



# GUIDEBOOK FOR PARTICIPANTS

## HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

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*We Invest in Your Dreams<sup>SM</sup>*

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# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE KEY PLAYERS

## HUD

HUD has four major responsibilities:

- Developing policy, regulations, handbooks, notices, and guidelines to implement housing legislation
- Allocate housing assistance funds
- Provide technical assistance.
- Monitor compliance with program requirements and performance goals

## CDCLI

- CDCLI has the following areas of responsibility:
- Establishing local policies
- Determining family eligibility and annual reexamination of family income
- Maintaining the waiting list and selecting families for admission
- Calculation of family share of rent and the amount of the housing assistance payment
- Establishing utility allowances
- Conducting outreach to owners, with special attention to those with units outside of areas of poverty or minority concentration
- Assisting persons with disabilities in finding satisfactory housing
- Approving units including assuring compliance with housing quality standards and determining the reasonableness of rent
- Making housing assistance payments to owners
- Conducting informal reviews and hearings
- Administering the FSS program
- Complying with fair housing and equal opportunity requirements, HUD regulations and requirements, the consolidation ACC, HUD-approved applications for program funding, CDCLI's administrative plan, and federal, state, and local laws.

## LANDLORD

- The landlord has the following major responsibilities:
- Screening tenants, selecting tenants, and entering into leases with tenants
- Complying with the HAP contract, leases, and tenancy addendum
- Carrying out normal owner functions during the lease term, such as enforcing the lease, performing maintenance, collecting family share of rent from the family, and charging tenants for any damage to unit.
- Maintaining unit compliances with HQS

- Complying with fair housing and equal opportunity requirements
- Paying for utilities, maintenance, and services (unless paid for by the family under the lease)

## FAMILY

Responsibilities of the family include:

- Supplying true and complete required information including:
  - Any information that CDCLI or HUD determines necessary in the administration of the program, including evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status
  - Information as requested for regular or interim reexaminations of all family income
  - Social Security numbers and signed consent forms for obtaining and verifying information
- Fixing any breach of HQS caused by the family or their guests
- Allowing CDCLI to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice
- Not committing any serious or repeated violation of the lease
- The Family must not engage in or allow their guests to engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity
- Notifying CDCLI and the owner before moving or terminating the lease with the owner
- Promptly giving CDCLI a copy of an eviction notice from the owner
- Using the assisted unit as a residence only and as the only residence of the family. Members of the household may engage in legal profit-making activities within the unit, but only if those activities are incidental to the primary use of the unit as a residence. The members of the family also may not receive another housing subsidy in the same unit or a different unit.
- Promptly informing CDCLI of any changes in household composition and obtaining CDCLI approval to add a family member by any means other than birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child
- Notifying CDCLI of any absence from the unit and complying with CDCLI's policies governing absence from the unit
- Not subletting the unit, assigning the lease, or having any interest in the unit
- Not committing fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any assisted housing programs.
- Family obligations are stated on the Housing Voucher (form HUD-52646), in the lease, and in the program regulations at 24 CFR, Part 982 for housing choice voucher holders.

# VOUCHER

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

There are (4) factors which affect eligibility:

- Family Definitions: Only applicants who meet the definition of family are eligible.
- Income Limits: The household's annual income may not exceed the applicable income limit as established by HUD.
- Citizenship Status: The applicant must meet the documentation requirements of citizenship or eligible immigration status.
- Eviction for Drug-related Criminal Activity: Persons evicted from public housing or any Section 8 program for drug-related criminal activity are ineligible for assistance for at least three years from the date of the eviction.

## ANNUAL INCOME

Annual income is defined as the anticipated total income from **all** sources. Although some types of income are not counted, the head of household is responsible for reporting all sources of income for the entire household. CDCLI is responsible for applying the HUD rules and deciding what needs to be counted in the annual income calculation. This is the first step towards determining the amount of rental assistance the family receives.

If a family member's welfare income is sanctioned by the Department of Social Services for noncompliance with self-sufficiency program responsibilities, CDCLI is required to include the amount of sanctioned welfare income in the family's annual income.

