



Berkeley Housing Authority



# Section 8 HAP'nings!

## May 2014

### Rent Increases

Recent reports confirm what you already know ~ rental rates in the Bay Area are on the rise. A few things to consider as you make the important decision about pricing your unit, and continuing to lease the unit to a family with S8 rental assistance:

- a. HUD rules require the Housing Authority to determine "rent reasonableness;" that means reviewing the 2-3 rent comps you provide;
- b. The Payment Standard is not "the rent" for a unit, but rather, the maximum the housing authority can pay (after deducting the family's 30% required rent contribution);
- c. We typically revise the Payment Standard each December. For new contracts, the "new" payment standard is applied when the HAP contract is signed. However for existing contracts, the new payment standard is phased in at the next annual recertification (a HUD requirement).

A rent increase at any time other than the contract anniversary can create a financial hardship for the family; for this reason we encourage owners to request an increase 60-90 days prior to the contract anniversary ~ so that the increase, if approved, is largely paid by BHA (not the family). That said, BHA has recently altered the Rent Increase rules so that a landlord may request an increase annually, even if outside of the 60-90 day window prior to the contract anniversary (but is not retroactive), but no more than once per year.

### HAP Subsidy

And then there were 3 ... that is, 3 months before the **July 1<sup>st</sup>** launch of our mandatory direct deposit system for HAP ~ rental subsidy. In this area of declining resources (cash and staff) to perform an ever increasing number of functions, it is critical that we continue moving forward with implementation of this cost savings measure. A *special thank* you to owners that have already using the direct deposit system! It is important that you act now to avoid a delay in receipt of your July rent subsidy. If you need another copy of the form, contact Jayla at (510) 981-5474 or [bfuentecilla@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:bfuentecilla@ci.berkeley.ca.us). If you opt not to sign

up for direct deposit you will have to pick up your check at the office each month. Checks will not be mailed.

### Self-Certification of Repairs

Reminder that you can avoid a reinspection for non life-threatening fail items. If you receive a Fail notice, seriously consider making the repair(s) and *self-certifying* compliance. The most typical way of documenting compliance is via receipt(s) from vendors/contractors, but there are other options. If you have questions about the self-certification process please contact Omar Flores at (510) 981-5490 or [oflores@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:oflores@ci.berkeley.ca.us), or Rachel Gonzales-Levine at (510) 981-5485 or [rgonzales-levine@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:rgonzales-levine@ci.berkeley.ca.us).

### Unit for Rental

Please continue listing your vacant units with us. It is always interesting when a family transfers a voucher from another city (or state), and reports finding the unit on our available unit listing report. Units that are adapted for wheelchair users and units where pets are allowed are always in great demand, and typically warrant top of the market rents.

### Safe Neighborhoods

A lot of illegal (and nuisance) behavior is associated with non-residents hanging out at the property. If this is a concern, consider posting your property ~ "**No Trespassing.**" We have posted the form on our website [www.cityofberkeley.info/bha](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/bha). Completed forms should be filed with Berkeley Police Department: Jane Ortega, Operations Division, 2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, 94704.

### Can we reach you by Email?

As we expand our efforts to communicate with you quickly and efficiently, we are moving toward email messages. Please take a minute to share your email address. Be sure to include the addresses for all units currently under contract. Thank you!

### May 2014 Calendar

- Closed every Friday
- Thurs, May 8<sup>th</sup>, Board Meeting (North Berkeley Senior Center, 6:00 p.m.)
- Closed Mon, May 19<sup>th</sup> – Malcolm X Day
- Closed Mon, May 26<sup>th</sup> – Memorial Day