

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER & YOU



August 2020

HOUSING AUTHORITY
of the City of Long Beach

BE COUNTED!

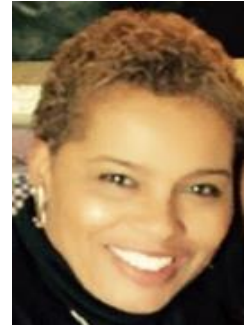


Be sure to count yourself and your family in the 2020 Census. This directly affects government funding in our communities for housing, schools, roads, hospitals, and more. For more information, visit 2020census.gov.

Stand up and be counted!

GREETINGS, PARTICIPANTS!

It is my sincere hope that you all are managing well during this COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter National Uprising. As we are continuing to make major adjustments in our lives to accommodate this new normal, please remember to take care of yourselves first. Please know that the Housing Authority stands with you, and that we remain committed to our mission:



to provide high quality housing assistance to Long Beach's low-income households through effective and efficient utilization of resources; promoting a positive image through excellent customer service and clear and open communication; and continually educating staff and others. Of course, the way we are doing that looks different, which will be explained later in the newsletter, but I can assure you that we are still operating business as usual.

Some of you may have noticed that you no longer have an assigned Housing Specialist. We have changed the structure of the agency to a team environment, meaning that all Housing Specialists work on teams that process certifications together. If you call and need immediate assistance, you will speak to staff specifically assigned to customer service issues. Thank you for your patience as we become accustomed to this new process. Please note that this process only applies to Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) participants and not to participants who are in project-based units or in special programs.

Lastly, you may have heard about the new state law AB1482, which bans no-cause evictions and rent increases over a mandated percentage. It is our position that HUD subsidies are not exempt from this law, which means that you – a Section 8 participant – are covered under AB1482. The Housing Authority will not accept any rent increases that exceed the mandated cap, nor will we accept any 60-90-day Notices to Vacate without cause. We are not able to assist with enforcement beyond notifying the owner of our rejection. If you believe you were subject to an improper rent increase or no-cause eviction, please contact Fair Housing at (562) 989-1206 or Legal Aide at (562) 435-3501.

Thank you so much for your cooperation. We look forward to serving you!

Best regards,



Heads up – we are moving, soon! We will keep you posted as our relocation progresses.



COVID-19 PROMPTS CHANGES AT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY

As we welcomed in 2020, we also welcomed in new unprecedented challenges to our daily routines. One of those challenges is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has prompted changes in the way we do business at the Housing Authority. We are currently closed to the public, until further notice.

Here are some service modifications about which you should know. We have centralized operations in a continued effort to provide excellent customer service. Under this new business model, participants and partners can access a central phone number and/or email account, where your message will be routed to the appropriate staff who can assist you. We estimate a 24-hour turnaround time for you to hear back from someone. Also, we encourage you to submit your documents digitally, either via email or fax.

We have also made some changes to our inspection process. The Housing Authority is conducting biennial inspections virtually, where possible. We will do initial inspections on new units if they are **vacant**, and we will continue to do special inspections if it is determined to be a threat to health and safety of the participant family. Based on the nature of the special inspection, it may be a physical inspection, a virtual inspection, or confirmation with a third party for pending outstanding items.

Below are the pertinent details regarding the new phone and email system.

*Note: all numbers use a 562 are code.

- **Phone:** 570-5242
Fax: 368-4534
Email: haclb@longbeach.gov

Move inquiries, rent increase questions, questions/concerns about your tenant, special inspection requests, and contract follow up.

- **Phone:** 570-5656
Fax: 368-4522
Email: haclb-portability@longbeach.gov

Follow up on portability requests, files, and clients.

- **Phone:** 570-5242
Fax: 368-4524
Email: LBHARentInquiries@longbeach.gov

To submit new rent increase requests, and to follow up on previously submitted rent increase requests.