Community Development Corporation of Long Island (CDCLI) must verify the amount, term, and reason for the sanction with the Suffolk County Department of Social Services.

## EXAMPLES OF INCOME

Employment  
Public Assistance  
Unemployment  
Pensions  
Relocation Payments  
Child Support  
Net Income from A Business  
SSI & SSD

Workers Compensation  
Annuities  
Interest from Assets  
Regular Contributions/Gifts  
Social Security  
TANF  
Alimony  
Military Pay

## NET INCOME FROM REAL/PERSONAL PROPERTY

1. The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips, and bonuses, and other compensation for personal service.
2. The net income from operation of a business or profession
3. Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property
4. The full amount of periodic payments received from social security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, lotteries, disability or death benefits, and other similar types of periodic receipts, including a lump-sum payment for the delayed start of a periodic payment.
5. Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment, worker's compensation, and severance pay
6. Welfare Assistance
7. Periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from persons not residing in the dwelling
8. All regular pay, special pay, and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces (whether or not living in the dwelling) who is head of the family, spouse, or other person whose dependents are residing in the unit

## DEDUCTIONS AND HUD ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

### Dependents

- A \$480.00 deduction is made for all minors under the age of 18, for family members 18 and older who are full time students, or a person with a disability (other than the Head of Household or Spouse).

### Elderly/Disabled Allowances

- A \$400.00 household deduction is made for families whose head of household, spouse, or sole member is 62 or over, or is disabled

### Allowable Medical Expenses

- Medical deductions are permitted only for households in which the head or spouse is at least 62, handicapped or disabled. Allowable medical expense is that portion of total medical expenses that is in excess of 3% of the annual income.

## DETERMINATION OF UNIT SIZE

The appropriate number of bedrooms needed by an applicant family must be determined by CDCLI when it determines family eligibility for a housing choice voucher. CDCLI must establish standards that determine the number of bedrooms needed for families of different sizes and composition. For each family, CDCLI determines the appropriate number of bedrooms under the subsidy standards. Family unit size is entered on the housing choice voucher issued to the family.

## EXPIRATION AND EXTENSION OF VOUCHERS

The initial term of the voucher will be 60 days and will be stated on the housing choice voucher. CDCLI may extend the expiration date of the voucher for an additional 30 days if there is a written request from the family on or before the initial expiration date along with a detailed list of dates and places the family has searched for housing.

# CHOOSING WHERE YOU WANT TO LIVE

## FACTORS IN CHOOSING WHERE TO LIVE

There are many factors to consider when finding suitable housing for your family. Try to select a place that meets your family's needs, such as:

- Schools
- Safety
- Work
- Child Care
- Public Transportation

## WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR IN A UNIT

In order for the unit to be approved, it must meet the following requirements:

- The owner must be willing to enter into a contract with the Housing Agency and comply with program rules
- The rent for the unit must be *reasonable* for the type, size and condition of the unit
- The unit must pass a Housing Quality Standards Inspection

# BEFORE YOU MOVE IN

## REQUEST FOR TENANCY

A family has 60 days to locate a suitable unit. Once a family finds a suitable unit and the owner is willing to lease the unit under the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the family must have the owner complete a Request for Tenancy form. The request for tenancy, a copy of the owner's deed, a copy of a current tax bill, and a copy of the owner's rental permit (where applicable) must then be submitted to CDCLI.

The landlord must certify the most recent amount of rent charged for the unit and provide an explanation for any difference between the prior rent and the proposed rent. Owners must also certify that they are not the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family, unless CDCLI has granted a request for reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities who is a member of the tenant household. Finally, for units constructed before 1978, owner's must 1) certify that the unit, common areas, and exterior have been found to be free of lead-based paint by a certified inspection; or 2) attach a lead-based paint disclosure statement.

## LEASING IN PLACE

If you are currently renting a legal apartment you may be eligible to receive assistance at your present unit.

