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GENERAL NEWS

PIH Issues Updated Notice on COVID-19 Waivers

On November 30, HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing ([PIH](#)) issued Notice [PIH 2020-33](#) to restate the COVID-19-related waivers and alternative requirements included in Notice [PIH 2020-13](#), carry forward information on previously specified HUD actions, add new waivers and alternative requirements, and incorporate the waivers and alternative requirements for [Mainstream vouchers](#) and the [Mod Rehab](#) program. In addition, the notice extends the period of availability of certain waivers, such as those related to income verification and annual examinations, until June 30, 2021.

The notice establishes the following new waivers and alternative requirements related to the [public housing](#) program:

- PH-13 waives the termination requirement for an over-income family and, alternatively, requires the PHA to charge the family the applicable fair market rent as the family's monthly rental amount.
- PH-14 waives the requirement that a family may not be offered a choice between a flat rent and an income-based rent more than once a year.
- The one and two-year substantial improvement requirement tolls the timing for determining substantial improvement for PHAs designated as troubled prior to the date of this notice and that have not received a Public Housing Assessment System ([PHAS](#)) for the first full fiscal year after the initial notice of the troubled designation.

The notice also adds the following alternative requirements to previously established Housing Quality Standard (HQS) and Housing Choice Voucher ([HCV](#)) program waivers:

- HQS-5 allows for delay in biennial inspections for both [tenant-based](#) and and project-base ([PBV](#)) units. PHAs must require owner certification that there are no life-threatening deficiencies.
- HCV-5 allows for PHA discretion on absences from units longer than 180 days. The PHA must maintain documentation in the tenant file which explains the extenuating circumstances that caused the extended absence (e.g., hospitalization, extended stays at nursing homes, caring for family members).

In addition, the notice provides for two additional alternative requirements related to the Section 8 Management Assessment Program ([SEMAP](#)):

- SEMAP allows field offices to perform remote SEMAP confirmatory review instead of an on-site confirmatory review before changing a PHA's rating from troubled to standard or high performer.
- SEMAP waives the requirement for PHAs to submit an annual SEMAP certification in the Inventory Management System/PIH Information Center ([IMS/PIC](#)) within 60 days of fiscal year end (FYE) during the timeframe HUD is rolling over prior year scores.

As stated in the notice, for the public housing and HCV programs, use of the waivers or alternative requirements is at the PHA's discretion, although HUD strongly encourages PHAs to utilize any and all waivers and alternative requirements as necessary in order to keep the programs operational to the extent possible. HUD requires that PHAs post publicly or otherwise make available to the public a list of all waivers and alternative requirements it chooses to apply, in addition to notifying affected residents and owners of the impact of such.

A summary of the public housing and HCV waivers and alternative requirements is included in [Attachment I](#) of the notice, starting on page 65 of the document. Further details on the specific waivers and alternative requirements can be found in the [notice](#).



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