

Section 8 FAQs-COVID-19

UPDATED August 11, 2020

If you are a participant or a property owner/manager in one of the rental assistance programs administered by the City of Pasadena Housing Department (for example Section 8, Project-based, Shelter plus Care, CoC Rental Assistance, or HOPWA), you may have questions related to our operations as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. These FAQs will provide guidance about how you can report changes in income, submit paperwork, request to move, receive your monthly housing assistance payments, or otherwise get assistance from the Housing Department. As we continue to refine our policies based on the situation and guidance from our federal funder, this document will be updated. The most recent version may be found online at <https://www.cityofpasadena.net/housing/> under the blue bar labelled "Section 8".

CONTACTING STAFF:

QC1. I need to deliver paperwork to the Housing Department/ask a question/receive assistance. How do I get assistance?

AC1. Our public lobby has reopened with shortened hours. It is open on Monday & Tuesday from 8:30am-1pm and Wednesday & Thursday from 12:30-5pm. However, we still encourage you to submit paperwork by mail, email, or fax when possible so that social distancing can continue. We understand that it may take longer for you to get us the paperwork we need for your annual income review. We will allow for this extra time, and your rental assistance will NOT be put at risk if documents arrive late.

Our mailing address is:

City of Pasadena Housing Department
PO BOX 7115
Pasadena, CA 91109

Much of our staff is still working remotely. If you have a question, you can contact us by email at the following addresses:

Housing Assistants:

Candy Rodarte	Crodarte@cityofpasadena.net
Elizabeth Sainz	Esainz@cityofpasadena.net
Eric Negrete	ENegrete@cityofpasadena.net
Kim Liu	Kliu@cityofpasadena.net
Maynor Varela	Mvarela@cityofpasadena.net

Senior Housing Assistant:

Traci Dudley	Tdudley@cityofpasadena.net
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Housing Specialists:

Angelica Ramirez	Aramirez@cityofpasadena.net
Arpie Akmakjian	Aakmakjian@cityofpasadena.net

Housing Assistance Officer:

Anne Lansing Alansing@cityofpasadena.net

QC2. I am a landlord who has questions about a payment, contract rent increase, change in ownership, or payee. Who do I contact? (NEW 7/27/20)

AC2. Angelica Ramirez is the Housing Specialist supervising the inspections and landlord relations section. You may reach her at aramirez@cityofpasadena.net.

QC3. I am a landlord or tenant and have a question about the tenant rent, an annual income reexamination, changes in income or family composition, or moving. Who do I contact? (NEW 7/27/20)

AC3. You should contact your assigned Housing Assistant from the list above. If you are not sure who your assigned assistant is, you may contact Arpie Akmakjian, Housing Specialist and occupancy section supervisor, at aakmakjian@cityofpasadena.net.

INSPECTIONS/UNIT DEFICIENCIES**QI1. I received a letter scheduling my annual inspection, but the inspector hasn't come (or, I'm expecting my annual inspection in the next few weeks. Will it happen?)**

AI1. Annual housing quality standards inspections have been temporarily cancelled. If your inspection was to happen in March or April, we will be contacting you by phone or by mail to cancel the inspection and to confirm that there are no life threatening or emergency repair deficiencies in your unit. Life threatening deficiencies are defined as follows:

- 1) Gas (natural or liquid petroleum) leak or fumes
- 2) Electrical hazards that could result in shock or fire
- 3) Inoperable or missing smoke detector
- 4) Inoperable or missing carbon monoxide detector
- 5) Gas/oil fired water heater or heating, ventilation, or cooling system with missing, damaged, improper, or misaligned chimney or venting
- 6) Lack of alternative means of exit in case of fire or blocked egress
- 7) Other interior hazards (missing or damaged fire extinguisher, where required)
- 8) Deteriorated paint surfaces in a unit built before 1978 and to be occupied by a family with a child under 6 years of age.

In addition to the above, emergency repair deficiencies are:

- 1) Lack of security for unit (ie can't lock door, close window)
- 2) Waterlogged ceiling in imminent danger of falling
- 3) Major plumbing leaks or flooding
- 4) Sewer backup
- 5) Lack of functioning toilet
- 6) No running hot water
- 7) Utilities not in service

- 8) Unit unable to maintain an interior temperature of at least 65 degrees between October-May
- 9) Broken glass (for example window) that is an injury hazard.

