



Financing Housing. Building SC.

300-C Outlet Pointe Blvd, Columbia, SC 29210

Fax # (803) 551-4900

E-Mail Address: Voucher@schousing.com

July 18, 2014

Important Notice

Changes to the Housing Choice Voucher Program

The following information concerning changes to the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) is being provided to explain the effect that these changes will have on certain participant's rental assistance.

The 2014 Appropriations Bill for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made several changes to the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) that became effective July 1, 2014. The two changes affecting families assisted by the HCVP are the calculation of the utility allowances and the frequency of Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections. Please read the following information and if you have any questions, please contact your Housing Program Coordinator (HPC) for clarification.

The utility allowance is established by the Public Housing Agency (PHA) and is used to determine how much of the contract rent the family and the PHA will pay. The amount of the utility allowance is determined by what utilities the tenant is required to pay. This change affects those families that currently occupy or select a unit size (number of bedrooms) larger than the size of the voucher issued to them. Prior to the change, the PHA was required to use the appropriate utility allowance for the actual size of the unit. The change requires the PHA to use the lesser of either the unit size or voucher size issued to the family. As an example, a family that has been issued a two bedroom voucher may have selected an affordable three bedroom unit. The utility allowance for the three bedroom unit is \$208; however, the two bedroom (voucher size) utility allowance is \$173, resulting in a \$35 difference. Therefore, the family's share of the contract rent will increase by \$35. This change will be applied at the next scheduled annual reexamination for all families.

The second change concerns the frequency of the HQS inspection. Previously, the PHA was required to conduct an annual HQS inspection within 12 months of the previous inspection. The change requires an HQS inspection to be conducted at least once every 24 months (biennial). The PHA is still responsible for ensuring that all units continue to meet HQS requirements so not all units will be transitioned to the biennial inspection requirement. Those units that fail or marginally pass inspection will continue to be inspected annually. Special inspections requested by landlords and tenants will still be conducted as requested and Quality Control inspection will still be conducted annually. Biennial inspections will be implemented for annual reexaminations effective January 1, 2015 and later with the inspections starting in September 2014.

Families that will be inspected will receive the same notice scheduling the inspection as in years past. Those families that will not be inspected will be required to complete their annual reexamination through the mail. They will receive a letter indicating their unit will not be inspected will need to complete and return all the documentation required to complete their annual reexamination.

HUD has implemented these changes in a limited fashion pending public input and will publish a final rule on how to fully implement these changes which may necessitate additional changes.

If you have any questions about this notice please contact your Housing Program Coordinator or the Authority at 803-896-8888.

If you are a person with disabilities and require a reasonable accommodation to fully understand or utilize the program, please contact the Authority. SC State Housing Authority, 300-C Outlet Pointe Boulevard, ATTN: Voucher Program, Columbia, SC 29210 or Fax #(803) 551-4900. If using a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), please call (803) 896-8831.