



Berkeley Housing Authority



## Section 8 HAP'nings April 2013!

### Funding for ALL HAP Contracts

The initial impact of Sequestration is now known. The good news is we have sufficient funding to continue honoring ALL the existing HAP contracts. The not-so-good news is, more cuts to funding are possible. A special thank you to the owners that continue to partner with BHA to make it possible for 1,778 low-income households including 1,063 disabled and 579 elderly households, to live in the City of Berkeley! We are continuing to monitor the situation with the Federal budget, and remain committed to honoring our contracts with you – and providing the best possible customer service.

### Help with Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

A check of our records confirmed there are 3 common fail items we believe can be avoided. We are equipping the Inspector with a supply of: both 9-volt and AA batteries; electrical outlet cover plates; and energy efficient light bulbs. If the only thing causing a fail for:

- A smoke or carbon monoxide detector is a missing battery – we will provide one; or
- A broken (cracked) faceplate on a 2-pronged electrical outlet – we will provide one; or
- A missing or burned out lightbulb - we will supply a light bulb (note: we only have energy efficient bulbs in stock, not every fixture can utilize this type so this may still be a fail).

The Inspector won't be able to do the actual installation, but will allow the family, owner or owner's representative a few minutes for installation. We hope that this small gesture will allow more units to pass the first inspection in the annual cycle, and avoid the need to schedule a reinspection.

### Termination of Tenancy

All rental tenancies in the City of Berkeley (including those with and without S8 assistance) are governed by the "Good Cause for Eviction" provisions in the Rent Control Ordinance.

- a. An owner has an absolute right to terminate a tenancy for non-compliance

with the lease. In some cases the cause for lease termination may also be grounds for BHA to terminate the family's S8 voucher. The risk of permanent loss of the rental subsidy is often a strong motivation for a family to correct any problem behavior – or to move voluntarily.

- b. In addition, an owner may terminate a tenancy for *Other Good Cause*, including a desire to owner-occupy the unit, or go out of the rental business. The Rent Stabilization Program website has a lot of useful information ([http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/Rent\\_Stabilization\\_Board/Home/Guide\\_to\\_Rent\\_Control.aspx](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/Rent_Stabilization_Board/Home/Guide_to_Rent_Control.aspx)). In the case of an *Other Good Cause* eviction the family will be allowed to move to another unit with S8 rental assistance.

### Electronic Payment

Over 100 owners responded to our recent notice, and their rental subsidy payment (HAP) will be deposited directly into their accounts beginning with the April 2013 check run! AND....with electronic payments funds and are available on the 1<sup>st</sup> working day of the month. Owners will continue to receive a check stub with information about the tenant and rent subsidy for each contract. To register, visit the BHA website ([www.cityofberkeley.info/bha](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/bha)) or contact Jayla at (510) 981-5474 or [bfuentecilla@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:bfuentecilla@ci.berkeley.ca.us). For owners requesting an alternate address for correspondence – those changes will be implemented no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Owner Feedback

We heard you. One owner requested that we consider revising the "fail letter" to eliminate assigning responsibility for the fail item to either the owner or the family, and allow that decision to be made by the two parties to the lease. It makes sense – and we will be implementing the change soon. We will continue to follow up directly with the tenant if we suspect tenant abuse – as it is a possible ground for termination of the S8 Voucher. We are listening, please keep your ideas coming!