



Reporting Requirements

In order to ensure that the Housing Authority (HA) and family are paying appropriate amounts based on family circumstances, and to ensure that changes as a result of owner rent increases or adjustments to payment standards and/or utility allowances are affected, the HA will conduct periodic examinations and implement adjustments as appropriate.

Housing Authorities conduct two types of periodic examinations for family composition and income which are mandatory Annual Re-certifications and Interim Adjustments.

Annual Re-Certification

The HA will review family composition and income annually. This is a HUD requirement, and no families will be exempt. Failure for the family to participate in the annual review process will result in termination from the program.

The HA maintains a listing of units under contract by month of contract execution to ensure systematic reviews of contract rent, allowances for utilities and other services, and housing quality in accordance with the requirement for annual re-examination.

The HA will automatically schedule families to meet with their assigned Housing Counselor each year to review information on income, assets, allowances and deductions, and family composition. The annual re-certification process will ensure that the effective date of the re-certification for each year is appropriate within HUD regulations.

Re-certification dates are established based on the first of the month that the family was initially assisted (regardless of when the family leased the unit). The annual re-certification date generally is the same each year, unless the family moves. Anytime a family moves to another dwelling unit, an annual re-certification will be performed, and the date for the next annual re-certification will be adjusted accordingly. Re-certification dates also may change at the discretion of the HA if interim changes must be processed in accordance with the Administrative Plan.

The HA will contact families at least 90 days in advance of the scheduled annual re-certification effective date, the head of household will be notified by mail of the scheduled re-certification interview date. The family will be instructed to bring all adult family members and updated income information.

Interim Adjustments (revised for 2003)

The HAP, Utility Reimbursement, Total Tenant Payment, and Tenant Rent to Owner will remain in effect for the period between regularly scheduled re-certifications, unless changes occur during the course of the year that would result in an adjustment.

The family must report changes to the HA, and the HA preliminarily will review the effect of the changes on payments and determine whether adjustments to the HAP, Utility Reimbursement, Total Tenant Payment, and/or Tenant Rent to Owner are required.

The HA will schedule interim examinations every 60 days for families with zero income.

The HA will systematically schedule interim examinations for families whose rent has been based on suspected false or incomplete information supplied by participants.

When interim adjustments are processed, they may – at the Housing Authority's discretion – be completed as full re-examinations, which would establish a new annual re-certification date.

Required Changes to Report

The family must report to the HA and, if appropriate, obtain HA approval for the following changes:

- any changes in household composition (HA approval is required),
- source or amount of income,
- allowances or deductions,
- gross household income in any amount,
- notice by the owner of a rent increase, and
- receipt of a deferred payment in a lump sum which represents the

delayed start of a periodic payment such as unemployment or a deferral due to a dispute (such as back child support payments). Excluded items include: lump sum Social Security benefits, and exclusions under the Earned Income Tax Credit Act of 1/1/91; the Student Financial Assistance Act of 10/1/92; and the Date for Child Care and Development Block Grant Assistance Act of 11/4/92.

Once the family advises the HA of a change, the HA will determine whether to schedule an interim examination to review and verify changes in accordance with verification procedures. If the reported change does not require an interim examination to be processed, the HA will send notice to the family that the change has been noted in the file and that no further action is required by the family related to that change.

The HA will automatically schedule families to meet with their assigned Housing Counselor each



Requirements

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Changes in Family Composition

All changes in family composition must be reported within 10 calendar days of the occurrence. Other than a birth, adoption, or death of a family member, all changes to household composition must be approved by the Housing Agency.

Adding Household Member

Household members to be added must be related by blood or marriage, be someone with whom a family member has had a stable relationship, or be a live-in aide. The procedure to add a household member is to provide the Housing Agency with a written statement from the landlord approving the addition of the household member to the lease and to request in writing to the HA to add the household member. If adding a household member affects the Voucher size, the family may be issued a Voucher to relocate.

Removing a Household Member

Any household member can be removed as long as verification can be provided to document where that individual is currently residing. If a household member will be out of the household for a period of less than 120 days or if the period of time cannot be determined due to illness, incarceration, or other mitigating circumstances beyond the members control, it may not be necessary to remove the member from the lease. The HA will make that determination after all verifications have been received.

Effect of Changes on Payments

As long as changes are reported timely and do not require the family to relocate, changes that result in an increase of the Tenant Rent to Owner will be documented in

the file and the change will be processed at the next annual re-certification or other qualifying interim change, whichever occurs first, except as noted below.

If changes are not reported in a timely manner, an increase of tenant rent will be processed and will be processed retroactively in accordance with procedures detailed below.

All decreases in income which result in a decrease in tenant rent or an increase in utility reimbursement will be processed.

