

Section 8 Program Temporary Policy Changes During COVID-19 Crisis

This document summarizes temporary policy changes to Santa Clara County Housing Authority's (SCCHA's) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some changes are implemented using HUD-issued COVID-19 waivers or SCCHA's Moving to Work (MTW) authority and are noted below as they apply. All of the policy changes listed below are subject to change based on business needs and HUD's modification of waivers.

Policy changes are listed according to the relevant Administrative Plan section and apply to all HCV participants unless otherwise specified.

5.1 Hierarchy of Verification

SCCHA is waiving the income verification hierarchy requirements for regular and interim reexaminations. Instead, SCCHA will allow the participant to self-certify their income without requiring third-party documentation. However, if a program participant self-certified that they lost their job, but later it is determined that the tenant's employment continued, SCCHA is required by HUD to take enforcement action that is consistent with its policies and procedures. *This policy change utilizes HUD waivers HCV-3 & 4.*

- **Effective: 4/13/2020 Expires: 12/31/2020**

6.2 Voucher Extensions

All vouchers with an expiration date of March 16, 2020 or later have been automatically extended to September 30, 2020. Voucher holders will still be eligible for a 60-day extension upon request if additional time is needed after September 30, 2020 and the voucher holder did not previously request an extension. Voucher holders that were already granted an extension by request will not be eligible for another extension except due to extenuating circumstances or as a reasonable accommodation.

- **Effective: 3/16/2020 Expires: 9/30/2020**

6.5 Briefings

SCCHA will not hold in-person briefings for new voucher holders. Briefing information will instead be provided in the form of a packet mailed to the voucher holder or as a webcast available to view. Some briefings may be conducted over the phone. *This policy change utilizes HUD waiver HCV-2.*

- **Effective: 4/13/2020 Expires: 12/31/2020**

7.6 Maximum Family Share at Initial Occupancy

Moving to Work (MTW) Participants: HUD regulations prohibit a tenant to pay more than 40% of their monthly income toward the rent of their new home at initial lease. SCCHA is waiving this to raise the income cap at initial lease to 50% of the tenant's monthly income. This will potentially increase the number of units a voucher holder will be eligible to rent and hopefully allow them to find a new home more quickly. *This policy change was made as a technical amendment to SCCHA's FY2020 MTW Plan (Activity 2020-5).*

- **Effective: 4/2/2020 Expires: 6/30/2021**

8.3 Periodic Unit Inspections

Regular biennial Housing Quality Standard (HQS) inspections will resume in July 2020 with additional safety precautions and strict social-distancing measures in place. However, SCCHA may delay an inspection as needed up to 1 year from the date it would have originally been required. *This policy change utilizes HUD waiver HQS-5.*

- **Effective: 4/13/2020 Expires: 12/31/2020**

8.4 Special Inspections

SCCHA is temporarily suspending Quality Control HQS inspections. These inspections are intended to audit regular HQS inspections for compliance with HUD regulations. *This policy change utilizes HUD waiver HQS-9.*

- **Effective: 4/13/2020 Expires: 12/31/2020**

10.1 Reexamination Schedules

Regular reexaminations due on May 1, 2020 may be up to three months delayed. Regular reexaminations on June 1, 2020 to September 1, 2020 may be up to two months delayed. Regular reexaminations due on October 1, 2020 and November 1, 2020 may be up to one month delayed. *This policy change utilizes HUD waiver HCV-2.*

- **Effective: 4/13/2020 Expires: 12/31/2020**

10.2 Interim Reexaminations

Non-MTW Participants: SCCHA will allow an increased payment standard to be applied at any time (including at interims) instead of at the regular reexamination (SCCHA already allows this policy for MTW participants). *This policy change utilizes HUD waiver HCV-7.*

- **Effective: 4/13/2020 Expires: 12/31/2020**

10.7 Effective Date of Interim Reexaminations

For all interim changes in income or family composition reported on March 11, 2020 or later, a decrease in the family's portion of the rent will be effective the first day of the month following the family's report of the change.

- **Effective: 3/11/2020 Expires: After shelter-in-place order is lifted**

12.4 Other Terminations of Assistance

On a case-by-case basis, SCCHA will waive the requirement that a HAP contract be terminated if the family has been absent from the unit for more than 180 consecutive days. SCCHA may decide not to terminate the HAP contract if the family is unable to return to the unit due to COVID-19 related reasons. *This policy change utilizes HUD waiver HCV-5.*

- **Effective: 4/13/2020 Expires: 12/31/2020**