing Authority (Housing Authority) intends to utilize several of these waivers to provide continuity of operations while doing everything possible to preserve the health and safety of Housing Authority clients, the community, and Housing Authority staff.

Regulatory Waivers which will be utilized for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Mainstream Voucher Program, the Family Self-Sufficiency Program and the Family Unification Program are listed here. A full description of the regulatory waivers and the corresponding time-frame in which the waivers are available is included at the end of this list.

1. Delayed Annual Examinations
2. Income Verification Requirements
3. Self-Certification of Housing Authority Client Income
4. Enterprise Income Verification Monitoring
5. Extension of Family Self-Sufficiency Contracts of Participation
6. Public Notice of the Opening and Closing of Waitlists
7. Delay of Annual and Biennial Housing Quality Standard Inspection
8. Alternate Housing Quality Standard Inspection Format for Initial Lease Ups and Project Based Voucher turn-over inspections when no life-threatening deficiencies are present
9. Alternate method and requirements for interim Housing Quality Standards inspections
10. Waiver of initial inspection requirement when a Project Based Voucher (PBV) unit is added or substituted on a PBV Contract
11. Temporary suspension of Housing Quality Standard quality control inspections
12. Temporary suspension of space and security standards when a unit is over-occupied
13. Informal adoption of changes to the Administrative Plan
14. Alternative methods for conducting Oral Briefings
15. Flexibility with the extension of vouchers
16. Additional time between when a HAP contract is executed and Housing Authority of assisted tenancy (increased to 120 days)
17. Flexibility to the time a household is allowed to be absent from the unit
18. Ability to apply increased payment standards between annual reexaminations
19. Flexibility on timing for Housing Authority review and adjustment of Utility Schedule
20. Additional time (until 26th birthday) for Family Unification Program – Youth to enter into a Housing Assistance Payment contract for the first time



Below is a full description of regulatory waivers which will be utilized by the Sonoma County Housing Authority as made available in PIH Notice 2020-05.

PH and HCV-2: Family Income and Composition: Delayed Annual Examinations

Statutory Authority: Section 3(a)(1) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.516(a)(1) - HCV

Description: PHAs are required to conduct a reexamination of family income and composition at least annually. Recognizing the foreseeable difficulties in complying with this requirement in light of the COVID-19 emergency, HUD is waiving this statutory and regulatory requirement to permit PHAs to delay annual reexaminations of HCV and public housing families. However, if the PHA delays annual reexaminations for HCV families under this authority, it must also comply with the alternative requirement regarding the application of an increase in the payment standard amount during the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract term (see HCV-7 below) if applicable, so as not to delay the application of the increased payment standard amount to the family's HAP calculation.

Period of Availability: All annual recertifications due in Calendar Year (CY) 2020 must be completed by December 31, 2020.

PH and HCV-3: Family Income and Composition: Annual Examination - Income Verification requirements

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 5.233(a)(2)

Sub-regulatory Guidance: PIH Notice 2018-18

Description: PHAs are required to use the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System for verification of family income at the annual examination. 24 CFR § 5.233(a)(2) requires PHAs to use EIV as a third-party source to verify tenant employment and income information during mandatory reexaminations or recertifications of family composition and income in accordance with §5.236 and administrative guidance issued by HUD. PIH Notice 2018-18 describes the required verification hierarchy process PHAs must follow. HUD understands that documentation may be difficult to obtain as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. PHAs are also facing challenges with securely accessing HUD systems while many if not all staff are working remotely.

To address these challenges, HUD is waiving the requirements to use the income hierarchy described by PIH Notice 2018-18 and will allow PHAs to forgo third-party income verification requirements for annual reexaminations, including the use of EIV, if the PHA wishes to conduct the annual recertification rather than delaying the family's annual recertification (as permitted under PH and HCV-2 above).

During the allowable period of availability, PHAs may consider self-certification as the highest form of income verification to process annual reexaminations. This may occur over the telephone (but must be documented by PHA staff with a contemporaneous written record), through an email or postal mail with a self-certification form by the tenant, or through other electronic communications. PHAs are encouraged to incorporate procedures to remind families of the obligation to provide true and complete information when adopting these flexibilities. PHAs are further reminded that there is no HUD requirement that income and family composition

examinations and recertifications must be conducted in-person unless determined necessary as a reasonable accommodation as long as applicable public health guidelines are followed (e.g., social distancing) and any state or local ordinance is followed.