- **Phone:** 570-5303
Fax: 368-4544
Email: Inspections@longbeach.gov

Follow up on request for inspection, inquiries regarding an inspection, and to submit any inspection-related documentation.

- **Phone:** 570-6897
Fax: 499-1039
Email: HACLB-OwnerServices@longbeach.gov

Ownership customer service, follow up on submitted RFTA's, inquire about missed HAP deposits, change any owner information, i.e., address, bank account, new ownership, etc.

Lastly, please note our new business hours.

Monday – Friday
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 pm.

We are available for phone calls and/or emails during this time. When necessary, in person appointments will be made as a reasonable accommodation. Also, if you are unable to submit paperwork digitally, you may drop off any documents in our mail slot during these hours **only**. Please be advised that there is no reception staff to assist you, as the front door will be locked. Assistance is available by phone, email, and appointment.

Again, it is our sincere hope that you and yours are staying safe during this crisis. We remain available to help, even if it is not face-to-face. As always, thank you for your continued patience.

FRAMEWORK FOR RECONCILIATION

In response to the recent national Black Lives Matter protests, the Long Beach City Council approved the “Framework for Reconciliation in Long Beach,” which includes the following four steps:

1. Acknowledge the existence and longstanding impacts of systemic racism in our America and in Long Beach.
2. Listen to community members’ accounts and experiences of inequity and harm caused by racial injustice.
3. Convene stakeholders to evaluate the feedback from the listening process and shape policy, budgetary, charter, and programmatic reform ideas.
4. Catalyze action by presenting immediate, short-term, medium-term, and long-term recommendations for the City Council to consider. *

*<http://www.longbeach.gov/health/healthy-living/office-of-equity/reconciliation/>

The HACLB is working closely with City leaders to support the balancing of racial equity in Long Beach. As a Bureau in the City’s Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), we are committed and actively involved in contributing resources to assist in the Framework for Reconciliation process.

Again, please see the City’s website for more information regarding the schedule of listening sessions, a historical timeline of racial inequities in Long Beach, opportunities for involvement, and more.

<http://www.longbeach.gov/health/healthy-living/office-of-equity/reconciliation/>

NEED HELP PAYING YOUR ENERGY BILL?

Need help paying your utility bill? Call the Long Beach Community Action Partnership at (562) 216-4600 to see if you qualify for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) through the Eastern Los Angeles Energy Assistance Team (ELEAT).



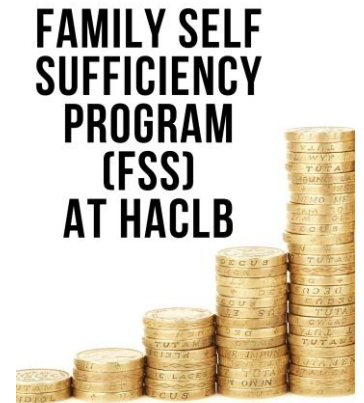
HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR THE FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM, YET?

Are you ready to make a positive change in your life?

Do you desire financial independence?

Would you like to pursue that dream job?

If your answer is “Yes” to any of the above questions, the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is just right for you. The FSS Program is a voluntary program designed to help you improve your financial situation. When enrolling in the program, we ask that you identify a few goals that you will like to accomplish over the next five years. Then we provide you with referrals and resources that you need to help you reach your goals.



In addition to helping you reach your goals, the FSS Program puts money into an escrow savings account for you. Once you reach the end of the 5-Year plan, and you accomplish your established goals, the money in your escrow account is awarded to you to use however you see fit. Those who have completed the program have chosen to do some of the following:

- Purchase a new home
- Start a business
- Pay off debt
- Attend college

In 2019, the FSS Program awarded a total of \$259,639 to program graduates. The average check amount awarded was \$12,363. Do not miss out on this amazing opportunity!

The only requirement to joining the FSS Program is that you are a current HCV participant with the Housing Authority of the City of Long Beach. Join the program today so that you can become a part of this successful program.



This could be you!