

# **CHELSEA HOUSING AUTHORITY**

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## **COVID-19 STATUTORY AND REGULATORY WAIVERS**

On April 10, 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued PIH Notice 2020-05, providing guidance to Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) in response to the Covid-19 national emergency. This PIH Notice allows PHAs to establish alternative requirements for several statutory and regulatory requirements. The implementation of these waivers is at the discretion of the Chelsea Housing Authority (CHA). These waivers are intended to provide public housing authorities with the flexibility to adjust program practices in order to prioritize mission critical functions. These waivers will have a minimal impact on program participants and are intended to ensure the safety and health of our residents, employees and partners. The CHA has implemented the waivers listed below as of May 1, 2020.

### **TEMPORARY AMENDMENTS TO THE LOW RENT PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM AND HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM POLICIES**

#### **1. PHA 5-YEAR AND ANNUAL PLAN SUBMISSION DATES AND SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENT REQUIREMENTS**

This amendment provides an extension to annual submission requirements and allows the CHA to submit its annual and five-year plans no later than 1/16/21, or 75 days before 4/1/21. The HUD requirement mandating Board approval and providing an open meeting for public comment has also been waived. The CHA is still required to notify public housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher Program participants of the adopted changes, and will do so on its website, by phone, written notification, and/or any other means deemed appropriate.

*Temporary amendment will expire on January 16, 2021 or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

#### **2. FAMILY INCOME AND COMPOSITION: DELAYED ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS**

This waiver permits the CHA, if necessary, to delay annual reexaminations of income. The CHA is required to reexamine each family's income and composition annually. During this health emergency, the CHA will work remotely with families to conduct annual recertifications of income and family composition. If the CHA is unable to process an annual recertification of family income and composition, tenant rent will be based on the most recent certification on file. The CHA will conduct a recertification of family income as soon as possible, but prior to December 31, 2020. For

families participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, an increased Payment Standard will be applied to determine tenant rent, effective on the date of the annual recertification.

*Temporary amendment will expire on December 31, 2020 or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

### **3. UTILITY ALLOWANCE SCHEDULE REVIEW AND REVISION: UTILITY ALLOWANCE**

The utility allowance schedule for the CHA is reviewed and revised annually. During this health emergency, the CHA may delay this revision.

*Temporary amendment will expire on December 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

### **4. FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM: CONTRACT EXTENSION**

The Family Self Sufficiency program allows for the extension of an FSS contract of participation for a two- year period for good cause. During this health emergency, program participants may extend their contracts using COVID-19 as good cause for a period not to extend beyond December 31, 2020.

*Temporary amendment will expire on December 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

### **5. FINANCIAL REPORTING**

The CHA will exercise its discretion to extend the deadline for uniform financial reporting standards and ensure it submits unaudited financial information in accordance with 24 CFR 5.801(b) and (d) no later than 8/31/2020.

*Temporary amendment varies by FYE.*

## **TEMPORARY AMENDMENTS TO THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

### **6. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS): INITIAL INSPECTIONS**

The CHA is committed to ensuring the safety of our families. During this health emergency, the CHA will continue to conduct initial inspections of apartments, with attention to social distancing practices. This amendment however permits the Chelsea Housing Authority to use its discretion, if necessary, to postpone HQS inspections for occupied units unless it is determined that a life-threatening condition exists. If a life- threatening condition exists, the CHA will require property

owners to take remedial action and self-certify life-threatening issues have been addressed. The CHA still retains the right to conduct an HQS inspection on any assisted unit, at any time.

*Temporary amendment will expire on July 31, 2020, or October 31, 2020. This amendment may be extended to a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

#### **7. NON-LIFE THREATENING HQS – INITIAL UNIT APPROVAL**

CHA will 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 is a result only of non-life-threatening conditions. CHA will provide an extension of up to an additional 30 days (60 days total) for the owner to make the non-life-threatening repairs and continue to make payments to the owner during this extension period. If the owner has not made the repairs after this extension period CHA will withhold HAP payments.

*Temporary amendment will expire on July 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

#### **8. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS): BIENNIAL INSPECTIONS**

The CHA is required to conduct inspections of units under contract no later than 24 months from the date of the most recent inspection. During this health emergency, the CHA will delay biennial inspections for both tenant-based. All delayed inspections will be completed as soon as reasonably possible on or before October 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.

*Temporary amendment will expire on October 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

#### **9. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS): INTERIM INSPECTIONS –SPECIAL INSPECTIONS**

Upon notification to the CHA by a family or government official of a life-threatening condition in an assisted unit, the CHA will immediately notify the property owner. The property owner will be required to correct the life-threatening deficiency within 24 hours of the CHA notification. The property owner MUST provide documentation of the correction through a text or email, including a photo and written verification that the deficiency has been corrected. In the case of a non-life-threatening deficiency, the CHA will notify the property owner in writing and require that correction be made within 30 days. A property owner's failure to comply will result in further action as described in the Administrative Plan which may include suspension of subsidy and/or termination of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract.

*Temporary amendment will expire on July 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

## **10. HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS): QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS**

HUD requires a CHA supervisor or other qualified person to conduct quality control inspections of sample units annually. During this health emergency, the CHA will suspend HQS supervisory inspections.

*Temporary amendment will expire on October 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

## **11. HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM: ORAL BRIEFING**

CHA will conduct briefings by alternative methods, which include, but are not limited to webcast, video call, or expanded information packet. CHA will 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 ensure meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency.

*Temporary amendment will expire on July 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*

## **12. VOUCHER TERM, EXTENSIONS, AND SUSPENSIONS**

The maximum term for a Voucher holder in housing search is a period of up to 120 days. During this health emergency, the CHA will consider extensions beyond this term to ensure that families in need of rental assistance are housed. These extensions will be granted by the Leased Housing Manager and on an individualized basis.

*Temporary amendment will expire on July 31, 2020, or at a time determined by HUD through waiver extension.*