PHAs that conduct annual examinations under this waiver/alternative requirement will be responsible for addressing any material discrepancies that may arise later. For example, if a tenant self-certified that the tenant lost their job, but later the EIV Income Validation Tool (IVT) shows the tenant's employment continued, the PHA must take enforcement action in accordance with their policies and procedures.

Period of Availability: The period of availability to conduct annual reexaminations using these modified verification requirements ends on July 31, 2020.

PH and HCV-4: Family Income and Composition: Interim Examinations

Statutory Authority: Section 3(a)(1) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 5.233(a)(2) - HCV and Public Housing

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.516(c)(2) - HCV

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 960.257(b) and (d) - Public Housing

Sub-regulatory Guidance: PIH Notice 2018-18

Description: For the HCV and public housing programs, PHAs are required to adopt policies (in their Administrative Plans and Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plans (ACOPs), respectively) prescribing when and under what conditions the family must report a change in family income or composition. However, at any time that a family requests an interim determination of family income or composition because of any changes since the last determination, the PHA must make the interim determination within a reasonable time after the family's request. In most cases, the reason a family requests an interim determination is due to a loss in income or a change in family composition.

PHAs are required to use EIV for verification of family income at interim reexamination. 24 CFR § 5.233(a)(2) requires PHAs to use EIV as a third-party source to verify tenant employment and income information during mandatory reexaminations or recertifications of family composition and income in accordance with §5.236 and administrative guidance issued by HUD. PIH Notice 2018-18 further describes the required verification hierarchy process PHAs must follow.

To assist PHAs that may be prioritizing the processing of interim reexaminations due to decreases in family income and mitigate the challenges of transferring documentation during periods of shelter-in-place/stay-at-home efforts in response to the COVID-19 emergency, HUD is waiving the requirements to use the income verification hierarchy as described by PIH Notice 2018-18. HUD will allow PHAs to forgo third-party income verification requirements for interim reexaminations, including the required use of EIV. During the allowable period of eligibility, PHAs may consider self-certification as the highest form of income verification to process interim reexaminations. This may occur over the telephone (with a contemporaneous written record by the PHA staff person), through an email with a self-certification form by the family, or through other electronic communications. As noted in the previous waiver description, there is no HUD requirement that income and family composition

examinations and recertifications must be conducted in-person unless it may be necessary as a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability as long as applicable public health guidelines are followed (e.g., social distancing) and any local and state ordinances is followed.

PHAs that conduct interim reexaminations under this waiver/alternative requirement will be responsible for addressing any material discrepancies that may arise later. For example, if a tenant self-certified that the tenant lost their job, but later the EIV IVT Report shows the tenant's employment continued, the PHA must take enforcement action that is consistent with its policies and procedures.

PHAs may wish to review and adjust their interim reexamination policies (e.g., revising the PHA requirements when families must report increases in income between annual reexaminations or revising the policy regarding how to determine the effective date of an interim examination). PHAs should see HCV-1 and PH-4 for information on how these types of changes can be expedited.

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on July 31, 2020.

PH and HCV-5: Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) Monitoring

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 5.233

Sub-regulatory Guidance: PIH Notice 2018-18

Description: PIH Notice 2018-18 specifies the required monitoring of EIV reports. For example, PHAs are required to monitor the Deceased Tenants Report, the Identity Verification Report, the Immigration Report, the IVT Report, and the Multiple Subsidy Report and the New Hires Report on a monthly basis. Recognizing the challenges PHAs are facing with many if not all staff working remotely, HUD is waiving the mandatory EIV monitoring requirements.

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on July 31, 2020.

PH and HCV-6: Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Contract of Participation; Contract Extension

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 984.303(d)

Description: Part 984 establishes the requirements for the Section 8 and Public Housing FSS Program. Section 984.303(d) authorizes a PHA to extend a family's contract of participation for a period not to exceed two years upon a finding of good cause. HUD has made a determination that the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 qualify as "good cause" to extend family contracts, and FSS programs may consider this expanded definition of "good cause" as they make their determinations on each family's eligibility for an extension.

Period of Availability: The period of availability during which the PHA may extend the family's contract of participation using COVID-19 as the "good cause" ends on December 31, 2020.