Q12. I am a participant in a rental assistance program administered by the City of Pasadena and I think my unit has a life-threatening deficiency or an emergency repair deficiency (see above list). What do I do?

A12. If your unit is in need of a repair, you should first contact your landlord or property manager to ask for it to be repaired. If the landlord does not respond in a timely manner, you may request that the Housing Department perform an emergency repair inspection. Prior to conducting the inspection, we will verify that no one in the household is ill or suspects they have been exposed to or have tested positive for COVID-19.

For a suspected gas odor or carbon monoxide emergency, immediately call Southern California Gas at 1-800-427-2200.

Q13. I want to lease my unit to a rental assistance program participant (or, I'm a program participant and am planning to lease a new unit). Will an initial inspection be conducted to verify that the unit meets Housing Quality Standards (HQS)? (Updated 8/11/2020)

A13. Initial unit inspections are being conducted again beginning August 10, 2020. Once you submit a Request for Tenancy Approval for your unit, we will be in touch regarding next steps.

Q14. I leased my unit to a rental assistance participant between March 15, 2020 and July 31, 2020, and completed a Certification that Rental Unit meets Housing Quality Standards and Health & Safety Requirements. Now that inspections are being conducted again, will this unit be inspected? (Updated 8/11/2020)

A14. As stated in the prior COVID-19 FAQs, we will be circling back to inspect these units, as required by HUD, before October 31, 2020, barring a further extension by HUD. We will notify both landlord & tenant of inspection date.

REPORTING INCOME CHANGES/ANNUAL REVIEWS

QR1. It is time for my annual review appointment. How do I submit my income verifications and other paperwork? (Updated 8/11/2020)

AR1. Currently, all annual review appointments will be conducted by mail. We will mail the annual paperwork to you for you to complete and return with copies of the necessary documents. Paperwork can be returned to us by mail, or it can be returned in person during our open lobby hours, Monday & Tuesday 8:30am-1pm and Wednesday and Thursday 12:30pm-5pm, or placed in our office mail box to the left of

the door in our main lobby. The office mail box will be checked daily. However, **we encourage you to mail paperwork to us instead of delivering it in person so that you may keep the recommended social distancing.** We understand that it may take longer for you to get us the paperwork we need for your annual income review. We will allow for this extra time, and your rental assistance will NOT be put at risk if documents arrive late.

QR2. I am a participant in a rental assistance program administered by the Housing Department, and I lost my job, am working fewer hours, or am temporarily out of work. How can I get my rent adjusted?

AR2. You may email, fax, or mail verification of reduction in work hours to us. We will review and verify the documents to determine eligibility for a rent reduction. We will work as quickly as possible to process requests for tenant rent adjustments. Our fax number is (626)744-8330. Email and mailing address can be found above in this document.

QR3. I have a change in income (SSA/SSI approved, new job, approved for unemployment, etc.). How do I report this change?

AR3. Paperwork can be emailed, faxed, or mailed, or it can be placed in our office mail box to the left of the door in our main lobby. The office mail box will be checked daily. However, we encourage you to mail paperwork to us instead of delivering it in person so that you may keep the recommended social distancing. Our fax number is (626)744-8330. Email and mailing address can be found above in this document.

QR4. I am a participant in the rental assistance program, and I received a stimulus check as a result of the coronavirus emergency. Will that check be counted as income? (NEW 5/12/20)

AR4: The federal CARES act stimulus is not counted as income, and will not affect your tenant rent.

MOVES/PORTABILITY

QM1. I am a current participant in a rental assistance program administered by the Housing Department, and I want to move. What do I do during this public health emergency?

AM1. We are discouraging voluntary moves at this time. If you do not need to move right now, please consider waiting until a later date. However, we will process requests to move using social distancing methods, with minimal face-to-face meetings and questions answered and documents provided via mail or email.

