HOUSING AUTHORITY of MARICOPA COUNTY

HAMC

Please be advised the Housing Authority of Maricopa County has made notable changes to its Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Administrative Plan (June 2019) that may affect you. A summary of a few important changes is below. To view the full Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan, please visit our website <u>https://maricopahousing.org/participants/</u>

<u>Section 5.3 Disallowance of Earned Income from Rent for Persons with Disabilities –</u> *Earned Income Disallowance policy updated to reflect 12 consecutive and 24 cumulative months versus 12 cumulative and 48 cumulative months, and maximum two-year disallowance.*

The annual income for qualified disabled families may not be increased as a result of increases in earned income of a family member who is a person with disabilities beginning on the date on which the increase in earned income begins and continuing for a consecutive 12-month period. After the disabled family receives 12 consecutive months of the full exclusion, annual income will include a phase-in of half the earned income excluded from annual income.

Exclusions of Income shall be calculated as follows:

- Initial Twelve-Month Exclusion - During the consecutive 12-month period beginning on the date a member who is a person with disabilities of a qualified family is first employed or the family first experiences an increase in annual income attributable to employment, HAMC will exclude from annual income of a qualified family any increase in income of the family member who is a person with disabilities as a result of employment over the prior income of that family member.
- Second Twelve-Month Exclusion and Phase-in - During the second consecutive 12-month period after the expiration of the initial consecutive 12-month period referred to above, the HAMC must exclude from annual income of a qualified family 50 percent of any increase in income of a family member who is a person with disabilities as a result of employment over income of that family member prior to the beginning of such employment.
- **Maximum Two-Year Disallowance -** Once a family member is determined to be eligible for the EID, the 24–calendar month period starts. If the family member discontinues the employment that initially qualified the family for the EID, the 24–calendar month period continues. During the 24–calendar month period, EID benefits are recalculated based on changes to family member income and employment. During the first 12–calendar month period, a PHA must exclude all increased income resulting from the qualifying employment of the family member. After the first 12–calendar month period, the PHA must exclude from annual income of the family at least 50 percent of any increase in income of such family member as a result of employment over the family member's income before the qualifying event (i.e., the family member's baseline income). The EID benefit is limited to a lifetime 24-month period for the qualifying family member. At the end of the 24 months, the EID ends regardless of how many months were "used."

<u>Section 5.8 Calculating Annual Income</u> – *Changes to calculation of annual income for seasonal occupations where it is normal for employees to work less than twelve (12) months per year such as school employees, agricultural workers, or the construction trades.*

Seasonal occupations where it is normal for employees to work less than twelve (12) months per year such as school employees, agricultural workers, or the construction trades, HAMC will use one of the following methods:

- Method 1 – annualize current income and conduct an interim reexamination with the income changes.
- Method 2 – Calculate the actual anticipated income from all known sources for the entire year. This means there will be no interim reexamination when the income changes as already anticipated. However, to use Method 2, a history of the individual's income from past years is needed. This method cannot be used when the future income source is "unknown" or "none."

<u>Section 6.8 Items to be Verified</u> – *To verify income, members will be required to provide 30 days worth of pay stubs unless the pay cycle is monthly. If pay cycle is monthly, the HAMC will require 2 consecutive pay stubs.*

<u>Section 6.9 Family Assets <$5000</u> -- *Verification will be required of all assets at the time of eligibility determination and at least every 3 years thereafter. A self-declaration signed by the head of household on the formal eligibility application or the annual recertification application will be acceptable verification for assets <$5,000 at all other recertification exams.*

<u>Section 11.4 Interim Recertifications / Changes in Income</u> -- *Amended policy to increases of income over $200 per month or is reporting zero income. Also, if increase in income due to the change reported timely to be effective after 30 days notice.*

If the household has an increase in income from any source which is more than $200.00 per month or is reporting zero income, it must be reported within 30 days of the change, and an interim recertification will be conducted. Participants may choose to report other changes in income which are under $200.00 per month. If HAMC considered fluctuations of income at the time of the annual recertification based on the 12 months prior to the annual recertification, an interim recertification will not be completed.
For decreases, changes in rent for interim re-certification will become effective the first of the month following the month in which the change was reported. “Reported” is defined as when HAMC receives all of the necessary documentation to make the change. For increases, if reported timely (within 30 days) the increase will be effective after 30 days notice. If the household is required to report an increase of income and the income is not reported timely, the increase will be effective on the first of the month following the change and the tenant may be required to enter into a repayment agreement and could be terminated for failing to report required changes.