PH and HCV-7: Waiting List: Opening and Closing; Public Notice

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.206(a)(2)

Sub-regulatory Guidance: PIH Notice 2012-34

Description: The regulation provides that when a PHA opens its waiting list, the PHA must give public notice by publication in a local newspaper of general circulation and also by minority media and other suitable means. Recognizing the foreseeable difficulties in complying with this requirement in light of the COVID-19 emergency, HUD is waiving this requirement and is providing an alternative requirement that the PHA may provide public notice in a voicemail message on its main or general information telephone number and through its website (if such a PHA website is available). PHAs must comply with applicable fair housing and other civil rights requirements when they provide public notice under this alternative requirement, including ensuring effective communication with persons with hearing, visual, and other communication-related disabilities. PHAs must ensure effective communication with persons with disabilities in all notifications and communications. For example, a PHA that chooses to provide public notice through a voice-mail message must ensure the notice is accessible for persons with hearing impairments, which may include also distributing the notice by email and public postings on websites. The voice-mail notice also must comply with all other applicable civil rights requirements, including ensuring meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency. See 24 CFR 5.105(a) (“Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity”).

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on July 31, 2020.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM WAIVERS – HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS) INSPECTIONS

Introduction: HUD recognizes the unprecedented challenge the COVID-19 pandemic poses to PHAs in carrying out the most essential of their HCV program administrative responsibilities – ensuring that assisted families are living in decent, safe, and sanitary housing. HQS inspections protect the health and safety of HCV families. However, conducting physical inspections of units in many communities during this national emergency poses its own health risks for families, participating owners, and PHA personnel, and may run counter to public health orders, directives, or recommendations such as shelter-in-place or other social distancing practices designed to contain and reduce exposure to COVID-19. In order to provide PHAs with the necessary flexibilities to continue to allow families to lease units and to postpone normally required HQS inspections for units under HAP contract, HUD is authorizing the use of the HQS-related waivers and alternative requirements listed in this section. PHAs are in the best position to determine which (if any) of these waivers should be applied to their HCV programs based on the needs and current conditions in their local communities.

PHAs that delay inspections under these waivers must inspect the units as soon as reasonably possible when it is again safe to do so, but must complete all delayed unit inspections no later than the date specified in this notice (or subsequent extensions provided by HUD). HUD has established relatively short periods of availability for these HQS waivers given the health and safety nature of these requirements. However, HUD will consider extending these HQS waivers and alternative requirements if HUD determines an extension is necessary.

Any PHA that applies any of these waivers to its HCV program retains the right to conduct an HQS inspection on any assisted unit at any time. Likewise, the PHA may always choose to conduct an initial inspection on a unit a family wishes to lease if such an inspection is determined to be warranted by the PHA, regardless of whether the PHA chooses to apply the

initial HQS inspection waivers to its HCV program. Crucially, use of any of these waivers by the PHA does not relieve owners of their responsibility to maintain the unit in accordance with HQS as required in the HAP contract, nor does it in any way restrict the PHA from taking action to enforce the owner's obligations. Furthermore, use of any of these waivers by the PHA does not create any right in any third party (such as with the assisted family) to require enforcement of the HQS requirements by HUD or the PHA, or to assert any claim against HUD or the PHA, for damages, injunction or other relief, for alleged failure to enforce the HQS (see § 982.407).

HQS-1: Initial Inspection Requirements

Statutory Authority: Section 8(o)(8)(A)(i), Section 8(o)(8)(C) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR §§ 982.305(a), 982.305(b), 982.405

Description: Section 8(o)(8)(A)(i) requires that the PHA must inspect the unit before any assistance payment is made to determine whether the unit meets HQS. Section 8(o)(8)(C) requires the PHA to conduct the initial inspection within certain time frames after receiving the RFTA. Section 982.305 provides that the PHA may not approve the assisted tenancy or execute a HAP contract until the unit has been inspected by the PHA and passes HQS. Additionally, Section 982.305 requires that the PHA must inspect the unit to determine that the unit satisfies the HQS before the beginning of the initial lease term, and that the PHA must perform this inspection within either 15 days or within a reasonable time depending on the size of the PHA.

HUD is waiving these requirements and providing an alternative requirement. In order to place the unit under HAP contract and commence making payments, the PHA may rely on the owner's certification that the owner has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life threatening conditions exist in the unit or units in question instead of conducting an initial inspection. At minimum the PHA must require this owner certification. However, the PHA may add other requirements or conditions in addition to the owner's certification but is not required to do so. The PHA is required to conduct an HQS inspection on the unit as soon as reasonably possible but no later than October 31, 2020.

