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HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER AUG/SEPT 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

Orange County Housing and Community Development will continue our commitment to keep you informed of any changes in service to you as quickly as possible. Here are the most recent updates:

Office Accessibility

Chapel Hill and Hillsborough offices are closed for in-person appointments. Drop boxes are located outside and inside the office building.

To schedule an appointment; contact 919-245-2490.

HQS Inspections

Effective May 1, 2020, all assisted subsidized units under the Orange County Housing Choice Voucher Program that have achieved a 'Pass' Annual HQS Inspection will now be placed on a biennial HQS inspection schedule. This means if your unit has passed its Annual HQS inspection in the past two years (2018 and 2019); your unit will now be inspected every two years.

At your Inspection make sure your unit doesn't have any of the following top HQS Inspection fail items:

- *Chipping/peeling paint*
- *Corrosion on pipes*
- *Missing annual inspection tag on boiler*
- *Potholes in driveway/walkway (tripping hazards)*
- *Uncovered junction boxes (exposed wires)*
- *Evidence of pest infestation*
- *Loose or missing railings*
- *Improperly grounded outlets/covers*
- *Leaks (under sinks, roof, ceiling, walls)*
- *Non-working Heater/AC*

DO YOU HAVE ANY CHANGES TO REPORT?

- Change in family, work or income status.
- New phone number
- New email address

Please report any of these changes for your rent determination.

To expedite a loss of employment incomes go to: www.orangecountync.gov/housing/participant_information - complete step 1 and 2 as instructed

Emergency Housing Assistance

Emergency Housing Assistance provides funds to help with security and utility deposits. Upon OCHCD approval, assistance can be provided for other urgent housing-related costs (e.g., moving costs), especially for hard-to-house individuals and families, such as large families with children, seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and people with justice system involvement.

Contact the Housing Helpline:
919-245-2655

Eviction and HCV

On May 30, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper signed Executive Order No. 142; which provided additional protections for residential tenants between May 30, 2020 and June 21, 2020. Please note that this moratorium has expired. For HCV participants, if your household income has decreased; contact OCHA for a rent determination. Your rent portion may decrease.

FAQ – Information regarding Evictions

Q: Can my landlord evict me?

A: Under North Carolina law you can only be evicted by the Sheriff’s Office, after the Court has entered a judgement against you and the Clerk issues a ‘Writ of Possession’.

- Landlord must:
 - Give you advance notice to terminate your lease
 - Make a demand for your past-due rent before starting the eviction process
 - File a Magistrate’s summons and a Complaint in Summary Ejectment with the Clerk of Court to begin the eviction process
- Your landlord **cannot** personally deliver the Summons and Complaint to you. It is serve to you by the Sheriff Office or a process server
- Magistrate’s Summons will notify you of your court date. This is your opportunity to contest the eviction.

Q: What can I do to avoid an eviction due to inability to pay rent?

A: For HCV participants, if you have a loss of income, report it immediately to OCHA, there may be a redetermination of your rent portion. For Non-HCV Participants, Emergency Housing Assistance is available to help pay rent that may be owed. Orange County also has an Eviction Diversion Program that may be able to help provide legal representation to you in court. For more information or to submit an application by email, contact HousingHelp@orangecountync.gov or call the Housing Helpline: **919-245-2655**

Please contact your landlord first to discuss your situation calmly and honestly and try to work out an affordable repayment agreement. HCV participants are permitted up to six months to pay your back rent.



IRS takes new steps to ensure people with children receive \$500 Economic Impact Payments

The IRS will reopen the registration period for federal beneficiaries who didn't receive \$500 per child payments earlier this year. Certain federal benefit recipients should use the [IRS.gov Non-Filers tool](https://www.irs.gov/Non-Filers) now through September 30 to enter information on their qualifying children to receive the supplemental \$500 payments. [Learn more on IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov)

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