<u>Section 12.2 Permissible Moves</u> – Changes made include: *Added language related to VAWA. Amended policy that requires families to lease in their unit for at least one year before a voluntary move will be permitted. Additionally, a move will be allowed if their scheduled annual recertification date is within 120 days. Families claiming no income will not be permitted to move until HAMC has assessed the nature of the family’s accessible resources to move.*

Families will not be permitted to move during the initial year of occupancy. Assisted families must lease the unit for at least one year before a voluntary move will be permitted. Families claiming no income will not be permitted to move until HAMC has assessed the nature of the family’s accessible resources to move (refer to Section 5.9). Every effort will be made by HAMC to coordinate program moves with all regularly scheduled annual activities. A family may be required to complete a recertification at the time of the move or earlier if the scheduled recertification is due within 120 days.
Program move documents for mandatory moves may be issued at times other than annual recertification for the following reasons:

- The Housing Assistance Payment Contract is terminated by HAMC for the owner’s failure to comply with HQS or other terms of the contract;
- The owner has given the family a notice to vacate, or has commenced an action to evict the family through no fault of the family;
- A household member is newly diagnosed with a disability, which requires a reasonable accommodation.
- A family is requesting protections under VAWA.

Prior to issuance of program move documents, the family must complete an annual recertification process and a zero income survival statement if claiming no income; must present a 30-day notice of intent to move form signed by the owner indicating that the family is current with all rent payments, has caused no damages beyond normal wear and tear, and is otherwise in compliance with all terms and conditions of the lease agreement. Upon receipt of this form, program move documents and a program move briefing will be provided to the family.

HAMC will approve a program move only with an effective lease date of the first day of the month after the date in which the unit has passed the inspection. Exceptions will be considered only for families exercising portability to another jurisdiction.

Section 12.3 Portability – Changes made include: ***If the household claims no income, a zero-income survival statement is required. Families claiming no income will not be permitted to move until HAMC has assessed the nature of the family's accessible resources to move. Added language that If a family requests portability, the HAMC will provide the family with the contact information for the receiving PHAs and the family chooses the receiving PHA. The family may request the HAMC to choose the receiving PHA if that is the family's preference.***

Applicants must reside within the jurisdiction of HAMC for a period of one year from the time of application to be allowed to exercise portability. Portability applies to families moving out of or into HAMC's jurisdiction within the United States and its territories from another geographic location.

To "port" to a jurisdiction outside of HAMC, the family must be income eligible under the income limits of the jurisdiction to which they intend to port during the initial 12-month period after admission to the program. If the household claims no income, a zero-income survival statement is required.

If a family desires to "port" to a jurisdiction with substantially higher (20% greater) payment standards, HAMC will determine if sufficient budget authority is available to support the family's request for portability to that location. If there is not sufficient budget authority, HAMC will work with the receiving PHA to determine their ability to absorb the family. HAMC will approve all port requests when the receiving PHA is able to absorb the family. The HAMC will provide written notification to the local HUD field office within 10 business days of the date on which the HAMC determines it is necessary to deny family moves due to insufficient funding.

If a family requests portability, the HAMC will provide the family with the contact information for the receiving PHAs and the family chooses the receiving PHA. The family may request the HAMC to choose the receiving PHA if that is the family's preference. HAMC will contact the "receiving" PHA in that jurisdiction and advise them of the family's intent. A voucher and corresponding portability documents will be issued to the family.

An HAMC voucher will be issued to the incoming family for the period of time remaining on the voucher issued by the initial PHA plus an additional 30 days. All incoming voucher holders must attend a new program briefing. The HAMC will suspend the term of the voucher once the family submits a Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA). The suspension will end when HAMC notifies the family in writing whether the RTA has been approved or denied.

HAMC will not permit families to exercise portability if the family is in violation of any family obligations under their Housing Choice Voucher; if the family owes any money to HAMC; or, if the family has vacated the assisted unit in violation of the lease agreement. Families claiming no income will not be permitted to port until HAMC has assessed the nature of the family's accessible resources to move (refer to Section 5.9).