The unit must:

- Be the appropriate size for your family
- Pass a housing quality standards inspection
- Have a reasonable rent

The landlord must:

- Be willing to enter into a housing assistance payment contract
- Complete a Request for Tenancy form HUD-52517 and a W9
- Submit a rental permit (if applicable)
- Submit a deed and a current tax bill

## SECURITY DEPOSIT

The owner of the unit decides how much the security deposit will be. When you begin your housing search, make sure that you have made plans in advance to have the money available for the security deposit. CDCLI does not provide security deposits. You may be eligible to receive security and broker fees from the Department of Social Services. For this you will need to contact



them directly. Please note that in addition to CDCLI's inspection, DSS will conduct their own inspection of the unit. You will not be allowed to move into the unit until the unit passes both inspections and your housing specialist has received proof the security has been paid.

## **INSPECTION**

The purpose of HQS inspections is to ensure that housing is decent, safe, and sanitary. This section discusses types of HQS program inspections CDCLI is required to conduct, methods for conducting inspections, inspection scheduling, and HQS enforcement.

CDCLI is required to conduct three types of inspections: initial, annual, and special inspections, which may include quality control inspections. Inspections result in pass, fail, or inconclusive reports. Units that pass inspection require no further action. Fail or inconclusive inspections require follow-up re-inspections or CDCLI verification to confirm the correction of the HQS infractions.

Depending upon the nature of the HQS infraction, fail or inconclusive items may be the responsibility of the owner or tenant. Failure to comply with the correction notices result in owner or tenant sanctions.

## **SCHEDULING INSPECTIONS**

CDCLI will schedule initial inspections in accordance with program requirements. Annual inspections, quality control inspections, and all resulting re-inspections will be scheduled by CDCLI's inspectors with the tenant and/or owner. Annual inspections must be scheduled so that all units are inspected every 12 months. It is the obligation of the family to allow CDCLI to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice in order to continue participating in the housing choice voucher program.

## **REASONABLE RENT**

CDCLI must ensure that rents charged by owners to housing choice voucher program participants are reasonable. This determination involves two comparisons. First, CDCLI must compare the rent for the voucher units to rents for similar unassisted units in the marketplace. Second, CDCLI must compare the rent to rents for similar units on the premises.

## COMPARABILITY

In conducting rent reasonableness, CDCLI must determine whether the rent to the owner is a reasonable rent in comparison to rent for other comparable unassisted units.

In determining comparability, CDCLI must consider:

- Location, quality, size, unit type, and age of the contract unit, and
- Amenities, housing services, maintenance, and utilities the owner must provide under the lease

## PAYMENT STANDARDS

A payment standard is used to calculate the monthly housing assistance payment for a family. The payment standard is a maximum set by New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR). It is determined from cost data for the Nassau/Suffolk region for modest, safe housing of a particular structure.

Current payment standards are as follows:

<b>Bedroom Size</b>	<b>Current Payment Standards Effective 11/01/18</b>
0	\$1,168
1	\$1,585
2	\$1,956
3	\$2,307
4	\$2,581
5	\$2,968

## DETERMINING THE TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT

CDCLI determines the amount of the monthly housing assistance payment (HAP) to be paid to the owner. Generally, the monthly housing assistance payment is the difference between the applicable payment standard and 30% of the monthly adjusted family income. In determining the maximum initial housing assistance payment for the family, CDCLI will use the payment standard in effect on the date the tenancy is approved. At times the family may choose to rent a unit for more than the payment standard but this choice does not change the amount of the assistance payment. The family share of the rent may not exceed 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income.

## CONTRACT AND LEASE

Once the unit passes the HQS inspection, a Housing Assistance Payment Contract (HAP) is executed and a lease is prepared. The family and the owner will receive notification that the lease and HAP contract are ready for signature. After the HAP contract and lease are signed, the initial subsidy payment will be paid and continues to be paid monthly to the owner as long as the family continues to meet eligibility criteria and the housing unit qualifies under the program.

## AFTER YOU MOVE IN

### ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION

CDCLI is required to reexamine the income and composition of housing choice voucher participants at least annually. The annual recertification determines the continued eligibility of the family and establishes the housing assistance payment (HAP) to be made on behalf of the family. CDCLI requires families to report interim changes in family income or family composition as well. A family's failure to comply with recertification requirements is grounds for terminating assistance.

