

HPD Division of Tenant Resources (DTR) Changes for Participants: COVID-19 HUD Waivers Expiring 03/01/2022

To HPD Rental Assistance Program Participant:

On March 1st, 2022, HUD's COVID-19 waivers will expire. This means that HPD's policies will be changing, and that many waiver flexibilities will no longer be in use.

A summary of these changes is below. To learn more about how HPD is accommodating tenants and owners during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms.

A. HPD's Virtual Operations

1. Communicating with HPD Staff

- a. HPD is operating virtually. HPD's Client Services Office at 100 Gold Street remains closed until further notice.
- b. **The best way to submit documents is to upload them to the DTR Portal (<https://www.nyc.gov/dtrownerportal>).**
 - i. Instructions for how to do so are available here: www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms
 - ii. You do **not** need to be an Owner, and do not need an Owner Portal account, to upload documents. Program participants like yourself can use the portal to submit documents too!
- c. **At this time, email is the best way to reach HPD staff.**
 - i. If you want to email rather than upload documents, please do so securely. Instructions for encrypting emails are available here: www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms
 - Email questions about HQS inspections and failures to HQS@hpd.nyc.gov
 - Email Applicant/Participant Forms (e.g., Tenant Self-Certification of Information, Requests for Additional Information, Request for Reasonable Accommodation Forms) to DTRAI@hpd.nyc.gov
 - For information about the Mainstream, FUP, VASH, and Project-Based Programs (PBV, Mod Rehab, Continuum of Care programs: Mod SRO and SPC, NYC 15/15): email PBV@hpd.nyc.gov
 - For information about Participant Move or Portability Requests: email Portability@hpd.nyc.gov

2. Email Encryption

- a. In order to protect your privacy, email communication may be encrypted.



- b. Encryption means that when you communicate with HPD by email, your information is kept safe and private. When requesting documents, HPD will send you an introduction email with instructions on how to view or send encrypted emails. You can also view these instructions and a list of email addresses at www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms.

3. Digital Signatures

- a. HPD now accepts digital signatures.
- b. It may be difficult to print and scan documents at this time. As an accommodation, HPD will accept your digital signature. This means that you may either:
 - i. Print the document, sign it with a pen, and either take a photo of the complete document or scan it and email it to HPD; OR
 - ii. Use the “Fill & Sign” option to electronically add your signature to a form you receive from us. Instructions on how to use the “Fill & Sign” option are available on HPD’s website at www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms.

4. Conferences

- a. Conferences, briefings and any other meetings with applicants and participants will continue to be conducted virtually (either over teleconference or over the phone). **In-person conferences are only available upon request. Please note that there may be scheduling delays for in-person visits.**
- b. The exception to this policy is for conferences that may result in *termination of subsidy* (e.g., EIV conference). In cases where failure to attend a conference may result in termination of subsidy, conferences will initially be scheduled virtually. However, **if a household fails to attend the virtual conference, an in-person conference will be scheduled before termination action is initiated.**
- c. To make an appointment, you can call HPD at 917-286-4300. You can also email HPD to an in-person appointment. Contact information can be found in section A(1)(b) above, or on HPD’s *About Section 8* page (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/about-section-8.page>).
- d. Starting March 1, 2022, barring any extenuating circumstances, the Appeals Unit will schedule Hearings/Reviews at HPD. If you get a scheduling notice and do not want to come to HPD for your Hearing/Review, you can call the Appeals Unit at (212) 863-6633 to ask about virtual Hearing/Review options. Please note that virtual Hearings/Reviews have specific requirements, and HPD cannot guarantee that you will qualify for a virtual Hearing/Review. For more details about virtual Hearings/Reviews, please visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/dtr-covid-19.page>

B. Moves (for Section 8 program participants ONLY)

Starting March 1st, 2022, HPD will resume reviewing regular move requests.

C. Income Verification



Starting March 1st, 2022, self-certification will no longer be sufficient to verify income.

D. Enforcement Action

1. As of March 1st, 2022, HPD is resuming enforcement action.
2. **Conferences**
 - a. Conferences will be held virtually. If a household fails to attend a virtual conference that may lead to termination of subsidy, **an in-person conference will be scheduled before termination action is initiated.**
3. **HQS**
 - a. If you live in a unit with an owner-caused HQS failure, you must provide the owner of the building with access to your unit to make repairs. To avoid Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) abatement effective March 1, 2022 (e.g., HPD stopping payments to the owner), owner-caused HQS failures issued in apartments between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021 must be corrected and validly certified as corrected by the owner.
 - b. HQS inspections that are conducted on or after January 1, 2022 will follow HPD's normal business processes.
 - i. Starting March 1st, 2022, if you live in a unit that has been under HAP abatement for 180 days or more, HPD will require you to start the required move process.
 - ii. If there is a life-threatening condition in your unit, call 311 or 911 as appropriate.
 - c. Effective March 1st, 2022, tenant-caused failures and tenant failure to provide access will be enforced prospectively.
 - i. In other words, tenant-caused failures and tenant failure to provide access will only be enforced if the inspection attempt resulting in the failure occurred on or after March 1st, 2022.
4. **Required Moves (for Section 8 program participants ONLY)**
 - a. Starting March 1st, 2022, **HPD will begin requiring households to move for reasons outlined in section 14.2 of HPD's Administrative Plan (owner non-compliance, long-term HAP abatement, overcrowded, overhoused) as well as for absence from the unit for more than 180 days.**
 - i. For households who abandoned, relinquished, or were evicted from the unit before December 31st, 2021:
 1. If you **do not have an active move voucher, and have not received a Required Move notice:** you will be sent a Required Move notice. This notice will inform you that your subsidy will be terminated unless you request a move voucher. If you do not respond to the Required Move notice within 15 days, then HPD will begin the process of terminating your subsidy.

2. If you **have an active move voucher, and have not received a Required Move notice**: upon expiration of your active move voucher, you will receive a Required Move notice. This notice will inform you that your subsidy will be terminated unless you request a move voucher. If you do not respond to the Required Move notice within 15 days, then HPD will begin the process of terminating your subsidy.
3. If you **have an active move voucher, and have received a Required Move notice**: you must either use the voucher by the voucher's expiration date or request an extension (the request form can be found at www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms). If you do not, HPD will begin the process of terminating your subsidy.

E. Employment and Training Support

If you receive Housing Choice Voucher Assistance (Section 8) and you have lost significant portions of your income, or your job entirely, the **Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is available to support your employment and training related goals and help you build substantial savings.**

1. The FSS program provides education, job training, job placement, and financial counseling services to participants. When household income increases from employment earnings, any resulting increase in the tenant share of the rent is matched in a savings account that becomes available to the household upon successful completion of the program.
2. If you are interested in joining, please send an email expressing interest to FSS@hpd.nyc.gov. You can also visit HPD's website to learn more about the program and complete an interest form at www.nyc.gov/hpd/fss.