This waiver and alternative requirement may also be applied to PHA-owned units if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

Period of Availability: The period of availability for PHAs to accept owner's selfcertification for an initial inspection ends on July 31, 2020. The period of availability for the PHA to inspect a unit that was placed under HAP contract based on the owner's selfcertification ends on October 31, 2020.

HQS-2: Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Pre-HAP Contract Inspections, PHA Acceptance of Completed Units

Statutory Authority: Section 8(o)(8)(A) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR §§ 983.301(b), 983.156(a)(1)

Description: The statute and regulations at § 983.301(b) provide that the PHA must inspect each contract unit before execution of the HAP contract and that the HAP contract may not be executed until the units fully comply with HQS. For rehabilitated and newly constructed units, §983.156(a)(1) further provides that the PHA must inspect the units to determine if the housing has been completed in accordance with the Agreement to Enter into the HAP Contract (AHAP),

including compliance with the HQS and any additional requirement imposed by the PHA under the Agreement.

HUD is waiving the HQS inspection requirement and establishing an alternative requirement. Instead of conducting the pre-HAP contract HQS inspection, the PHA may rely on the owner's certification that the owner has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life threatening conditions exist in the unit or units in question. At minimum the PHA must require the owner's certification. However, the PHA may add other requirements or conditions in addition to the owner's certification but is not required to do so. The PHA is required to conduct an HQS inspection on the unit as soon as reasonably possible but no later than October 31, 2020.

If the PHA has imposed an additional requirement under the AHAP for newly constructed or rehabilitated projects, the PHA may choose to allow the owner to certify that the PHA requirement has been met instead of inspecting the housing to make that determination. This waiver and alternative requirement may also be applied to PHA-owned units if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

Period of Availability: The period of availability for PHAs to accept owner's selfcertification for the pre-HAP inspection/completion of work requirement ends on July 31, 2020. The period of availability for the PHA to complete all delayed inspections on units placed under a HAP contract based on the owner's self-certification ends on October 31, 2020.

HQS-3: Initial Inspection: Non-Life-Threatening Deficiencies (NLT) Option

Statutory Authority: Section 8(o)(8)(A)(ii) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) of 2016: Implementation of Various Section 8 Voucher Provisions, 82 Fed. Reg. 5458 (Jan. 18, 2017)

Description: Section 8(o)(8)(A)(ii) provides the PHA with the option to choose to approve an assisted tenancy, execute the HAP contract, and begin making housing assistance payments on a unit that fails the initial HQS inspection, provided the unit's failure to meet HQS is the result only of NLT conditions. The statute further requires that the PHA must withhold housing assistance payments from the owner if the NLT conditions are not corrected within 30 days.

HUD is waiving the requirement that the PHA must withhold the payment if the NLT repairs are not made in 30 days. Instead, the PHA may provide an extension of up to an additional 30 days to the owner to make the NLT repairs and continue to make payments to the owner during the period of that maximum 30-day extension. If the owner has not made the NLT repairs by the end of the PHA extension period, the PHA must withhold payments. This NLT initial inspection option is available to the PHA for both tenant-based units and project-based units. This waiver and alternative requirement may also be applied to units if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

Period of Availability: The period of availability for the PHA to approve an extension of up to an additional 30 days ends on July 31, 2020. The extension to make the NLT repairs may extend beyond July 31, 2020, depending on the date the PHA approved the extension. For example, if

the PHA approved the extension on July 15th, the maximum extension provided to the owner would be August 15th.

HQS-4: HQS Initial Inspection Requirement – Alternative Inspection Option

Statutory Authority: Section 8(o)(8)(A)(iii) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) of 2016:

Implementation of Various Section 8 Voucher Provisions, 82 Fed. Reg. 5458 (Jan. 18, 2017)

Description: Section 8(o)(8)(A)(iii) provides the PHA with the option to authorize occupancy of a unit prior to the initial inspection being completed if the unit had in the previous 24 months passed an alternative inspection. Under the statute the PHA may then make assistance payments retroactive to the beginning of the lease term once the unit had been determined to meet HQS pursuant to the PHA's inspection. The HOTMA HCV Federal Register Notice that implemented this statutory option further provided that the PHA must inspect the unit within 15 days of the RFTA.

