

Temporary Changes to the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan due to COVID-19

Chippewa County Housing Authority (CCHA) has implemented several broad waivers in regard to the administrative operations of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. These waivers became effective on 4-10-2020. The period of availability is specific to each waiver. Please see below for a list of temporary changes to the HCV administrative plan and how it will affect you.

Delayed Annual Examinations

- If you are due for an annual re-certification, this may get delayed but must be completed no later than December 31, 2020 for assistance to continue.

Annual Examinations – Income Verification Requirements

- When necessary, your worker will forgo third-party income verification requirements for annual re-certifications and accept your word (self-certification) to verify your income. This will be implemented on an as-needed basis through December 31, 2020.

Interim Examinations

- When necessary, your worker will forgo third-party income verification requirements for interim re-examinations (such as when you report a change in income) and accept your word (self-certification) to verify your income. This will be implemented on an as-needed basis through December 31, 2020.

Housing Quality Standards: Initial Inspections

- If you have already been issued a voucher and you have found a unit, Chippewa County Housing Authority (CCHA) would like to assist you to move into the unit as soon as possible. This means that CCHA may not be able to inspect the unit in person, but may instead rely on the landlord's word (owner/authorized representative certification) that the landlord has no reasonable basis to have knowledge that life threatening conditions exist in the unit. CCHA will accept owner certification as needed through December 31, 2020. CCHA will conduct a physical inspection of the unit as soon as reasonably possible and no later than the 1-year anniversary of date of owner's certification. When the physical inspection has been completed, the landlord will be required to repair any deficiencies in order for CCHA to continue paying rent subsidy for that unit.

Housing Quality Standards: Biennial Inspections

- If your home is due for an inspection as part of the re-certification process, this inspection may get delayed if it is scheduled to occur before October 31, 2020. CCHA will conduct a physical inspection of the unit as soon as reasonably possible and no later than 1 year after the date on which the biennial inspection would have been required if the inspection had not been delayed.

Housing Quality Standards: Interim Inspections

- From time to time, CCHA receives notice from an assisted family or government official that the unit does not comply with Housing Quality Standards. We may need to delay a physical inspection of the unit. If the reported deficiency is life-threatening, CCHA will contact the landlord to discuss the necessary repair/s. The landlord will be required to correct the life-threatening deficiency within 24 hours after CCHA has notified the landlord, or provide documentation that the reported deficiency does not exist. In the case of non-life-threatening deficiencies, CCHA will notify the landlord of the reported deficiencies and the landlord will need to make the repair/s or provide documentation that the deficiency does not exist within 30 days or any approved extension by CCHA. This will be implemented on an as-needed basis through December 31, 2020.

Housing Quality Standards: Quality Control Inspections

- As a standard practice, CCHA performs quality control inspections on a sample of units that are being subsidized. This means that CCHA will send a different inspector to a unit that has already been inspected to ensure the quality of the original inspection was adequate. CCHA may delay all quality control inspections until on or before December 31, 2020.

Housing Quality Standards: Space and Security

- As a minimum standard, each dwelling unit assisted through the HCV program must have at least one bedroom/sleeping room for each two persons. The purpose of this standard is to avoid overcrowding in assisted units. CCHA is waiving this requirement if a current participant needs to add member/s to the household as a result of the COVID-19 emergency. This provision does not apply to an initial or new lease. This waiver will be in effect for the duration of the current lease term or one year from the date that CCHA implemented this waiver (4/10/21), whichever period of time is longer.

General HCV Program Waivers: Administrative Plan

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has allowed Public Housing Authorities, such as CCHA, to revise the HCV administrative plan on a temporary basis without Board approval through September 30, 2020. This allows CCHA to respond quickly to the needs of HCV participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any permanent changes to the administrative plan will be formally adopted by the Board on or before December 31, 2020.

General HCV Program Waivers: Oral Briefing

- Once a family/household has been pulled from the waiting list, the family must participate in a briefing meeting to learn about the HCV program and how to find a suitable dwelling unit. Typically these are done orally in group settings. CCHA will continue to attempt oral briefings through electronic means, but may conduct the briefing by other means such as a webcast, video call, or expanded information packet. This will be implemented on an as-needed basis through December 31, 2020.

General HCV Program Waivers: Absence from Unit

- Under normal circumstances, CCHA requires that a family may not be absent from the assisted unit for a period of more than 90 consecutive calendar days (or 180 consecutive calendar days under special circumstances that have been approved by CCHA). If there are extenuating

circumstances (such as hospitalization, extended stays at nursing homes, caring for family members), CCHA may approve continuing housing assistance beyond the usual timeframes, but CCHA will not make payments beyond December 31, 2020 and the family's assistance will be terminated on that date if the family is still absent from the unit.

General HCV Program Waivers: Automatic Termination of HAP Contract

- When a family's income increases to the extent that the housing assistance payment (HAP) is reduced to \$0, CCHA may, upon written notice to the owner/landlord and family, extend the period of time that a family continues to be enrolled in the HCV program. Under normal circumstances, the family would be terminated from the HCV program after 180 days at \$0 assistance. CCHA will be extending the length of time that a family can be enrolled at \$0 assistance beyond the 180 days but no later than December 31, 2020. This will allow a safety net for families who may find themselves with decreased income after the 180 day period, which would then generate a housing assistance payment for the unit and keep the family enrolled in the HCV program.

General HCV Program Waivers: Increase in Payment Standard under HAP Contract Term

- If CCHA makes an increase to the payment standard that is used to calculate rent subsidy, the increased payment standard may be applied sooner than the family's annual re-examination. If a family has a delayed annual re-examination, the increased payment standard, if applicable, will be used to calculate the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) as of the date of the family's first regular re-examination following the change. If applicable, this waiver will be implemented through December 31, 2020.

Uniform Financial Reporting Standards: Filing of Financial Reports; Reporting Compliance Dates

- CCHA has reporting deadlines for the submission of unaudited and audited financial information. CCHA will make a best effort to submit the information on time to HUD, but may delay the submission of unaudited financial information so that it is submitted no later than November 30, 2020 and the audited financial information is submitted no later than June 30, 2021.