



# **Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Program**

Desk Guide for Property  
Managers & Service  
Coordinators

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## **About the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Program**

The Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program is a component of the tenant-based Section 8 program funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HACLA does not receive additional funding for the PBV program.

The PBV program provides rental assistance to families residing in approved units in buildings with a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract. The rental subsidy is tied to the unit, not the tenant. To receive continued subsidy, the tenant must remain in the unit and be in compliance with the PBV program obligations.

Participants of the PBV program will pay 30% of their total adjusted household income as their portion of rent. HACLA establishes a minimum rent of \$50 for participants.

If the unit is part of the PBV contract, please DO NOT accept the RFTA. Applicants for PBV units should go through the referral process.

## **PBV Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract**

The PBV Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract is valid for up to 20 years, with options for renewal.

The contract details the following:

1. Term of HAP contract
2. Occupancy and payment
3. Target population
4. Unit numbers assisted under the contract
5. Services, maintenance, and appliances to be provided by the owner

The effective date of the HAP contract is the HAP contract anniversary month. Rent increases request must be submitted 60 days before this date.

## **Application Intake Process**

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) referrals should be received via the Universal Housing Application (UHA) through the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) website.

Non-PSH referrals should be emailed to the assigned Eligibility Interviewer (EI) or Housing Program Advisor (HPA).

Receipt of referral (PSH & non-PSH) indicates the building has approved the applicant and the unit is ready for inspection. The EI/HPA will then determine eligibility for the PBV program.

To be determined eligible the applicant(s) must:

1. have a cleared Criminal Background Check (CBC), including all adult household members in the application
2. have a completed UHA or Special Program Application packet, to include all supplementals
3. have at least 1 family member with eligible immigration status
4. be income eligible
5. meet the target population for the building, if any (e.g. homeless, chronic homelessness, or at-risk of homelessness)

Once the applicant has been determined eligible, and the unit has passed inspection, a Certification of Eligibility (COE) will be issued.

Following the issuance of a COE, a Move-In Authorization (MIA) must be provided to the EI/HPA immediately following move-in via e-mail detailing the:

1. Client name
2. Address and unit number
3. Security Deposit amount
4. Move-in date

After the MIA is received, the EI/HPA will provide the PBV Tenancy Addendum for signature by the owner or designee and the tenant.

Upon receipt of the signed Tenancy Addendum, the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) will be processed for the next check run. The signed Tenancy Addendum should be returned immediately to ensure timely HAP payment.

## **Inspections**

### New Tenancies

For new tenancies, the unit must be inspected prior to the applicant moving in. New buildings or units being added via an amendment will have a mass inspection conducted prior to the execution of the HAP contract or an amendment. Turn-over units will be inspected upon notification that the unit is ready for inspection.

### Existing Tenancies

At least 20% of contract units in a building will be inspected biennially for existing tenancies. The building and tenant will receive communication from the Inspection Unit prior to the date of inspection

### **Pre-inspection Checklist**

This list is intended as a guideline and is not a guarantee that the unit will pass inspection. All utilities must be on at the time of the initial inspection.

## EXTERIOR OF BUILDING

- Units must have trash cans or a dumpster
- All crawl space covers, and vent screens must be intact (rodent prevention)
- Steps and railings must be in good repair. If there are more than four steps, a handrail is required
- Exterior must be free of loose, scaling, chipping or peeling paint
- Gas heating devices must be vented to the outside
- Address must be visible from the street, unit number must also be posted on the door

## INTERIOR OF UNIT

- Units must have a permanently installed heating system. Portable heaters are not acceptable
- The unit must be free of safety hazards, i.e. no bare electrical wires. Electrical outlets and receptacles must be properly covered. All electrical outlets, whether or not in excess of minimum, must be operable. Frayed or torn carpet and damaged linoleum is not acceptable
- Double-cylinder dead bolt locks are prohibited
- Hot water heaters must have a temperature and pressure relief valve (TPRV) or, if an ECO device is built in, a pressure relief valve (PRV). A TPRV must have a metal (copper or galvanized steel) downward discharge line, which terminates at least 6 inches above the floor. The downward discharge line cannot be plastic pipe. Hot water heaters must also be strapped in accordance with City code
- Smoke detectors are required in each sleeping room and hallways adjacent to sleeping rooms. Smoke detectors in multi-unit dwellings must be hardwired or have a sealed 10-year battery.
- All accessible windows must have locks. Windows designed to open should operate easily. Windows painted shut should be freed. Broken glass is not acceptable