HUD is waiving the requirement that the PHA must conduct its own inspection of the unit in order to commence making assistance payments under the Initial Inspection – Alternative

HQS inspection for the unit for which it has commenced assistance payments under this waiver authority as soon as reasonably possible but no later than October 31, 2020. This initial inspection option is available to the PHA for both tenant-based units and projectbased units.

This waiver and alternative requirement may also be applied to PHA-owned units if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

Period of Availability: The period of availability for the waiver to place a unit under HAP contract and commence payments ends on July 31, 2020. The period of availability for the PHA to inspect a unit placed under HAP contract under this waiver authority is October 31, 2020.

HQS-5: HQS Inspection Requirement – Biennial Inspections

Statutory Authority: Section 8(o)(D) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR §§ 982.405(a), 983.103(d)

Description: The statute and the regulations require the PHA to inspect the unit not less often than biennially during the term of the HAP contract. (Per the recent Federal Register Notice, 85 Fed. Reg. 11381 (Feb. 27, 2020), small rural PHAs may instead inspect the unit not less often than triennially, but since small rural PHAs do not have the authority to begin using a three-year inspection interval until after the next scheduled inspection after Feb. 27, 2020 is carried out, the majority of small rural PHAs have not yet moved from a biennial to a triennial requirement.) HUD is waiving this requirement and is allowing PHAs to delay biennial inspections for both tenant-based and PBV units. All delayed biennial inspections must be completed as soon as reasonably possible but no later than October 31, 2020. This waiver and alternative requirement may also be applied to PHA-owned units if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on October 31, 2020.

HQS-6: HQS Interim Inspections

Statutory Authority: Section 8(o)(8)(F) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR §§ 982.405(g), 983.103(e)

Description: The statute requires that upon notification to the PHA by a family or government official that the assisted unit does not comply with the HQS, the PHA must inspect the unit within 24 hours of when the PHA received the notification if the condition is life-threatening. 24 CFR 982.405(g) provides that if the reported condition is not life threatening, the PHA must inspect the unit within 15 days. The regulation further provides that in the event of extraordinary circumstances HUD may waive the 24-hour or the 15-day inspection requirement until such time as an inspection is feasible.

HUD is waiving these requirements and establishing an alternative requirement for both tenant-based and PBV units. If the reported deficiency is life-threatening, the PHA must notify the owner of the reported life-threatening deficiency and that the owner must either correct the life-threatening deficiency within 24 hours of the PHA notification or provide documentation (e.g., text or email a photo to the PHA) that the reported deficiency does not exist. In the case of a reported non-life-threatening deficiency, the PHA must notify the owner of the reported deficiency within 30 days and the owner must either make the repair or document that the deficiency does not exist within 30 days of the PHA notification or any approved PHA extension. The PHA may add other requirements or conditions in addition to the owner's documentation but is not required to do so.

As is the case under the current HCV program requirements, the PHA is not required to conduct an on-site inspection to verify the repairs have been made but may rely on alternative verification methods (e.g., photos submitted by the owner, tenant certification, etc.).

This waiver may also be applied to PHA-owned units if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on July 31, 2020. After July 31, 2020, the PHA must conduct the HQS inspection in accordance with the applicable time periods upon notification by a family or government official that the assisted unit does not comply with the HQS.

HQS-7: PBV Turnover Unit Inspections

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 983.103(c)

Description: The regulation requires that before providing assistance to a new family in a PBV contract unit, the PHA must inspect the unit. HUD is waiving this regulatory requirement and providing as an alternative requirement the PHA may rely on the owner's certification that the owner has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life threatening conditions exist in the unit or units in question to allow a new family to occupy the vacated PBV unit. At minimum the PHA must require this owner certification. However, the PHA may add other requirements or

conditions in addition to the owner's certification but is not required to do so. The PHA is required to conduct the HQS inspection on the unit as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than October 31, 2020.

This waiver may also be applied to PHA-owned units if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

Period of Availability: The period of availability to fill a turnover PBV unit without conducting an HQS inspection ends on July 31, 2020. The period of availability for completing inspections for turnover PBV units that were reoccupied without an HQS inspection under this waiver authority ends on October 31, 2020.

