



Berkeley Housing Authority



# Section 8 HAP'nings! January 2014

## Thank you .....

With your assistance, we are providing quality, affordable rental housing to approximately 1,800 households, including 601 seniors (1 centenarian), 1,021 disabled, and 886 children! We are particularly thankful for your assistance – especially as we read or hear about people living on the streets (some dying on the streets) in the frigid weather. We are also proud to share that we, through the rental subsidy payments to approximately 900 landlords, pumped over \$20 million into the local economy.



## New Tenancies

We realize time is money, so we act as quickly, and responsibly as we can to start the Housing Assistance Payment Contract, and process your first payment. Note:

- A. We can typically schedule the mandatory pre-contract inspection within 3 business days of receipt of the RTA;
- B. The earliest date we can start the contract is the day the unit passes inspection, and the family takes occupancy unless there are negotiations that need to be taken with regard to the rent you are asking. **Important to confirm** that the family has given proper notice to the current landlord, and is eligible to go under contract in a new unit.
- C. To process payment, we need a copy of the signed lease (owner and tenant), and the signed, original Housing Assistance Payment contract.



We have two rent subsidy check runs: the largest on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, and a second check run the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month.

## Check is NOT in the mail

With the Federal Sequestration still in effect, and more cuts in funding a very real possibility, we are looking at all of our procedures for opportunities to reduce cost, without reducing service level. In that spirit, we are moving closer to our April 2014 date for **direct deposit of all rental subsidy payments**. Payment of the rental subsidy payment will be wire transferred to your designated bank account on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month – making the funds available to you sooner. If you haven't signed up, please obtain a copy of the form online, or contact Jayla in Finance (981-5474). If you prefer receiving a physical check – we will accommodate you through March 2014, however, the check will be held for you at the front desk [we will not mail the check, and providing a self-addressed stamped envelope is not an option]. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.



## S8, Still a Great Way to Rent

In this economy, there are fewer and fewer guarantees. Once-stable employers are laying off employees, reducing hours, or reducing wages. These changes can disrupt an otherwise excellent rental situation. With most S8 tenancies, BHA pays the larger share of the rent AND, if the family experiences a decrease in income – BHA can often pick up the difference. In addition, BHA inspects the unit at least once annually – so you have an additional set of eyes monitoring what is happening with your property. It is also a way of exempting yourself from registration and fees with the Rent Stabilization Board. Our Payment Standards were increased in December:



\$1,139 (Studio); \$1,380 (1 bedroom); \$1,736 (2 bedrooms); and \$2,424 (3 bedrooms); \$2,974 (4 bedrooms).

## Rent Increase

The Rent Board recently announced a 1.7% Annual Adjustment Factor (AAF) for rent increases in 2014. Rents for units leased to households with S8 assistance are not limited to the AAF. If you are considering an increase in the contract rent, note:

- a. You must submit your request 60-90 days prior to the contract anniversary; and
- b. The only limitation on the increase is that it is reasonable, and supported by rents charged in the market for comparable units [you can use comps from Craig's List or other on-line services].

NOTE: an increase in contract rent may cause a challenge for the household, if the new rent is higher than the payment standard, or the family is living in a unit with more bedrooms that authorized on the S8 Voucher [for example, an empty nester parent, whose children have moved from the home].

## Visiting the Office



Need to run into the office for a short visit? there is metered parking on both University and Addison, or you can park in the underground garage (entry on Addison St) for \$3 per hour.

❖ 1936 University Ave, Suite 105  
Berkeley, CA 94703

## Security Deposit

Reminder – you are required to refund the interest on the security deposit by January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Failure to do so will require a penalty assessment of 10%. For more info., visit: [http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Rent\\_Stabilization\\_Board/Home/Security\\_Deposit\\_Interest\\_Refund.aspx](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Rent_Stabilization_Board/Home/Security_Deposit_Interest_Refund.aspx).



## Passing of a Resident

Death isn't limited to the aged, it can occur without advance notice, and none of us are exempt. Landlords are

reminded of the HUD rule that **prohibits** payment of even \$1 of rental subsidy beyond the end of the month when the last household member occupied the unit. Avoid an overpayment by monitoring your tenancies, and alerting BHA as soon as you learn of the passing of one or more members of an assisted household.

## January 2014 Calendar

- Mon, Jan 20 – office closed, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Thurs, Jan 9<sup>th</sup>, Board Meeting (North Berkeley Senior Center, 6:00 p.m.)
- Fri. Jan 10 & 24 – Regular Friday closures.