### ·**Kitchen** must have:

- o Space for a refrigerator
- o Space for a four-burner stove with a vent for the stove
- o Adequate space for storage, preparation and serving of food
- o A ceiling or wall light fixture and one electrical outlet
- o Proper ventilation
- o Gas shut-off valve for gas stoves
- o A sink with hot and cold running water

·**Hallways or areas immediately adjacent to bedroom entrances** must have smoke detectors in accordance with City Code and Carbon Monoxide Detectors in accordance with State Law

### ·**Bedrooms** must have:

- o Smoke detector in accordance with City Code
- o Minimum of 70 square feet of usable space and a closet
- o At least one window with a minimum clear opening of 5.7 square feet
- o Two electrical outlets, one of which may be an overhead light
- o Each bedroom or sleeping area with window security bars must have a single-motion quick release latch for emergency exit. The release lever must be no higher than 48 inches above the floor.

### ·**Bathrooms** must have:

- o Fixed wash basin and a tub or shower, each with hot and cold water

- o Window or adequate exhaust ventilation
- o Ceiling or wall light fixture

#### APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAYS AND ELEVATORS

All apartment building hallways must be clean and well-lighted. The fire exits must be posted and lit. Building must have fire hoses and/or extinguishers in hallways and building lobbies. If the building has an elevator, a current elevator certificate from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety must be posted in the elevator.

#### NEW CONSTRUCTION

All newly constructed dwellings must have final approval from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, and a Certificate of Occupancy must be issued. Duplicate copies should be available at the request of a Housing Authority Inspector. PERMANENT electrical and gas services must be connected at the time of inspection.

### Annual Reexaminations

A reexamination of income, assets, expenses, and family composition is required at least once every 12 months. At each annual reexamination, the Advisor/HPA ensures that verifications, disclosures, and reporting requirements are met. The month for the annual recertification is determined at the time of initial HAP contract signing and will apply to all PBV participants in the building. Larger PBV developments will have the annual recertifications divided into several months.

The annual reexamination process will begin 120 days (4 months) prior to the effective date of the annual reexamination. The tenant may use the online portal to complete the reexamination process. A packet will be mailed to those who do not have an online portal.

At the time of the reviews, the Advisor/HPA will go over the information in the packet and verify income, assets, and expenses. If a client is missing documents, the Advisor/HPA will provide the family with 14 business days to submit missing documents. If the family fails to submit the required documents within 14 business days, a *Notice of Intended Action* giving the client 30 calendar days to comply with the annual reexamination to avoid termination from the program will be provided. If client has not complied with the final 30-day deadline, they will be terminated from the program and HAP will not be paid beyond the termination date. **Please do not remove pages from the annual review packet. All pages are required for processing.**

Developments with permanent supportive services must aid the tenant in completing the annual reexamination process. The Advisor/HPA may be contacted with further questions or assistance. Their contact information is included in all HACLA notices.

Buildings typically have their annual reexamination month at the same time every year. New tenants will be aligned with the buildings' existing annual reexamination schedule. This can result in a tenant completing more than one re-examination during their first year of tenancy.

## Interim Reexaminations

An interim reexamination is conducted at the request of the participant family. The family must report all changes in circumstances (i.e. income/asset change, addition/removal of household members) which could result in a change of their rent portion.

Changes should be reported promptly to their assigned Advisor/HPA via email or via regular mail. The request should include:

1. A completed *Notice of Application for Interim Rent Adjustment* (RE-14)
2. Verification of reported change (ex. income documents)

Once the request is received, a follow-up will be provided if additional documentation is needed. They will also be informed if an interim re-examination will be required or if the change will be captured at the next annual re-examination. Interims that are processed will be effective the first of the month following in which all required documentation is provided.

If a reported change does not affect the tenant portion, the client will receive an *Interim Denial Letter*. Some of the reasons are as follows:

1. The client did not provide proof of change in a timely manner.
2. The delay in processing is caused by the Advisor/HPA, in which case we will honor the initial effective date
3. The change would result in an increase in the tenant's rent portion. The new income will be captured at the next annual re-examination.

