



Alex Sanchez, Executive Director

HUD Approves Section 8 Program Changes to Keep Families Housed

I am pleased to report that our action plan to avoid terminating households from the Section 8 housing assistance program was approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These changes to our Section 8 program will enable us to provide current participants with some assistance rather than terminate more than 1,000 families from the program.

Because of HUD's swift approval, our program participants will have more time to adjust to their increased rent burdens or take action to avoid the rent increase by moving.

The changes to the Section 8 program were necessary because of Congress' unprecedented sequester cuts to HUD's Section 8 program funding. The harsh reality is that Congress has chosen to help fewer struggling families. While HACSC has spread the cut across all participating families, many housing agencies around the nation have opted to stop re-issuing vouchers when the assistance is over. This has the effect of lowering the overall number of vouchers available in a community; in our case, we have lowered the level of assistance across the board.

We believe these changes to HACSC's Section 8 program, coupled with a conservative, fiscally prudent FY2014 budget and our prior years of program streamlining and cost savings, will position the Agency to face this on-going fiscal crisis.

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Summary of Section 8 Program Changes

Notices describing these changes are being mailed between early to mid-July 2013 to all of our Section 8 tenants and owners. To read more, go to www.hacsc.org and click **News** or **Tenant Information** and **Owner Information**. For general information about the changes to the Section 8 program and how they affect you, call 1-800-285-2418 or write to HACSC, P.O. Box 1930, San José, CA 95109.

Across-the-board Increase in Tenant Rent Contribution Effective Sept. 1, 2013

HACSC is implementing a new, simpler method of rent calculation that eliminates all allowances (*including utilities*), deductions and expenses, and increases the tenant contribution toward the rent to 35% of monthly gross income, or a \$50 minimum rent, whichever is greater. HACSC households currently pay, on average (*after accounting for all expenses, allowances and deductions*), approximately 27% of their gross income toward rent. These changes will be effective for all households Sept. 1. There will be a 90-day hardship available for those households experiencing rent increases of \$50 or more as a result of these changes.

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Informal Hearing Officer Volunteers Needed

HACSC is in immediate need of volunteer informal hearing officers. We will train all volunteers on the informal hearing process, the Section 8 program changes and the hearing decision. Because the hearing is informal, no legal training is required. Volunteers must be available to serve between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. between July 29 - August 30, 2013, for a total time commitment of 20 hours during this period. If you are interested in this opportunity to serve in your community, please email

hearingofficer@hacsc.org

with your expected availability during this time period. We will contact you to set up training and orientation.

Resource Fair for Tenants

HACSC is holding a Resource Fair for Tenants where they can learn more about agencies and non-profit organizations that provide services to assist low-income families. The Resource Fair is being held on Friday, July 26, 2013, from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the Social Services Agency auditorium, 333 West Julian Street, San José, CA 95110. **If your organization would like to participate** please email katherineh@hacsc.org. For more information go to www.hacsc.org and click **Tenant Information** or call 1-800-285-2418.



Adoption of HUD’s Minimum Standards of Housing Size (Voucher Size Policy) Effective Sept. 1, 2013

Voucher size is the number of bedrooms a family qualifies for (*also known as the subsidy size*). HACSC is adopting HUD’s minimum standards of housing size: one room for the head of household (*including spouse/partner*) and one additional room for every two people regardless of age or gender. This change is effective immediately for all new admissions, households moving into the Agency’s jurisdiction and those participants who are moving into a new unit. This change will be effective Sept. 1 for all households who are in units under active Housing Assistance Payment contracts. The households will receive notice between early to mid-July if, after reviewing their family composition, their voucher size changes. Those requiring an extra room for a reasonable accommodation would not be affected. There will be a 90-day hardship available for those households experiencing rent increases of \$50 or more as a result of the increase in tenant rent contribution combined with the voucher size change.

Limit to Additions to Household Size

HACSC will allow additions to the household only in the following cases: the addition of a spouse/registered domestic partner or boyfriend/girlfriend to the head of household; the addition of children by birth, adoption or court-awarded custody to any current family member; and the addition of foster children or elderly or disabled parents or grandparents to the head of household, spouse/registered domestic partner or boyfriend/girlfriend to the head of household.

Freeze on Contract Rent Increases to Owners

HACSC has begun a one-year moratorium effective June 24, 2013, on contract rent increases. Any extension of the moratorium would be limited to one year, and would be considered by the Board in response to unexpected or unbudgeted reductions in program funds only after it considers other ways to manage budget cuts. This will freeze HACSC’s Housing Assistance Payment costs to the current amounts under contract.

News Briefs

HACSC’s Board of Commissioners is developing the Agency’s strategic plan which we expect to conclude in Fall 2013. Having the Agency’s vision and core values defined in a multi-year strategic plan will enable HACSC to respond even better to future community needs and to have a clearer focus on its priorities and objectives when allocating resources.

Thanks in part to our successful collaboration with the Palo Alto Veterans Health Care System in housing Santa Clara County’s most vulnerable homeless veterans, **HUD awarded HACSC an additional 100 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program vouchers.** This brings the Agency’s total of available VASH vouchers to 635. We’ll have more to report in our next newsletter about how we’re working with local partners Destination: Home and the City of San José to accelerate our leasing program for housing our chronically homeless clients, including veterans.

HACSC recently received **full funding from HUD for one of its two Continuum of Care grants.** The one-year funding grant of \$275,469 will enable us to provide rental assistance and case management to roughly 17 chronically homeless and disabled individuals. The other grant was fully funded in March.

HACSC’s mission is keeping families housed and enabling low-income people in Santa Clara County to achieve financial stability and self-reliance. We will continue working to ensure that we are able to provide both service and rental assistance to as many eligible families as possible.

For more information, please refer to www.hacsc.org.



HACSC is the largest provider of affordable housing assistance in Santa Clara County, helping make rental housing safe and affordable for low-income families through Section 8 voucher programs and below-market rental properties. Designated a Moving to Work agency, HACSC assists approximately 18,000 households.

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara • 505 West Julian Street, San José, California, 95110 • www.hacsc.org