All residents receiving a rental subsidy must recertify with CDCLI within twelve months of receiving their first subsidy payment. Annual recertification packets will be mailed to all families 90 days prior to the lease renewal date. This package must be returned promptly and completed with all required documents by the return date listed on the cover letter. As part of the re-examination process a housing quality standards inspection of your unit must take place. If the family fails to submit the completed packet and/or allow an inspection to take place, CDCLI will be unable to pay a subsidy on the unit and the family will be responsible for the full portion of the rent and the family may be terminated from the program. Upon completion of the annual recertification you will receive a notice from our office informing you of your portion of the rent and the housing assistance payment to the landlord.

- If you receive an appointment letter for your annual examination you must make the necessary arrangements to attend your scheduled appointment. Your housing specialist will review your documentation regarding household income and family composition.

### ENTERPRISE INCOME VERIFICATION (EIV)

Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) is a web-based computer system containing employment and income information on individuals participating

in HUD's rental assistance programs. The amount of rental assistance paid on behalf of the family is calculated using the family's annual income, less allowable deductions. Therefore, it is critical that CDCLI obtain and adequately verify annual income and benefits information in making rental housing subsidy determinations.

CDCLI is able to use the EIV system to determine if you:

- Correctly reported your income
- Used a false social security number
- Failed to report or under reported the income of a spouse or household member
- Receive rental assistance at another property

During interim and annual recertification of family income, your housing specialist will generate the EIV report. As a participant you will be required to review this third party report and acknowledge that the information contained in the report is true and accurate. All family members age 18 and over are required to sign the report.

If you do not agree with the employment and/or income information in EIV, you must tell your housing specialist who will then conduct written third party verification with the reporting source of income. If the source confirms this income is accurate, you will be required to repay any overpaid rental assistance.

## REPORTING CHANGES

At the briefing, it is explained to you the procedures for reporting changes in household composition and income. You must report all household income and family composition changes to CDCLI within 2 weeks. When a change in your income occurs, contact your Housing Specialist immediately for further instructions. Your Housing Specialist may set up a meeting with you so the changes can be verified. When your income changes, your payment and the HAP payment to the owner may change. Both you and the owner will be given written notice before any changes go into effect. **Failure to report changes could result in repayment or termination of your Housing Choice Voucher.**

## PORTABILITY

An eligible family that has been issued a housing choice voucher may use that voucher to lease a unit anywhere in the US or US commonwealth where there is a housing agency operating a housing choice voucher program. This feature of the program is referred to as portability. This section describes

eligible families and the procedures for moving from one jurisdiction to another using portability.

A participant family electing to move to another jurisdiction with its voucher is eligible to do so only when the family is able to move out of its current program unit under the terms of the family's lease. A family is not eligible for portability if the family has moved out of its assisted unit in violation of the lease.

When a participant family chooses to move using portability, CDCLI will review the family's lease to determine the termination provisions and the length of notice required. CDCLI will review a copy of the family's written notice to the owner of their intention to vacate. If the owner has agreed to an early lease termination, CDCLI may require a written statement from the owner.

## **SIDE PAYMENTS**

It is illegal for you to make additional payments to the owner to cover a rent amount that is higher than the agreed upon contract rent. It is illegal for the owner to charge such side payments. All separate agreements between the owner and family must be approved by CDCLI.

## **MOVE-OUT PROCEDURES**

If you decide to move from one unit to another, you must contact your Housing Specialist and request the move-out procedure form. Before you move, you must give your landlord adequate notice, your unit must be in good condition, and your rent and all utilities must be paid to date.

## **FORECLOSURE**

If CDCLI learns that the property is in foreclosure, CDCLI must:

- A. Make all reasonable efforts to determine to the status of the foreclosure and ownership of the property. This information can most likely be obtained through information that has been sent to the tenant notifying them of the foreclosure, and possibly in a 90-day notice to vacate. Additionally, CDCLI may review legal notices in the local newspaper or the local government's web site to keep apprised of foreclosure actions initiated against owners of HCV assisted properties.

