



DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATION

HUD COVID-19 WAIVER EXTENSION

Due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 virus, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has implemented waivers to assist participants in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. Effective **May 1st, 2020**, the Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA) has adopted and will implement the following:

Housing Choice Voucher – General Waivers

- **Public Housing Authority (PHA) Oral Briefing for New Housing Choice Voucher Participants:** HUD is waiving the requirement that the PHA must give an oral briefing to families in the HCV. OCHA will conduct the briefing by other means such as webcast, video call, or explained informational packet.

OCHA will ensure that the method of communication for the briefing effectively communicates with each family member, including those with vision, hearing, and other communication-related disabilities and those with persons with limited English proficiency. ~~This waiver ends on July 31, 2020.~~ **Extended until December 31, 2020.**

- **Term of Voucher – Extensions of Term:** HUD is waiving the requirement for voucher term extensions must to be in accordance with the PHA administrative plan. OCHA will grant extension on a case by case basis. ~~The waiver is available until July 31, 2020.~~ **Extended until December 31, 2020.**

- **Execution of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP):** HUD is waiving the requirement that the HAP contract must be executed 60 days after the lease term begins. OCHA may now execute a HAP contract after 60 days after the beginning of a lease and make HAP retro payment back to the beginning of the lease term. The HAP contract must be executed no later than 120 days from the beginning of the lease term. The period of availability to execute the HAP contract after the 60-day term ~~ends on July 31, 2020~~ **has been extended to December 31, 2020.**

- **Absence from Unit:** HUD is waiving the requirement that a voucher family may not be absent from a unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days. OCHA has discretion whether to continue the HAP contract in this situation and not terminate due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, extended stays at nursing homes, or caring for family members). The period of availability to continue making these HAP payments despite the family's absence ends on December 31, 2020. OCHA will not make payments after this date if the family is absent and the HAP contract will terminate.

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- **Automatic Termination of HAP Contract:** HUD is waiving the requirement to terminate a HAP contract 180 days after a housing assistance payment is reduced to \$0. This is in recognition that the COVID-19 emergency may cause the temporary addition of household members which causes the calculation of HAP to reach \$0. As an alternative requirement, the PHA, following a written notice to the owner and family, may extend the period of time following the last payment to the owner that triggers the automatic termination. The extension beyond the 180 days may not extend beyond December 31, 2020.

Family Income and Composition

- **Interim Examinations:** HUD is waiving the requirements to use the income hierarchy described by PIH Notice 2018-18 and will allow PHAs to forgo third-party income verifications, including EIV. PHAs may consider self-certification as the highest form of income verification for interim reexaminations. Interim reexaminations are not required to be held in-person. ~~This waiver is available until July 31, 2020.~~ **Has been extended until December 31, 2020.**
- **Income verification:** HUD will allow PHAs to forgo third-party income verification requirements for annual reexaminations, including the use of Enterprise Income Verification (EIV). This may occur over the telephone (but must be documented for the written record by PHA staff), through an email or postal mail with a self-certification form by the tenant, or through other electronic communication. Income and family composition examinations and re-certifications do not have to be conducted in-person. ~~This waiver ends on July 31, 2020.~~ **Has been extended until December 31, 2020.**
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- **EIV:** HUD is waiving mandatory EIV monitoring requirements found in PIH Notice 2018-18 ~~until July 31, 2020~~ **has been extended until December 31, 2020.**
- **Wait list notice:** HUD is waiving the requirement that PHA's must give public notice of opening a wait list by publication in a local newspaper and by minority media and other suitable means ~~until July 31, 2020~~ **has been extended until December 31, 2020.**

PHAs may provide public notice of an open waitlist in a voicemail message on its main or general information telephone number and through its website. These messages must meet applicable fair housing requirements.

For the most current information on our operations, visit

<http://orangecountync.gov/2331/13439/COVID-19-UPDATES>

or call

919-245-2485