Adding another household member (including live-in aids) requires prior written approval from property manager **and** HACLA. Families will need to contact their Advisor/HPA before the new household member moves in. If the member moves into the unit prior to obtaining HACLA approval, it could result in program termination.

## Vacancies

Vacancies must be reported promptly to the assigned Advisor/HPA via email. All supporting documents, such as sheriff lock out dates or move-out notices, must be included in the email.

Failure to report vacancies timely will result in HAP being recaptured retroactively and a potential delay in re-leasing the unit.

Please note that HAP may only be paid through the end of the move-out (vacate) month. HACLA defines "move out date" as: the sheriff lock out date due to eviction, date of death, program termination date, mutual agreement day, or the day before a new contract. If the client executes another contract with a new unit, we will use the date on which the tenant vacated the unit or the day before the new contract, whichever is earlier.

## Filling Vacancies

For PSH units, a new referral should be received via the UHA. For non-PSH units, a referral should be emailed to the assigned EI/HPA.

The application process for turn-over units will follow the *Application Intake Process* section.

## Rent Adjustments

Rent adjustment requests must be submitted at least **60 days prior to the PBV HAP contract anniversary month**. One request per bedroom size must be received via the Owners portal. The new rental amount will apply to all units of the same size in the building. Buildings with multiple HAP contracts must submit individual requests for each HAP contract. Rent adjustment requests may only be submitted once per year.

Rent increase requests will only be approved if:

1. It was received at least 60 days prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the HAP contract anniversary month
2. The rent is reasonable (based on unassisted units in the same area)
3. Gross rent (contract rent plus utility allowance) does not exceed the current payment standard

Partial rent adjustments will be approved if the gross rent exceeds the payment standard and/or the rent is not reasonable compared to unassisted units in the same area.

Rent adjustment request may be denied if:

1. Request was not submitted at least 60 days before the PBV HAP contract anniversary month
2. Asking rent is not reasonable compared to unassisted units in the area
3. Gross rent exceeds the current payment standard
4. The last rent increase was less than 12 months ago
5. The request was submitted too far in advance of the HAP contract anniversary
6. City ordinances such as moratoriums and rent increase freezes

A *Notice of Rent Increase Denial* will be provided if the rent adjustment is not approved.

## Family Right to Move

After one year of tenancy, the family has the option to convert from a project-based to a tenant-based voucher. A request for a tenant-based voucher must be submitted in writing to their assigned Advisor/HPA via email, drop-box, or mail. A voucher will be issued when available.

The waiting time for a tenant-based voucher varies and a specific time frame of when they will receive one may not be provided.

The family may continue to reside in their PBV unit while searching for housing with a tenant-based voucher. The family is responsible for providing notice to move upon securing housing with their tenant-based voucher. If their voucher expires, and they are still in the PBV unit, HAP will continue as usual.

If the family moves out of their PBV unit, they may continue to search for housing using their tenant-based voucher, however if they are not successful in securing housing before the voucher expires, they will be terminated from the program.

## **Vacancy Loss**

If an assisted family moves out of a contract unit, HACLA may provide vacancy payments to the owner for up to two months from the beginning of the first calendar month after the move-out month. The payment may not exceed the monthly rent, minus any rental payment made by the tenant including amounts available from the tenant's security deposit. The vacancy payment may cover only the period the unit remains vacant.

Vacancy loss payment will only be made if:

1. Prompt written notice was received (within 30 days of move out)
2. The owner certifies the vacancy was not a fault of their own and the unit is vacant for the period for which payment is claimed
3. The owner certifies that it has taken every reasonable action to minimize the likelihood and length of vacancy
4. Any additional information required and requested is provided to verify entitlement to the payment

Request for vacancy loss payments must be submitted to the assigned Advisor/HPA.

## **Reasonable Accommodations**

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles strives to provide equal opportunity for all individuals to participate in and benefit from its programs in compliance with state and federal fair housing laws.

An individual with a disability may request a change, exception, or adjustment to a HACLA rule or policy as a reasonable accommodation to obtain equal access to the HACLA programs.

