

# The HCV Insider

Your Inside Source to the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Landlord Edition

[www.miamidade.gov/housing](http://www.miamidade.gov/housing)



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

There is no doubt in my mind that challenging times are ahead for public housing agency's (PHAs) nationwide. The proposed budget crafted by the 112th Congress includes funding levels that will certainly reshape the way we do business.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) estimates that a reduction of more than 8 percent for the Housing Choice Voucher program for FY 2012 could result in over 87,000 vouchers lost nationally over the next year. The local impact of this reduction here in Miami-Dade County will be devastating. The funding assault on the HCV Program is unprecedented, and will force PHAs to consider radical steps in the management of their housing programs. Unfortunately, this is our new funding reality – and it is not encouraging at all.

Not only must PHAs ask the critical questions, but we must think strategically as well. All decisions -- short and long-term -- must be carefully planned, budgeted, and efficiently executed.

The agency expects to face funding challenges for years ahead. We will continue to realign budgets, implement efficiencies, maximize federal dollars, and utilize technology to improve customer service -- including more community outreach with owners in an effort to provide the best service to our clients.

As you know, thousands of the most vulnerable citizens in Miami-Dade County depend directly upon us to help them with their housing needs. Together, we must find the answers that will allow us to continue serving the neediest families in our communities.

Sincerely,

Gregg Fortner

Director

Miami Dade Public Housing Agency

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## INSPECTIONS... WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW!

### Scheduling of HQS Inspections

HUD regulations require that all Housing Choice Voucher units be inspected annually—that is, within 365 days of initial or previous annual inspection. Miami-Dade Housing Choice Voucher Program (MDHCVP) staff will schedule annual inspections by notifying the owner and tenant in writing approximately 14 days prior to the inspection.

### Failed Inspections for “No Access”

Landlords and/or tenants are responsible for providing the MDHCVP inspectors with access to the unit and premises for all inspections, failure to gain access can lead to abatement of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and termination of tenant program participation. After 2 failed inspections for no access, HAP payments will be abated and the tenant will be processed for program termination.

### Failed Inspections

When a unit fails an annual inspection, the owner and tenant will receive written notice of all HQS violations detailing who is responsible for correcting the violation(s). There are two types of HQS fail items: emergency and routine.

- Emergency fail items require correction and reinspection within twenty-four (24) hours.
- Routine fail items must be corrected within fifteen (15) business days.

Reinspections to determine compliance with all violations are automatically scheduled by MDHCVP. The date of the reinspection will be listed in the violation notices to tenants and owners.

### Abatements (See also Change in Abatement Policy on page 3)

If the unit fails reinspection, or MDHCVP is unable to gain entry to the unit and premises to conduct a reinspection, the HAP payments will be abated effective the day after the failed reinspection if the landlord is responsible for the violations. When the tenant is the responsible party, the tenant may be terminated from the program.

### Compliance Inspections

To avoid program termination, abatement of HAP or to resume HAP payments when a unit has been abated, an owner or tenant must request a compliance inspection by calling our call center (305) 403-3222. If a compliance inspection has already occurred, a *Final Compliance Inspection Request Form* must be filled out by both parties and submitted to the MDHCVP Inspections Department. Compliance inspections occur within 15 business days of request approval.

### How The Call Center Can Help You With Inspections--(305-403-3222

- Find out estimated time of arrival for an inspector
- Request an Inspection
- Obtain or clarify inspection results
- Resend results to you if they were lost
- Notify MDHCVP if a unit does not have utilities

All call center conversations are recorded and tracking tickets are created when agents are unable to provide the requested information. These tickets are forwarded to our Inspections Department where the caller is contacted within 24-48 hours. Call Center agents speak English, Spanish and Creole.

### Top five fail items

#### Annual Inspections

1. Building exterior items - damaged soffit or crawl space vents; deteriorated paint; may include damaged may electrical meter enclosures
2. Windows/security - windows not operating or broken; exterior doors that do not lock; missing or defective strike plates
3. Electrical Hazards - damaged outlets; outlets not working; GFCIs do not trip; exposed wires in or around the unit
4. Bathroom Fixtures - leaking faucets; faucets with sharp edges; loose toilets
5. Kitchen Appliances - missing or malfunctioning burners

#### Initial Inspections

1. Electrical - damaged outlet; outlets not working; GFCIs do not trip; exposed wires in or around the unit
2. Building exterior items - damaged soffit or crawl space vents; deteriorated paint; may include damaged electrical meter enclosures
3. Heat/AC and/or Water Heaters - no heat; missing down tube for water heater
4. Windows/ security - windows not operating or broken; exterior doors that do not lock; missing or defective strike plates
5. Kitchen Appliances - missing or malfunctioning burners; missing appliances



Did you know that you can call the Call Center the day before and/or the day of an inspection to verify the expected arrival time for an inspection? Inspectors keep the Call Center informed of their daily progress.