- B. Continue to make payments to the original owner until ownership legally transfers in accordance with the HAP contract. With the exception of HUD-insured mortgages or loans, defaulting on a mortgage/loan is not a breach of the HAP contract.
- C. Attempt to obtain a written acknowledgement of the assignment of the HAP contract from the successor in interest. The written agreement should include a request for owner information such as Tax Identification Number, and payment instructions from the new owner. Even if the new owner does not acknowledge the assignment of the HAP contract in writing, the assignment is nevertheless effective by operation of law.
- D. Inform the tenant that they must continue to pay rent in accordance with the lease, and if the successor in interest refuses to accept payment or cannot be identified, the tenant should pay the rent into escrow, because failure to pay rent may constitute an independent ground for eviction.
- E. If CDCLI is unable to make HAP payments to the successor in interest due to: (1) An action or inaction by the successor in interest that prevents such payments, including rejection of payments or the failure of the successor to maintain the property in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS); or (2) An inability to identify the successor, CDCLI should inform the family of this. In order to ensure adequate protection of the tenant's rights under the statutory authority as well as enforcing performance of the successor in interest under the HAP contract, the CDCLI should refer tenants, as services are needed, to the local Legal Aid Office.

CDCLI must make reasonable inquiries to determine whether the unit, in addition to having a tenant receiving HCV assistance, will be (or has been) assisted under the [Neighborhood Stabilization Program \(NSP\)](#). The department believes that units covered by this notice that receive such assistance will be rare. CDCLI may inquire with the applicable units of local government to determine if properties occupied by housing choice voucher participants are under consideration for the NSP program.

## TENANT OBLIGATIONS TO THE HOUSING AGENCY

Participation in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program requires that the family fulfill certain obligations to the housing agency and other obligations to the owner. Families who participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program are required to comply with certain family obligations. These family obligations are required by HUD regulations and are listed on the voucher. By signing your voucher, you acknowledge your responsibilities and obligations for participating in the program.

The list of family obligations is as follows:

1. When the family's unit is approved and the HAP contract is executed, the family must follow the rules listed below in order to continue participating in the Housing Choice Voucher program.
2. The family must
  - a. Supply any information that CDCLI or HUD determines to be necessary including evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status, and information for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition
  - b. Disclose and verify social security numbers as well as sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
  - c. Supply any information requested by CDCLI to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.
  - d. Promptly notify CDCLI in writing when the family is away from the unit for an extended period of time in accordance with CDCLI policies.
  - e. Allow CDCLI to inspect the unit at reasonable times after reasonable notice.
  - f. Notify CDCLI and the owner in writing before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease
  - g. Use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.

- h. Promptly notify CDCLI in writing of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child.
  - i. Request CDCLI's written approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit
  - j. Promptly notify CDCLI in writing if any family member no longer lives in the unit
  - k. Give CDCLI a copy of any owner eviction notice
  - l. Pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease
3. Any information the family supplies must be true and complete
4. The family (including each family member) must not:
- a. Own or have any interest in the unit (other than in a cooperative, or the owner of a manufactured home leasing a manufactured home space).
  - b. Commit any serious fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act.
  - c. Engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity or other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity or the premises.
  - d. Commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.
  - e. Sublease or let the unit or assign the lease or transfer the unit.
  - f. Receiving housing choice voucher program housing assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other Federal, State, or local housing assistance program.
  - g. Damage the unit or premises (other than damage from ordinary wear and tear) or permit any guest to damage the unit or premises.



- h. Receiving housing choice voucher program housing assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family, unless CDCLI has determined (and has notified the owner and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide a reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities.
- i. Engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health and safety or right of peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity or the premises.

## TENANT OBLIGATIONS TO THE LANDLORD

Families are obligated to:

- Pay the rent on time
- Take care of the housing unit

Generally, the owner is required to make repairs and provide routine maintenance. However, if a housing unit fails to meet Housing Quality Standards because of tenant caused problems, and the deficiencies are not corrected within the time period set by the housing inspector, CDCLI will discontinue assistance payments to the owner. Also, your participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program may be terminated.