HQS-8: PBV HAP Contract – HQS Inspections to Add or Substitute Units

Statutory Authority: Section 8(o)(8)(A) of the USHA of 1937

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR §§ 983.207(a), 983.207(b)

Description: At the discretion of the PHA and subject to all PBV requirements (including the program cap and income-mixing requirements), the PHA may amend the HAP contract to add additional PBV contract units or to substitute a different unit for a previously covered contract unit. The PBV requirements include inspecting the proposed substitute or additional unit to determine that the unit meets HQS before it may be added to the HAP contract.

HUD is waiving the HQS inspection requirement. In order to substitute or add a new unit to the PBV HAP contract, the PHA may rely on the owner's certification that the owner has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life threatening conditions exist in the unit or units in question instead of conducting an initial inspection. At minimum, the PHA must require the owner's certification. However, the PHA may add other requirements or conditions in addition to the owner's certification but is not required to do so.

This waiver may also be applied to PHA-owned units if the independent entity is unable to perform the inspection.

Period of Availability: The period of availability for PHAs to accept owner's selfcertification for an initial inspection ends on July 31, 2020. The period of availability for the PHA to inspect a unit that was placed under HAP contract based on the owner's selfcertification ends on October 31, 2020.

HQS-9: HQS Quality Control Inspections

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.405(b)

Description: The regulations require PHAs to conduct supervisory quality control inspections of a sampling of units under contract. HUD is waiving this regulatory requirement.

Period of Availability: The period of applicability ends on October 31, 2020.

HQS-10: Housing quality standards; Space and Security

Regulatory Authority: § 982.401(d)

Description: The regulation establishes a minimum standard for adequate space for both an HCV and PBV -assisted family. Specifically, it requires that each dwelling unit have at least 1 bedroom or living/sleeping room for each 2 persons. HUD is waiving this requirement for PHAs where the PHA wishes to assist a current participant that needs to add a member or members to the assisted household as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, and the additional family members would result in the unit not meeting the space and security standards. This provision does not apply to an initial or new lease. A participant must not enter into a new lease for a unit that does not comply with the space and security standards.

Period of availability: For any family occupying a unit that does not meet the space and security requirements pursuant to this waiver, the waiver will be in effect for the duration of the current lease term or one year from the date of this notice, whichever period of time is longer.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM WAIVERS – GENERAL

HCV-1: Administrative plan

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.54 (a)

Description: The regulation requires that any revisions of the PHA's administrative plan must be formally adopted by the PHA Board of Commissioners or other authorized PHA officials. Recognizing the foreseeable difficulties in complying with this requirement in light of the COVID-19 emergency, HUD is waiving the requirement to allow the PHA administrative plan to be revised on a temporary basis without Board approval. As an alternative requirement any informally adopted revisions under this waiver authority must be formally adopted as soon as practicable following June 30, 2020, but no later than July 31, 2020.

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on July 31, 2020.

HCV-2: Information When Family is Selected - PHA Oral Briefing

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.301(a)(3), § 983.252(a)

Description: The regulation requires when the PHA selects a family to participate in either the HCV or PBV program, the PHA must give the family an oral briefing. HUD is waiving this requirement and as an alternative requirement allowing the PHA to conduct the briefing by other means such as a webcast, video call, or expanded information packet. Section 504 and the ADA require PHAs to ensure effective communication with applicants, participants and members of the public in all communications and notices. The PHA must ensure that the method of communication for the briefing effectively communicates with, and allows for equal participation of, each family member, including those with vision, hearing, and other communication-related disabilities, and ensures meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency.

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on July 31, 2020.

HCV-3: Term of Voucher – Extensions of Term

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.303(b)(1)

Description: The regulation provides that at its discretion, the PHA may grant a family one or more extensions of the initial voucher term in accordance with the PHA policy as described in the PHA administrative plan. HUD is waiving the requirement that the extension(s) must be accordance with the PHA's administrative plan in order to allow the PHA to provide extensions even though it has been unable to formally amend its policy in the administrative plan.

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on July 31, 2020.

HCV-4: PHA Approval of Assisted Tenancy – When HAP Contract is Executed

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.305(c)

Description: The PHA may not make any housing assistance payments to the owner until the HAP contract is executed. The regulation provides that PHA must use best efforts to execute the HAP contract before the beginning of the lease term and that the HAP contract must be executed no later than 60 days from the beginning of the lease term. Any HAP contract executed after the 60-day period is void and the PHA may not pay any housing assistance payments to the owner. HUD is waiving the regulatory requirement to allow PHAs to execute the HAP contract after the 60-day deadline has passed and make housing assistance payments back to the beginning of the lease term. However, the PHA and owner must execute the HAP contract no later than 120 days from the beginning of the lease term.