**INSPECTIONS... NEWS ALERT!****Change In Abatement Policy**

Effective September 1, 2011, MDHVCVP will abate HAP payments the day after a final failed inspection for owner responsible HQS violations. HAP remains abated until the unit passes a Compliance Reinspection. (You may contact the Call Center to schedule a Compliance Reinspection after you have made the repairs.) Since HAP is prepaid at the beginning of the month, the HCV program will recapture the funds (which were paid for the period between the abatement and the passed reinspection) from future HAP payments.

When abatements are not cured by successful compliance inspections and tenants have not been cited for HQS violations, the tenants will be offered the opportunity to move. HAP contracts become null and void if abatements are not cured within 180 days.

**On-site Confirmation of Initial Inspection Results**

Effective September 12, 2011 inspectors will provide owners or their representatives with written notice of any HQS violations cited at Initial (Pre-Contract) inspections. This service is being provided to improve the communication between MDHVCVP and owners during the pre-contract HQS inspection process. The notices will provide owners with a list of all violations and the reinspection date. Owners may request a shortened reinspection timeframe through the Call Center. These requests will be evaluated and accommodated whenever possible.

Since these confirmation notices serve as owner communication for HQS violations and reinspection dates, the process of mailing Initial inspection result letters will be eliminated. Owners are encouraged to use the Partner Portal to verify inspection results and reinspection dates.

**PARTNER PORTAL... SECTION 8 AT YOUR FINGER TIPS!**

Partner Portal is an "online" tool that allows Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) landlords/owners to view their information and that of their tenants.

Partner Portal can help you...

- View your Profile
- View your Tenant's Information and upcoming recertifications
- View the status of inspections and reinspections
- View HAP payments by resident
- Avoid unnecessary appointments and calls.
- Avoid abatements
- Print out Forms
- Stay informed with any new announcements regarding the Miami-Dade Housing Choice Voucher program.

Landlords are encouraged to use the Partner Portal to review inspection results. Inspection results along with any cited HQS violations are available within 24 hours of a completed inspection. Therefore, landlords are no longer reliant on delivery of mail to learn what HQS repairs need to be performed. This provides landlords additional time to make repairs and reduces the likelihood of abatement.

**Why wait any longer? Register today!**

Getting started is as easy as logging in to the internet and creating a user account through a simple set-up process. Once completed, you will have immediate access to all your account information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Landlords interested in registering for Partner Portal may do so by visiting the Miami Dade Public Housing Agency link at <https://services.miamidade.gov/partnerportal>.

## FAIR MARKET RENT AND PAYMENT STANDARDS

HUD's Fair Market Rent (FMR) limits, indicate the amount of rent a property can be expected to command when compared to other similar properties in the area. Payment Standards are used to calculate the maximum amount of housing assistance a family will receive for their size unit. Local housing administrators have the option of setting their Payment Standards from 90 to 110 percent of the Fair Market Rents. A change in the Payment Standard percentage does not change your contract rent, but it will change the amount of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) you receive. The difference between the HAP amount and the contract rent will be charged to the tenant. Beginning October 1, 2011 the MDHCV will be reducing the Payment Standard from 97.6% of the FMR to 90% of the FY 2012 FMR depending on the transaction:

- The HAP amount for new moves (lease-ups) will be determined using the new Payment Standards effective October 1, 2011. If the unit rent is higher than the payment standard, the family will be required to pay the additional amount

so long as it does not exceed 40% of its adjusted monthly income.

- Rent increases received after October 1 will be processed using the new Payment Standards. Note that if your rent increase is approved, your HAP may not increase but the amount of rent paid by the tenant will.
- The HAP amount for existing tenants will be recalculated on their anniversary date as recertifications are processed, beginning with tenants who have an anniversary date of November 1, 2011. For example, if your tenant's anniversary is March 1, 2012 the HAP for that unit will be recalculated during the tenant's March recertification.

