

Multifamily Housing COVID-19 Updates and COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program Resources

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently released several important COVID-19 related multifamily housing updates. Please read the information below carefully.

We are also excited to share that the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program is now open to accept applications from individuals and families impacted by COVID-19. There is helpful information below on this new program and resources that you can use to share information with households that may be eligible and interested in applying.

In this eNews:

[Unemployment Income](#) | [Requirements for Face Coverings and Masks](#) | [REAC Inspections Will Resume](#) | [The COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program Has Launched!](#)

Unemployment Income

On July 31, 2020, HUD released an update to the [Multifamily COVID-19 Q & A document](#). In this update, HUD provides clarification around Coronavirus Aid relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) unemployment income. This clarification describes three different types of unemployment benefits and indicates which benefits should be included from income and which should be excluded. **This guidance applies to HUD assisted properties as well as Section 42 Tax Credits, Section 1602, HOME, National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF), and MARIF programs.**

- **Section 2102:** Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). This is an unemployment benefit for individuals who are self-employed, seeking part-time employment, or who otherwise would not qualify for regular unemployment insurance (UI). HUD has determined that PUA benefits must be included as annual income.
- **Section 2104:** Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program. This program provides eligible individuals who are collecting certain UI benefits, including regular unemployment compensation to receive an additional \$600 in federal benefits per week for weeks of unemployment ending on or before July 31, 2020. HUD has determined that FPUC benefits meet the definition of temporary income and must NOT be included in annual income.
- **Section 2107:** Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program. This program provides an extension to regular unemployment insurance benefits for eligible individuals, allowing them to receive up to 13 weeks of additional benefits (this extends UI from 26 weeks to 39 weeks in total). HUD has determined that PEUC benefits must be included in annual income.

Requirements for Face Covering and Masks

HUD also provides direction on enforcing face mask requirements in HUD Multifamily properties (see Question 7 on HUD's updated [Multifamily COVID-19 Q&A document](#)). Failure to comply with face covering in common areas may only be treated as a lease violation if the requirement is in the property's house rules. House rules must be reasonable and consistent with state and local law and directives and must be implemented as an attachment to the HUD Model Lease. For direction on how to update house rules, please see HUD Handbook 4350.3, Chapter 6. For information on the state of Minnesota's face covering requirements, including in common areas of multi-unit apartment buildings, [please see information provided by the Minnesota Department of Health](#).

REAC Inspections Will Resume

HUD will resume Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) inspections of HUD properties and units under strict safety protocols during the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. REAC intends to resume inspections on or around Monday, October 5, 2020, with the required 14-day notification period to begin on or around Monday, September 21, 2020. Please note that Minnesota Housing is continuing to postpone physical inspections and site visits until further notice.

To keep the residents and staff of HUD properties safe during the inspection process, REAC will prioritize inspections in states and localities based on the latest COVID-19 data from Johns Hopkins University and health risk scoring methodology from the Harvard Global Health Institute. REAC will provide a listing on its website of low-risk counties 45 days prior to the start of physical inspections. At the end of the 45-day period, REAC will provide a 14-day notification to priority properties in that county to inform families that an inspection will take place.

Please see the [press release](#) and [HUD's REAC webpage](#) for regional details.

The COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program Has Launched!

Minnesota Housing is pleased to announce that the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program is now accepting applications from individuals and families impacted by COVID-19. The COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program provides housing assistance payments to help prevent eviction, prevent homelessness, and maintain housing stability for eligible renters and homeowners. Local administrators will review applications from individuals and families requesting assistance, verify eligibility, and process payments for eligible expenses on behalf of households. **NOTE: Families that receive rental assistance that adjusts with income (i.e. Housing Choice voucher, project-based assistance, or another form of state or federal rental assistance) are generally not eligible to apply for rental assistance in this Program but may be eligible to apply for assistance with certain utility expenses.**

We need your help spreading the word about this new program! [Please share this flyer](#) with the individuals and families you work with who may be eligible for this housing assistance. United Way 211 is providing a statewide intake service to help determine program eligibility and connect households to local program administrators to complete and process their application. For household interested in applying, please have them call 211 (or call 800-543-7709), visit the United Way website at [211unitedway.org](#), or text "MNRENT" or "MNHOM" to 898-211. The 211 helpline has dedicated multilingual staff available to answer questions about the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. The United Way 211 website is available 24 hours a day. The program is experiencing high demand.

You can also learn more about how the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program works by [visiting our website](#).

Thank you for your help in sharing the news that this housing assistance is available to the many Minnesotans facing housing instability.



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