QM2. I am a participant in a rental assistance program administered by the Housing Department and I want to port to another area, or I have a rental assistance voucher from another public housing agency and want to port to Pasadena. What do I do during this public health emergency?

AM2. We are discouraging voluntary moves at this time. If you do not need to move right now, please consider waiting until a later date. However, we will process portability requests using social distancing methods, with minimal face-to-face meetings and questions answered and documents provided via mail or email.

ADDITIONS TO HOUSEHOLDS

QA1. I am a current participant in a rental assistance program administered by the Housing Department, and I would like to request an addition to my household. How can I add a family member? (Updated 8/11/2020)

AA1. You may come to our office during open lobby hours. However, we encourage you to email, fax or mail your request. The Housing Department will contact you via email or regular mail with the requirements. We will work as quickly as possible to process your request and may approve the added family member as a temporary guest during the interim. In order to process your request or approve the temporary guest, the Housing Department will require written approval from the owner or manager of your rental unit.

EVICTION MORATORIUM

QE1. I am a current participant in a rental assistance program administered by the Housing Department, and I heard about an eviction moratorium. Am I obligated to continue to pay my tenant rent? (UPDATED 8/11/20)

AE1. Effective March 17, 2020, Pasadena City Council approved a moratorium on eviction for non-payment of rent by tenants experiencing financial impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. More information about this can be found here:

<https://www.cityofpasadena.net/housing/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/Eviction-Moratorium-and-FAQ-revised-May-2020.pdf>

The federal CARES Act implemented a temporary suspension of evictions due to non-payment of rent and suspension of late charges and fees, applicable to Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) participants. This temporary federal suspension expired July 24, 2020. However, the City of Pasadena moratorium is still in place. More information about this can be found here:

https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/CPD/documents/CPD_Eviction_Prevention_for_At_Risk_Tenants_intro_2020-08-10.pdf

It is important to know that **unpaid rent is not forgiven**. It will still need to be paid to the landlord at the end of the moratorium period. However, rental assistance participants experiencing an inability to pay rent due to financial impacts of COVID-19 may be eligible for a reduction in their portion of the rent by reporting this change. Requesting this adjustment may allow to continue paying your portion of rent on time and prevent you from having a debt to repay to the landlord. Program participants should submit documentation to support their claim for a rent adjustment to the Housing Department via, mail, email or fax.

QE2. I am a property owner participating in the rental assistance program, and my assisted tenant cannot pay their portion of the rent due to an income reduction because of the COVID-19 crisis. May I evict them? (UPDATED 8/11/20)

AE2. Please refer to the eviction moratorium resolution related to non-payment of rent as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak which is in place during this locally-declared state of emergency:

http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/councilagendas/2020%20Agendas/Mar_17_20/AR%20%20RESOLUTION.pdf.

Also, the federal CARES Act implemented a temporary suspension of evictions due to non-payment of rent and suspension of late charges and fees, applicable to Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) participants. This federal moratorium expired July 24, 2020. However, the City moratorium remains in effect. More information about preventing evictions can be found here: <https://www.cityofpasadena.net/housing/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/Information-for-Section-8-HCV-Landlords.pdf>

However, rental assistance participants may also request that their portion of rent be adjusted as a result of reduction in income. The eviction moratorium does not affect the housing assistance payment that is paid to the landlord by the Housing Department. That payment will continue to be made, and may increase if the tenants' income decreases.

PAYMENTS & RENT INCREASES

QP1. I am a current owner participating in the rental assistance program. Will there be a delay in my monthly housing assistance payments?

AP1. At this time, both the regular and mid-month check runs will be processed as usual. However, as a result of City of Pasadena staff working remotely to support social distancing, the check may be mailed, or the direct deposit received, a few days later than normal.

QP2. The annual inspection of the assisted unit(s) at my property was cancelled, and I did not get the form I usually receive to request a rent increase. How should I request an increase?

AP2. While the Housing Department has in past provided rent increase forms on the back of the notice of annual inspection, property owners/managers are not required to use this form to request a rent increase. As long as the tenant is provided proper notice, and that notice meets State of California and S8 requirements, you may use your own form or an on-line template. The notice must be received by the Housing Department 60 days prior to the effective date of the requested increase.