Period of Availability: The period of availability to execute the HAP contract after the normally 60-day period from the beginning of the lease term ends on July 31, 2020.

HCV-5: Absence from Unit

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.312

Description: The regulation requires that a family may not be absent from the unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days for any reason. HUD is waiving this regulatory requirement to allow the PHA at its discretion to continue housing assistance payments and not terminate the HAP contract due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, extended stays at nursing homes, caring for family members).

Period of Availability: The period of availability for the PHA to choose to continue making HAP payments despite the family's absence of more than 180 consecutive days ends on December 31, 2020. The PHA may not make payments beyond December 31, 2020, and the HAP contract will terminate on that date if the family is still absent from the unit.

HCV-6: Automatic Termination of HAP contract

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.455

Description: When an HCV family's income increases to the extent that the housing assistance payment is reduced to \$0, PHAs are required by this regulation to automatically terminate HAP contracts 180 days after the last housing assistance payment to the owner. In recognition that the COVID-19 emergency is creating economic and employment instability for many families, as well as situations where families may on a temporary basis be adding members whose additional income may result in a \$0 HAP subsidy calculation, HUD is waiving this requirement. As an alternative requirement, the PHA, upon written notice to the owner and family, may extend the period of time following the last payment to the owner that triggers the automatic termination of

the HAP contract. The extension beyond the normally applicable 180 days is determined by the PHA but may not extend beyond December 31, 2020.

Period of Availability: The period of availability for the extension ends December 31, 2020. The PHA may not extend the HAP contract beyond December 31, 2020.

HCV-7: Increase in payment standard under HAP contract term

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.505(c)(4)

Description: The regulation requires that if the payment standard amount is increased during the term of the HAP contract, the increased payment standard amount shall be used to calculate the monthly housing assistance payment for the family beginning at the effective date of the family's first regular reexamination on or after the effective date of the increase in the payment standard amount.

HUD is waiving this requirement and as an alternative requirement allowing the PHAs to apply the increased payment standard at any time (e.g., interim reexamination, owner rent increase) after the effective date of the increase in the payment standard amount, provided the increased payment standard is used to calculate the HAP no later than the effective date of the family's first regular reexamination following the change.

Note that if the PHA has delayed the family's annual recertification under the waiver authority described earlier in this notice (see PH and HCV-2), the PHA must use the increased payment standard amount to calculate the family's HAP beginning the date that the family's first regular examination would have been effective in the absence of the waiver.

Alternatively, the PHA may conduct an interim reexamination where the only change is the increased payment standard amount. Regardless of the method used, the participant must receive the increased payment standard no later than the effective date of the family's first regular reexamination following the increased payment standard.

Period of Availability: The waiver period of availability ends on December 31, 2020.

HCV-8: Utility allowance schedule – required review and revision

Regulatory Authority: 24 CFR § 982.517

Description: The regulations require the PHA to review its schedule of utility allowances each year and revise its allowance for a utility category if there has been a change of 10 percent or more in the utility rate since the last time the utility allowance schedule was revised. HUD is waiving this requirement to allow PHAs to delay the review and update of utility allowances.

Period of Availability: Any review and update of utility allowances that were due at some point in time in CY 2020 must be completed no later than December 31, 2020.

HCV-10: Family Unification Program (FUP): FUP Youth Age Eligibility to Enter HAP Contract

Statutory Authority: Section 8(x)(2) of the USHA of 1937

Description: The statute provides that a FUP youth must be not more than 24 years of age (not yet reached their 25th birthday) to be eligible to be placed under HAP contract. A FUP youth issued a voucher at 24 years of age may not be able to lease the voucher before their 25th birthday where PHA operations may have been shut down or severely curtailed, unit searches are not possible due to shelter-in-place orders, or where the movement of people is significantly restricted.

HUD is waiving this requirement and providing as an alternative requirement that the PHA may execute a HAP contract on behalf of any otherwise eligible FUP youth not more than 25 years of age (not yet reached their 26th birthday).

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on December 31, 2020.