

HUD Waivers for COVID-19 CARES Act (Public Law 116-136) Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security - Effective April 10, 2020 (Updated May 05, 2021)

Re-certification and Interim Exam:

- **Public Housing (PH) and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)-2 Family Income and Composition- Delayed Annual Reexaminations** - If a resident or participant has a review date due, Housing Catalyst will work to complete it on the regular schedule. If there is a COVID-related reason that is not possible, the review may be delayed.
- **PH and HCV-3 Annual Re-examination Income Verification** - If residents and participants have a regular reexamination due and they are unable to collect third-party documentation of income, Housing Catalyst may use self-certification of income in its place.
- **PH and HCV-4- Interim Reexaminations** - If residents and participants want to process an interim reexamination (such as income decrease) and they are unable to collect third-party documentation of income, Housing Catalyst may use self-certification of income in its place.
- **PH and HCV-6: JumpStart-Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Contract of Participation** If a family in the JumpStart Program has a COVID-related hardship that affects their participation, they will be able to stay in the program for up to two more years.
- **PH and HCV-8 and 9: Eligibility Determination: Income Verification/ Social Security Number and Citizenship Verification- updated May 05, 2021** HUD is waiving third-party income verifications and alternatively, will allow PHA to consider self-certification as the highest form of income verification at admission. Applicants must submit an affidavit attesting to reported, income, assets, expenses, or other factors that go into determining eligibility. Applicants may provide third-party documentation which represents the applicant's income within the 60-day period prior to admission or voucher issuance but is not dated within 60 days of the PHA request. HUD understands that documentation may be difficult to obtain, particularly for families or individuals experiencing homelessness. HUD is waiving the requirement to obtain and verify SSN documentation and documentation evidencing eligible noncitizen status before admitting applicants to the HCV and Public Housing programs. PHAs may adopt policies to admit applicants who are unable to provide the required SSN or citizenship documentation during the initial eligibility determination. As an alternative requirement, such individuals must provide the required documentation within 90 days of admission to be eligible for continued assistance, pending verification.

Inspection:

- **Housing Quality Standards (HQS)-1: Initial Inspection** – Housing Catalyst will generally send inspectors for physical inspections to unoccupied units. If a participant is already living in a unit when an initial inspection is due, the landlord may self-certify that the apartment meets the acceptable standard. After the pandemic, a physical inspection will take place.
- **HQS-2: Project Based Voucher Pre-HAP Contract Inspections-** Housing Catalyst may accept owner's certification of the pre-HAP contract HQS inspection, at a minimum HC must require the owner's certification, however HC does have the opportunity to add additional requirements. HC is required to inspect all units as reasonably possible but no later than June 30, 2022.

- **HQS-5: Biennial Inspection** - Scheduled inspections will be postponed. In lieu of a physical inspection for a critical health situation or a COVID-related issue, a video inspection can be conducted and approved as use for a biennial inspection.
- **HQS-6: Interim Inspections** – Housing Catalyst will generally not send inspectors for physical inspections to currently occupied units. Landlords may use a form to self-certify that repairs have been completed.
- **HQS-7: Project Based Voucher (PBV) Turnover Inspections** – Housing Catalyst will generally send inspectors for physical inspections to unoccupied units; if any need arises to change this process, property owners can self-certify that units meet acceptable standards. After the emergency ends, a physical inspection will take place.
- **HQS-8: PBV HAP Contract - HQS Inspections to Add or Substitute Units Adopted May 05, 2021** – Housing Catalyst will generally not send inspectors for physical inspections to an occupied unit. Property owners can self-certify that units meet acceptable standards. After the pandemic ends, a physical inspection will take place.
- **HQS-9: HQS Quality Control (QC) Inspections** – Housing Catalyst will not send inspectors for physical inspections to currently occupied units.

Waitlist and Voucher Items:

- **HCV-1: Administrative Plan** - Normally if Housing Catalyst were to make a significant change to the Administrative Plan, we would need to present the change to the Board of Commissioners at a public meeting. With this waiver, we may make emergency changes without going through that process.
- **HCV-2: Public Housing Authority (PHA) Oral Briefing** – Housing Catalyst will limit in-person, group briefings for new Housing Choice Voucher participants. Some briefing could be held by phone or other electronic medium and participants will receive the materials to review independently.
- **HCV-3: Term of Voucher - Extensions of Term** - If participants are unable to find a unit in which to use their new voucher within 120 days for COVID -related reasons, they will continue to get extensions to use their voucher.
- **HCV-4: PHA Approval of Assisted Tenancy** – Housing Catalyst may execute HAP contracts that go beyond the 60-day period. We will work with landlords to have contracts signed as quickly as possible.
- **HCV-5: Absence from Unit. (Updated additional clarification May 05, 2021)** 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). The PHA must maintain documentation in the tenant file which explains the extenuating circumstances that caused the extended absence.

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, 2021. The PHA may not make payments beyond December 31, 2021, and the HAP contract will terminate on that date if the family is still absent from the unit.

- **HCV-6: Automatic Termination of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract** - Until 12/31/2020, Housing Catalyst will not automatically terminate assistance after 180 days of paying zero subsidy.

- **HCV-10: Family Unification Program (FUP)** - Currently, Housing Catalyst can only serve foster youth who are 24 or younger with a FUP voucher. With this waiver, foster youth who are 26 or younger are eligible for FUP vouchers.

- **HCV-15: Project Based Voucher and Enhanced Voucher (adopted 05/05/2021)** -Currently Housing Catalyst when leasing a Project Based Contract unit each family must be appropriate for the size of the family under the PHA's subsidy standards. Additionally, if Housing Catalyst determines a family is occupying a wrong-size unit, Housing Catalyst must offer the family the opportunity to receive continued housing assistance in another unit and must terminate assistance if the family does not accept the offer or move in a reasonable time. HUD is waiving this requirement to allow a family to initially lease an under-occupied PBV or RAD PBV. These waivers and alternative requirements are specific and additional details can be found in PIH notice 2021-14(HA)

This also applies to an eligible family whose current occupied unit has been subject to a conversion action and placed under a PBV HAP contract, so that the family may continue to lease the same unit under these conditions.

Period of Availability: The period of availability ends on December 31, 2021. Any PBV, RAD PBV, or EV family residing in an under-occupied unit on this date in accordance with this waiver may remain in the unit until the end of the family's lease term following this date, at which time the family will be subject to the relevant requirement for under-occupied units.

Additional provisions:

- **PH and HCV-1: PHA 5-year and Annual Plan Submission Dates**— Housing Catalyst Due to the potential postponement of public hearings due to limitations on large public gatherings, HUD is waiving annual hearing requirements, and providing alternative deadlines for some PHAs. PHAs with 12/31/20 FYE dates must submit their 5-Year (if due in 2020) and annual plans no later than 1/16/21 (75 days before 4/1/21).

- **MS-1: Initial Term:** To provide a greater range of housing opportunities for Mainstream voucher holders, Housing Catalyst may enter initial lease terms of less than a year.

PH-4: ACOP (Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy) - Usually, if Housing Catalyst were to make a significant change to policy, they would have to present the change to the Board of Commissioners. With this waiver, we may make emergency changes without going through that process. PHAs are not required to keep waivers in place. These waivers could be eliminated should Housing Catalyst determine there is no longer an appropriate need.