Exceptions

Interim adjustments related to changes in household composition will always be processed.

All changes will be processed based on the HA's discretion for any family that is suspected of attempting to manipulate its income in order to avoid paying rent.

Reporting Timeframe Requirements

The standard for reporting changes for interims (other than changes in family composition which are detailed above) in a timely manner is for the family to report the change within 30 days of the occurrence and complete any necessary follow-up as directed by the HA within 45 days of the occurrence.

Signed certification forms not returned to the Housing Authority within 10 days cannot be disputed or changed by the tenant until the next interim examination or re-certification.

The procedure to add a household member is to provide the Housing Agency with a written statement from the landlord...

Processing Procedures for Changes Reported Timely

The HA will notify the family and owner of changes in the Housing Assistance Payment to be effective according to the following:

- The family will always be given a 30-day notice for an increase in Total Tenant Payment/Tenant Rent to Owner. Increases in Total Tenant Payment/Tenant Rent to Owner are to be made effective on the first of the month following the 30-day notice.
- Decreases in tenant rent are to be made effective the first of the month following the date the HA received, in writing, the report of the change.

Processing Procedures for Changes Not Reported Timely

If the family does not report the change in a timely manner as specified previously, the family will be determined to have caused an

unreasonable delay in the interim re-examination processing.

Increased Tenant Rent to Owner

The change will be effective on the first day of the month following the date of the change. By reporting untimely, the family

If changes are not reported in a timely manner, an increase of tenant rent will be processed and will be processed retroactively...

will have forfeited the right to be given a 30 day notice of the increase in rent.

Decreased Tenant Rent to Owner

The change will be effective on the first day of the month following the date the change was completed. By reporting untimely, the family will have forfeited the right to a reduction in rent from the date the change occurred.

When Changes Include Both Increases and Decreases

The effective date of the increase is to be used to determine tenant rents and amounts of repayment agreements, if necessary. In this situation, decreases would be retroactive to the date of the change resulting in the decrease occurred or to the effective date of the increase, whichever is later.

The family will be required to sign a repayment agreement for any overpaid housing assistance.

Processing Procedures for Changes Not Processed Timely by the HA

"Processed in a timely manner" means that the change is effective on the date it would have been effective had the family reported the change in a timely manner.

If changes are not processed by the HA staff in a timely manner, the family will receive the required 30 day notice for rent increases or the decrease in rent will be effective on the first month after the change occurred as if the change was executed in a timely manner.

Interims will be processed by the HA within 15-30 days from written notification.

Interim & Annual Re-Certification

"What this means to you."

Interim Re-Certifications

Timely reporting (within 30 days of change) on increases in income will greatly benefit you. Effective January 1, 2003, additional rent will not be charged

on increased income until your next annual re-certification, **if reported timely.**

Decreases in income must be

submitted in writing to your Housing Counselor when the change occurs. If the change in income results in a decrease in rent, this becomes effective on the first of the month following the date the change was reported. If you fail to report decreases in income, you may be paying a higher rent than you should be.

If child support payments stop, you must provide the Housing Authority with a payment history to show zero payments for the past three months or a court order that indicates when payments will stop.

If notice is received from the landlord notifying you of a rent increase, forward a copy to your Housing Counselor. The landlord must give written, 60 day notice

of any increase. If proper notice is given, this change will be processed and you will be notified of any change in rent with at least a 30 day notice.

If the family size changes (adding/removing/absences), you must report it to your Housing Counselor within 10 days. All changes other than birth, adoption, or death must be approved.

It is not necessary to make an appointment with the counselor to report changes, you can do so by dropping off written verification with the Department of Community Service's receptionist. The receptionist will log the document with the date and time received and forward to the appropriate Housing Counselor.

If child support payments stop, you must provide the Housing Authority with a payment history...

Annual Re-Certifications

The Housing Authority will automatically schedule the annual re-certification. You must provide the Housing Authority with updated information on the family size, income, allowances, assets, and deductions.

If you do not attend the scheduled meeting, the housing assistance may be terminated.

Further Your Education

Did you know that you can earn a college degree online?

That's right, the internet opens a new world of education possibilities right in your own home. You can take classes online, at your convenience, any time...day or night...in any field you choose. In addition to furthering your education, the internet provides numerous tools to help locate jobs locally and throughout the metropolitan area. Examples of websites to explore are www.monster.com or www.hotjobs.com. The Washington Post also has a website which will aid in a job search.

The College of Southern Maryland offers many educational classes such as GED, CNA, and others to help you achieve your educational goals to help lead to financial independence. Financial aid is also available at the college. A new program will be available in spring of 2003 which assists applicants with financial aid forms. You will be able to use the College's computers to complete the forms for financial aid.

