

**HPD Division of Tenant Resources (DTR)
Participant COVID-19 Accommodations
3/16/2020**

To HPD Rental Assistance Program Participant:

Given the current state of emergency due to COVID-19, HPD has taken the following measures to prioritize the health and safety of our Participants, Owners, and Staff while ensuring that our rental subsidies continue uninterrupted. As HPD continues to assess the situation, updates will be posted on our website here: www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr. HPD will send you notice when these provisions are no longer in effect.

A. HPD is now operating virtually

1. HPD's Client Services Office at 100 Gold Street has been closed since March 16, 2020.
 - a. **At this time, email is the best way to reach HPD staff.** A list of emails is available at www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms. HPD staff will respond as soon as possible.
 - b. HPD is conducting outreach to our participants to confirm contact information and may call you from an unfamiliar phone number. If you do not answer, they will leave a voice message with a number for you to call back.
 - c. This also means that HPD's Client Services phone number is currently not in operation. HPD is making every effort to bring the general number back online and will notify you and update the website when it is operational.

2. **You can now submit documents online.**
 - a. HPD's website now has a partner portal where you can submit your documents to HPD. You can access the portal and instructions at: www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms.

3. **In order to protect your privacy, email communication may be encrypted.**
 - a. 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 emails at www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms.

4. **HPD now accepts digital signatures.**
 - a. 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.

5. HPD is following New York City and State guidance on social distancing. At this time, **move requests may be impacted.**

- a. HPD continues to process any move requests already in progress.
- b. HPD continues to process requests to “port,” or move, outside of New York City; however, this process may be impacted by the receiving Public Housing Agency’s policies during this crisis.
- c. At this time, HPD is only accepting new move requests for emergency situations. This includes individuals who are victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking as well as individuals who believe they may experience a threat of imminent harm by remaining in the unit. To make a request for an emergency move, please email: Portability@hpd.nyc.gov. If you are in immediate danger, please call 911. You may also reach the City's 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline: **800-621-HOPE** (4673) for immediate safety planning, shelter assistance, and other resources.
 - i. For more information regarding the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Accommodations, please visit the “Rights and Responsibilities” page of the HPD website at www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr.

B. If you cannot afford your rent because of lost income, let HPD know as soon as possible.

- 1. If your household experienced a loss of income, notify HPD so we can adjust your tenant share of rent. Your tenant share will change only after HPD processes your request and issues your new rent breakdown letter, but the change will be retroactive to the date of your income loss.
- 2. You may report your income loss by completing a Decreased Income Form, which is included with this letter. Then, you can upload it to the partner portal at www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms, or email it to: DTRIncomeDecrease@hpd.nyc.gov or fax it to: (212) 863-5299. If you cannot complete the form, you may email the information to HPD. If you need to mail it, you may also mail it to 100 Gold Street, Room 1M, New York, NY 10038.
 - a. You will receive your updated Rent Breakdown Letter informing you of your updated tenant share (what you must pay the landlord each month).
 - b. Until you receive your new tenant share, the property owner may hold you responsible for your old tenant share of rent.
- 3. If you currently have a rent burden that is greater than 30% of your income because your rent is greater than the payment standard for your zip code, HPD will complete an interim certification to reduce your level of rent burden.
- 4. Note: Many HPD households have received a one-time, \$1,200 stimulus payment from the federal government, and/or a weekly \$600 enhancement to their unemployment benefit. **HPD will NOT consider these payments as part of your income**, for the purpose of determining your eligibility or your tenant share of rent. You must continue to report this and all income at your next annual recertification.

C. HPD is temporarily delaying the following enforcement actions:

- 1. Until further notice, participants with an Annual Recertification due date that occurs during the State of Emergency will NOT be penalized for failure to submit required documents to HPD by that due date.**
 - a. If you are able to safely return your completed documents to HPD via email, mail, or fax, please do so by:
 - i. Scanning or taking photos of documents and submitting them to HPD:
 1. Submitting them through HPD's partner portal www.nyc.gov/hpd/dtr-forms
 2. For the HCV annual recertification package: DTRPRODUNIT@hpd.nyc.gov or fax to (212) 863-5776
 3. For other HCV documents and general questions: DTRAI@hpd.nyc.gov or fax to (212) 863-5299
 4. Documents and questions for PBV, CoC-SPC, Mod SRO, Mod Rehab, NYC15/15, SRO, VASH, Mainstream, and FUP Programs (your rental subsidy program is listed in the top right corner of the first page of your recertification package): PBV@hpd.nyc.gov or fax to (212) 863-8828
 - ii. If you cannot email or fax documents, and are safely able to mail them, you may mail them to:

HPD Division of Tenant Resources
100 Gold Street, Room 1-M
New York, NY 10038
- 2. Pre-termination conferences will be handled by phone or delayed until our offices reopen.**
 - a. Until further notice, scheduled pre-termination and pre-denial conferences will be conducted over the phone with an HPD staff member. If a phone conference is not possible, HPD will schedule in-person conferences when HPD is back in operation.
- 3. HPD has provided extensions for non-emergency Housing Quality Standards (HQS) enforcement.**
 - a. If you live in a unit with an owner-caused HQS failure, your property owner has been granted an extension to make repairs until HPD's normal operations resume. They will then have an additional 30 days to make corrections before HPD suspends/abates payment.
 - b. If you live in a unit that has been under HAP abatement for 180 days or more, HPD will not require you to start the move process, or have the issue resolved, before January 1, 2021.
 - c. If there is a life-threatening condition in your unit, call 311.
- 4. As of March 16, 2020, HPD will not terminate assistance to participants, except in case of death, until further notice.** HPD will send out another notice with more information as operations begin to resume, as well as updating our website.
 - a. HPD may terminate under these three (3) circumstances: relinquishing, abandoning, or being evicted from the unit.
 - b. HPD is delaying subsidy terminations under the following situations:**
 - i. Failure to comply with program requirements. Tenants can disregard previously issued pre-termination notices and check HPD's website for updates. You will receive notification from HPD when these termination proceedings will resume.
 - ii. As of April 10, 2020, households that are overcrowded, in situations of no rent hardship, or who are absent from the unit will not have their assistance terminated:

these terminations and the required move process associated with them will be revisited at their 2021 annual recertifications.

- iii. Households that have been identified as absent for more than 180 days from the assisted unit as of March 16, 2020. Family members must return to the unit by December 31, 2020.
- iv. The HPD Appeals Unit is currently closed. As a result, your informal hearing or informal review date may be rescheduled. The HPD Appeals Unit will notify you by mail regarding a new informal hearing or informal review date. Your written informal hearing or informal review decision may be delayed. The HPD Appeals Unit will mail your written decision to you once the Unit has reopened. If you want to appeal an HPD enforcement action, you may submit your request for an informal hearing or informal review to the HPD Appeals Unit at: Appeals@hpd.nyc.gov

D. Evictions for non-payment of rent:

You are protected by federal and New York State law from eviction at this time if you cannot pay your rent as a result of COVID-19. If your income has changed, please follow the guidance in Section B above on how to have your tenant share of rent adjusted. Late payments or fees for missed rent payments are stopped from March 20 to August 20, 2020. You can enter into a written agreement with your landlord to address any rental arrears and how you can use your security deposit. **If you have been forcibly removed or unlawfully locked out of your apartment without a court order, please call 911 if you need immediate assistance, and 311 for other legal assistance.**

E. Employment and Training Support Opportunity

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 helps 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.