

# ***Housing Choice Voucher Program Tenant Newsletter***

## **New Occupancy Standards**

Effective October 1, 2010 the occupancy standards for the Housing Authority of the City of Long Beach (HACLB) were revised to reflect that families will receive one bedroom for every two household members regardless of gender and/or age.

This means that a four-person household and a three-person household will receive a two-bedroom voucher.

Most families have already been downsized to the new occupancy standard. For those families that have not yet been downsized you can expect that it will occur at your next annual certification whether the family moves or not.

If the family chooses to remain in the existing unit with an additional bedroom, the family may pay the difference for the additional bedroom as long as it does not exceed 40% of the adjusted household income.

An additional option is to locate a unit with the additional bedroom at the smaller voucher size price.

For example, if you have been issued a two-bedroom voucher with a payment standard of \$1,361 you may lease a three-bedroom unit as long as the contract price for that unit does not exceed \$1,361.

Exceptions will be made for families with a permanently disabled household member who requires a reasonable accommodation.

Consideration for a reasonable accommodation requires that there be a direct relationship between the disability and the need for additional physical space.

To receive a reasonable accommodation, you may contact your housing specialist or download the packet from our website at <http://www.longbeach.gov/civica/filebank/blobload.asp?BlobID=21872>.

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## **Annual Recertification Process**

Remember, follow these simple steps:

1. Bring all of your information to the office by the date given in your notice. If you do not have all of your verifications, bring what you do have.
2. When you come in, inform the guard that you are bringing in your recertification paperwork. The guard will show you to the correct line- you do not have to take a number.
3. Have all your papers together before you get into line and place them in an envelope. Make sure you made a copy of all the papers for your records-we will not make copies.
4. Sign your name on the clipboard and deposit your paperwork into the box – you are done!

## Fraud Stories from HUD Cases

Over the past two years HACL B has been working with HUD OIG on various fraud cases. Below are some of the cases that HUD has prosecuted over the past several months.

**Hawthorne:** Former Hawthorne Housing Authority Section 8 tenants and a landlord, were each charged in Los Angeles County Superior Court, with allegedly committing grand theft and perjury and offering or attempting to offer a false instrument for recording. In addition, former Hawthorne Section 8 tenant was sentenced to 270 days incarceration and 3 years probation and ordered to perform 30 days of community service and pay Hawthorne \$15,358 in restitution for her earlier guilty plea to committing grand theft.

Between August 2003 and January 2010, the above defendants allegedly admittedly failed to report income, accurate household composition, or their familial relationship with their Section 8 landlord on housing or other certifications and together obtained \$129,019 in housing and \$16,514 in other assistance they were not entitled to receive

**Miami:** Five former Miami-Dade Housing Agency housing recipients were arrested on probable cause or charged in the Florida Circuit Court, with allegedly committing grand theft. In addition, former Miami-Dade housing recipients were collectively sentenced to 20 years probation and 15 years supervised release and ordered to pay HUD \$123,614 in restitution.

Between 1993 and 2007, the above defendants allegedly admittedly failed to report income or accurate household composition on housing certifications and collectively obtained \$253,984 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

**Las Vegas:** Former Las Vegas Housing Authority Section 8 tenants and a landlord were each charged in Las Vegas or Clark

County Justice Courts, with allegedly committing theft or theft by misrepresentation and a conspiracy. From November 2003 to July 2009, tenants allegedly failed to report income or an accurate household composition, and allegedly conspired and failed to report an unauthorized resident.

The above defendants obtained \$113,392 in housing assistance they were not entitled to.



**Boston:** A former Boston Housing Authority Section 8 tenant, pled guilty in Court, to making a false claim and committing larceny over \$250 by false pretense. In addition, another former Boston Section 8 tenant was sentenced to 2 years probation and ordered to pay Boston \$25,000 in restitution for her earlier guilty plea to making a false claim and committing larceny over \$250.

From March 1998 to January 2007, the tenants failed to report income on housing certifications and together obtained \$95,381 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive

**Sacramento;** Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency Section 8 tenants, were each charged in Sacramento County Superior Court, with allegedly committing grand theft, welfare fraud, and perjury. In addition, former Sacramento Section 8 tenant was sentenced to 90 days incarceration and 3 years probation and ordered to pay an undetermined amount of restitution for his earlier *nolo contendere* plea to committing grand theft. The above defendants allegedly failed to report income, their criminal histories, or an unauthorized resident on housing certifications and collectively obtained \$85,992 in housing assistance they were not entitled to receive.

## Ways To Prevent Voucher Termination

1. Attend all office appointments, be on time and bring all members of the household over age 18 for annual interview.
2. Make sure someone is home for all inspections appointments (this person will need to be 18 or older).
3. Report all household income changes (this includes full time student, social security and SSI for all household members).
4. Turn in all information requested by housing specialist by the due date.
5. Do not let unauthorized people live in your unit (people not included on the lease).
6. Do not let unauthorized people use your address for mail (people not included on the lease).
7. Report all household changes in writing, within 30 days of the change (income, family members, etc.). Keep a copy for your records, along with your receipt.
8. Pay rent portion in a timely manner.
9. Maintain utilities at all time (gas, electric, water).
10. Report all drug related and or violent criminal activity that may have occurred with any member of the household.
11. Pay and remain current on any debt amounts owed to the PHA.

## Helpful Hints from the Inspectors

We may not be Heloise, but here are a few helpful hints on in-expensive cleaning solutions that you might find useful.

Window Cleaners - If you would like your windows to sparkle, don't buy blue or green tinted solution from the grocery store. Instead, mix one-part vinegar to two-part water and pour into a spray bottle to apply. For an extra strength window solution, try mixing three tablespoons of ammonia to one-part vinegar and two cups of water. For lint free windows, use coffee filters or newspaper to clean instead of a cloth.

Stain removers – If you spill on carpets, furniture or clothing and a stain is left behind, don't panic. Make up a solution of one-part vinegar, one part mild dishwashing liquid and two parts water. Pour this onto the stain and blot until the stain is lifted. For a greasy stain, first pour baking soda or cornstarch directly on the stain and leave for an hour to absorb the grease. Vacuum the powder and use your homemade spot cleaner for any residue left behind.

Clean mildew from shower and tub – mix one-part vinegar and one part water and pour into a spray bottle. Spray onto walls and tile and wipe with a sponge to remove.



Cleaner – For a product that cleans walls, counters, floors and many other areas, try filling a large jug with one half gallon water, one half cup of vinegar and one quarter cup of baking soda. This can be poured into spray bottles and stored for a couple of months.



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*"Working Together To  
Serve"*

Name  
Address  
Address  
City, State, Zip

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## So, You Want to Move out of Long Beach

Did you know that Housing Choice Vouchers are accepted by cities across the country, giving families real choice about where they live? As long as you move from one Housing Authority to another with a voucher program anywhere in the United States, you are eligible for continued assistance.

Before you decide to move out of Long Beach, you should evaluate how your life will improve in terms of work, school, safety and services in the new area. You should make every effort to find out what opportunities your new community can offer you to make your move a successful one.



In addition, every Housing Authority has its own rules, regulations and deadlines and they may not be the same rules, regulations and deadlines that we have in Long Beach.

- Fair Market Rent limits, payment standards, utility allowances or size of your voucher may be different in the new area than they are here.
- Subsidy and Occupancy standards may be different.
- When you move, the new authority will re-verify your income.

Before you make the final decision to move, discuss the advantages and disadvantages and proper move procedures with your Housing Specialist and contact the new Housing Authority - this will ensure a much smoother transition for you!