You can also contact the Maryland Adult External High School

Choice tips

Eight Changes that Must be Reported

Increases and Decreases in Income

Report all changes in monies received or earned by everyone living in the household. Include all money from employment, self employment, unemployment, unemployment compensation, child support, regular contributions, social security, SSI, retirement, disability, worker's compensation, AFDC, Veterans Benefits, rental property income, stock dividends, interest, alimony, annuities and all other sources. Notify the HA in writing within 30 days of the change.

Landlord Request for a Rent Increase

A landlord must give a tenant 60 days notice of intent to increase rent. The tenant should send the landlord's request to the HA.

Adding or Removing Household Members

All changes in family composition must be reported within 10 calendar days of the occurrence. All changes to your household composition must be approved by the housing authority except births, adoptions, or death of a family member.

Childcare Expenses

Some child care deductions may be given to families who are working, are actively looking for employment, or are in school.

Medical Expenses

If you pay (and are not reimbursed) for care or equipment for a disabled member of your family so that either the disabled member or another member of your family may work, you should report these expenses. For disabled or elderly tenants, an allowance may be given for Medical Insurance Premiums; medical, dental, or optical expenses; or prescriptions or over-the-counter drug expenses.

Vacate Notices

Landlords may give tenants notice to vacate. Tenants are required to vacate according to their lease terms, which is usually within 30 days.

Marriage or Divorce

Tenants must get approval to add spouses to the household. The Housing Authority must count spouses, and their incomes, as part of the household until proof of legal separation or divorce is received.

Unit Deficiencies

If landlords do not make necessary repairs for the tenant within a reasonable amount of time, the tenant can report the violation to the Housing Authority.



Diploma Program. This is a recognized high school diploma option for adults with life experience: an alternative to the GED exam, this program is designed for mature adults.

For more information on these programs or others, call 301-645-8765.

The Quarterly Housing Choice Voucher Program Newsletter is a publication of the Charles County Department of Community Services. Community Services is responsible for County services involving aging, child care, grants, housing, public transportation, and recreation.

For information regarding this newsletter or any Community Services program, contact the Department of Community Services:

8190 Port Tobacco Rd
Port Tobacco, MD 20677
301-934-9305
301-870-3388
301-932-6004
MD Relay Service: 711
Relay TDD: 1-888-735-2258

www.charlescounty.org
www.housingvoucher.com



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Equal Opportunity County
Say No To Drugs

The mission of Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient, and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning, and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility.

*The Housing Choice
Voucher News*

Attention Parents—

You may be eligible for the purchase of child care services

The purchase of day care/child care services is provided to families to subsidize the cost of child care for low-income parents and guardians who are employed, in training, or in school. Children must be placed in licensed daycare centers or in registered daycare homes. Informal arrangements in the children's own homes or the home of a relative may also be subsidized.

Purpose—

To provide financial assistance to eligible families to help pay for child care.

Eligibility—

Determined by a combination of income, family size, and other eligibility factors. Other eligibility factors include:

- 1) The parent, legal guardian, or caretaker is not available or not able to care for the child and there is no other friend or family member to provide care.
- 2) The parent, legal guardian, or caretaker must be in an approved work activity or employed.

How to Apply—

Application for this service can be made at the Charles County Department of Social Services, Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M., and between 8:00 A.M.–7:00 P.M. on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.



Basic Income Guidelines

Co-payments of varying amounts are required at higher income levels.

A Family of:

2—annual income up to \$24,277

3—annual income up to \$29,990

4—annual income up to \$35,702

5—annual income up to \$41,414

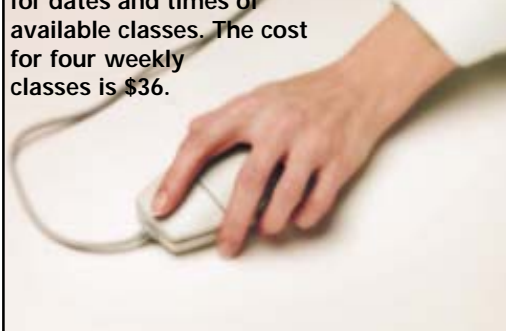
6—annual income up to \$47,127

Information for larger family sizes is available at the Charles County Department of Social Services.

*For more information on this service, you can call
301-392-6656 or 301-392-6658*

Computer Classes at Nanjemoy Community Center

NCC offers a variety of computer classes. Classes are based on participation. Call the Center at 301-246-9612 for dates and times of available classes. The cost for four weekly classes is \$36.



***YES,
You Can
Afford
College***

Learn the process and get advice on financial aid for college tuition from a representative from the College of Southern Maryland. Pre-registration is recommended.

Age: All • Free
9014.WNA
6:30 P.M.-8:30 P.M.
Tuesday • Feb 18
At Nanjemoy
Community Center