- The family is required to provide any utilities (*such as electricity, gas, or water*) that are not furnished by the owner. If this happens, you will be given a brief period of time to get the utilities in service. If you are responsible to provide utilities, make certain that they remain in service.
- The family is responsible for providing and maintaining any appliance that the owner does not furnish, such as a stove or refrigerator.
- The family is responsible for damages to the unit or premises (beyond normal wear and tear) that are caused by any family member or guest.

**When you sign a lease with an owner, you are obligated to pay your share of the rent on the first of each month in accordance with your lease. If you fail to pay your rent, you will be subject to eviction by the owner. Serious and repeated violations of the lease may also result in termination of housing assistance.**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Why does my Housing Specialist change each year?*

Our team is based on a system of checks and balances. Changing housing specialists annually assists us in providing quality services to all program participants while ensuring regulatory compliance

*How long do I have to wait to move?*

The HAP term is for 1 full year and automatically renews on a month to month basis after the first year until either party gives a full 30-day written notice.

*What do I have to do to move?*

You must be in compliance with all program regulations and have met all move out procedures.

*How do I schedule an inspection when I move?*

Once you have submitted your completed Request for Tenancy package your housing specialist will submit the request for our inspection team. The inspector will contact the new landlord directly to schedule an appointment. Your housing specialist does not schedule appointments.

*Will CDCLI pay my security deposit?*

NO. The Housing Choice Voucher Program subsidizes rent only. If you need assistance with a security deposit, you can contact the Department of Social Services. You must provide your housing specialist with proof that the security has been paid or a guarantee letter from DSS before you move into the unit.

*Can I move if I owe my landlord, CDCLI, or utilities?*

All repayments and rent must be paid in full. You must be current with your utilities and/or payment agreement in order to move because you will have to be able to get services at your new unit. If you are moving out of Suffolk County, all utilities must be paid in full.

*My landlord will not make a repair, what should I do?*

If you have contacted your landlord and informed them that something is in need of repair and get no response, you must put it in writing to your housing specialist so a special inspection request can be made. **Do not stop paying rent.**

*Can I move people in with me?*

No, not without written approval from both the landlord and CDCLI. Restrictions do apply and a request to add a family member is not guaranteed approval. If you give birth, you must provide a copy of the child's birth certificate and social security card. In the case of a minor, custody must be awarded.

*What if someone moves out of my house?*

You are responsible to notify your housing specialist in writing within two (2) weeks. You must provide proof of the new address.

*What do I do if my income changes?*

You are responsible to report any changes in household income with supporting documentation in writing to CDCLI within two (2) weeks.

*Who is responsible for the exterior of my home?*

If you are renting a single family home, you are responsible for the lawn care, garbage, and snow removal. All families are responsible for their belongings, vehicles, and proper garbage disposal whether in a private home or apartment complex. All participants are required to comply with all state and local laws.

*What should I do if I receive an eviction notice?*

Notify your housing specialist immediately. Do not ignore it or wait until a judgement has been ordered by the courts.

*What should I do if I receive notice that the house I am renting is in foreclosure?*

Notify your Housing Specialist **immediately**. Often landlords are able to rectify the situation and it will have no impact on the tenant. You are responsible to continue paying the landlord your portion of rent.

*How is my rent portion calculated?*

Your rent portion is based upon the adjusted gross household income. We include income before taxes, and income received, both earned and unearned for all household members.

*Where can I live in Suffolk County?*

You can live in any qualified unit in Suffolk County. The landlord must be willing to accept you as a tenant and the terms of the HAP contract. The landlord must provide a copy of the Deed, tax bill, and rental permit. You may also move outside of Suffolk County under the rules of portability.

*Can I get an animal/pet?*

You are required to obtain approval from the landlord first. You will be responsible for any and all damage created by your pet and for properly cleaning up after your pet.

*What do I do if my dependent is no longer a full-time student?*

Once a household member turns 18 years of age you **MUST** notify your housing specialist if the person is no longer a full time student. Once a family member turns 18, you **MUST** report all earned income whether they are full time students, or not.