### CURRENT FY 2011 Fair Market Rents and Voucher Payment Standards (Effective 10/01/10)

	SRO	0BR	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	5BR
Fair Market Rent (FMR)	659	878	994	1206	1542	1803	2073
Voucher Payment Standards	659	842	953	1156	1479	1728	1987

### FY 2012 Fair Market Rents and Voucher Payment Standards (Proposed) (To Be Effective 10/01/11)

	SRO	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	5 BR
Fair Market Rent (FMR)	614	819	927	1125	1439	1682	1934
Voucher Payment Standards	553	738	835	1013	1296	1514	1741



### HOW WILL THIS AFFECT YOU?

Scenario: 2 Bedroom Unit, Contract Rent \$1,100, Utilities \$105, GROSS RENT=\$1205	HAP and tenant portion under OLD Payment Standard	HAP and tenant portion under Proposed Payment Standard
<b>Payment Standard</b>	<b>\$1,156</b>	<b>\$1,013</b>
<b>HAP to Owner</b>	\$762	\$619
<b>Tenant Rent Portion</b>	\$338	\$481
<b>TOTAL (Contract Rent)</b>	\$1,100	\$1,100
<b>Impact on Owner</b>		-\$143 in HAP
<b>Impact on Tenant</b>		+\$143 in Tenant Rent Portion

## DIRECT DEPOSIT: A WORRY FREE WAY OF RECEIVING YOUR HAP PAYMENTS! LEARN HOW...

Direct Deposit is a form of wire transfer that deposits funds electronically into your bank account at no financial cost to you rather than through a paper check via Mail. Direct deposit has become increasingly popular in recent years and MDHCV provides this service for all its Landlords/Owners.

### Why should you set-up a Direct Deposit?

- No more waiting for a check to arrive by mail
- No more calling MDHCV for a missing check or misplaced check.
- No more standing in long lines at the bank to deposit your check.
- No more worries about losing or having a check stolen.
- No more waiting for the funds to clear, since you have access to your money as soon as it hits your account.

As a whole, direct deposit is the most popular form of payment as it eliminates the risk of losing a check and the need to physically visit a bank to make a deposit. So why wait? Request your HAP payment to be Direct Deposit today! It fast, safe, and hassle free.

For a Direct Deposit application form please visit <http://www.miamidade.gov/housing>

## REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL (RFTA)

### THE RFTA PROCESS

- STEP 1:** RFTA packet is issued to participant at the Issuance of Voucher. Participant/landlord complete RFTA packet and turn it in to MDHCVP.
- STEP 2:** MDHCVP receives RFTA packet and reviews it for completeness. The owner will be advised if any additional information is needed.
- STEP 3:** Once the packet is complete, the Inspections Department contacts the landlord/owner to schedule the initial inspection. If the first inspection fails or the unit is not ready, this step will repeat within 10 business days. No more than two failed inspections will be allowed.
- STEP 4:** Once the unit passes inspection, a Rent Reasonableness survey will be completed to determine if the proposed rent is comparable with other units in that area. If rent is not acceptable because it is more than the market will bear or more than the tenant can afford, MDHCVP will contact the landlord/owner to negotiate a lower rent. If the reduced rent amount is not accepted, the RFTA will be cancelled.
- STEP 5:** Once rent is approved and all other requirements have been met, MDHCVP will contact the landlord/owner to schedule the HAP and Lease signing appointment. Please note MDHCVP now provides a model lease. You may download a copy via Partner Portal or at [www.miamidade.gov/housing](http://www.miamidade.gov/housing).

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO HAVE ALL THE ABOVE DOCUMENTS COMPLETED, DATED AND SIGNED PRIOR TO DROP OFF. THIS WILL AVOID A DELAY IN THE RFTA PROCESS.**



### RFTA PACKET REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- RFTA document
- Lead-Based Paint Disclosure
- Landlord Certification of Responsibility
- Miami-Dade County Affidavits
- Proof of Ownership (such as tax bill or deed.)\*
- An **unexecuted** lease\* and Tenancy Addendum
- Condo, co-op, or association approval letter, if applicable.\*
- W-9 form
- Owner/landlord driver's license/state ID or proof of SSN or TIN number.\*
- Owner Consent Form
- Direct Deposit agreement (with a voided check.)

\*Denotes additional documents not included in the RFTA packet, which must be submitted.



**Please Beware...**

**In recent months MDHCVP has received alerts of Landlord/Owner fraud. These cases are forwarded to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for further investigation and prosecution.**

**If you are found guilty of having committed housing fraud you could be...**

1. Required to repay all overpaid rental assistance you received.
2. Fined up to \$10,000.
3. Imprisoned for up to five years.
4. Prohibited from receiving future assistance.
5. Subject to State and local government penalties.

**It is important that you follow your HAP Contract and are compliant with the terms at**



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