A reasonable accommodation may only be granted if there is a **verified** disability-related need for the accommodation. Applicant and participants may request an accommodation from HACLA verbally or in writing using HACLA's "*Reasonable Accommodation Questionnaire*" form (S504-02). Upon receipt of request, the Advisor/HPA will follow up with additional forms to certify and verify

the nexus between the disability and accommodation requested. The Advisor/HPA will forward the completed forms to Reasonable Accommodation team for review.

A unit transfer approval is conditional on an available unit under the HAP contract in the same building. Once the family's reasonable accommodation request is approved, it is the client's responsibility to request a transfer with the building management. HACLA will not make the transfer until we receive a *Unit Transfer Request* from the building management, and the new unit passes inspection.

Approval of a companion or service animal is solely dependent on the Property Manager in accordance with the lease and applicable local, state, and federal laws.

## **Over housed/ Under housed Families**

If a family occupies a unit that is too small or too large based on their family composition, HACLA will notify the family and the owner of this determination and of its intent to terminate assistance for the unit.

After receiving the notice from HACLA, the property manager must notify HACLA if they are able to accommodate a transfer to another PBV unit that will fulfill the family's requirement. If the property manager does not have a unit available, then the client will be able to request a voucher to move. This option is contingent upon the requirements set forth in the *Family Right to Move* section of this manual and availability of vouchers.

If the family refuses the offer of a unit of appropriate size by the owner and/or refuses the offer of voucher assistance, HACLA shall terminate PBV assistance of their current unit or accessible unit within 90 days of the effective date of the annual reexamination. Ninety days shall be considered a reasonable period for the family to continue to receive PBV assistance if they have refused offers of other assistance.

After issuing a family a tenant-based voucher to locate another unit, HACLA will continue assistance in the PBV unit for the family for as long as the family holds a valid tenant-based voucher. HACLA must terminate PBV assistance for the family at the expiration of the term of the voucher (including any extensions granted by HACLA).

## **Contract Monitoring**

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles is responsible for managing and monitoring HAP contracts under the Section 8 Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Program ensuring that owners and property management comply with the terms of the Section 8 PBV Program and the executed HAP contract. Per the terms of the HAP Contract, contracted properties must permit access to all required documents to ensure program compliance on at least an annual basis

The Administrative Assistant (AA) will contact the property manager to schedule the monitoring date and provide a list of required files. On the day of the review, the AA will conduct interviews with the property manager and case managers/service coordinators. After reviewing the case files, the AA will meet with property staff to debrief.

#### **File Review:**

##### **How Many Files Are Reviewed?**

At least 5 of the Property's participant files will be randomly selected for review.

##### **Why Are Files Reviewed?**

To ensure the Property's compliance with HUD regulations regarding:

- Client intake
- Eligibility verification
- Program enrollment
- Waitlists
- Resident selection criteria
- Tenant records

#### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):**

##### **Does My Property Need to Provide Case Management Documents?**

**Yes**, if the building is part of the **Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSHP)**. If your property does not have a supportive services component, no case management files are required.

##### **What Should a Service Coordinator Expect in a PSHP Review?**

If your building is part of PSHP, the review will focus on:

- The supportive services provided to clients during the contract term.
- Ensuring services align with what was outlined in the contract and proposal.

By following this process, we ensure that all properties are compliant with HUD regulations, providing a fair and transparent review of client services and records.

#### **General Required Documents**

##### **Property Policies and Procedures:**

- Valid Government-Issued I.D.
- Social Security Card
- Income Verification Documents from the previous year
- At least one of the following applicable documents:
  - Homeless Certification
  - Chronically Homeless Certification
  - Disability Certification
  - TAY Letter from Referral Agency or Transitional Housing
  - Veteran's VA Referral
- Certification of Eligibility (COE)

- Property Lease (front page and signature page)
- HACLA Lease (front page and signature page) and Addendum
- Signed Statement of Family Responsibility

**Supportive Services (For PSHP Properties Only):**

- Case Notes
- Intake and Needs Assessment
- Individual Service or Action Plan (including individual goals, milestones, and appointments)
- Flyers and Sign-in Sheets for Groups, Community Meetings, and Social Activities
- Evidence of Counseling/Meetings/Visits (if applicable)
- Exit or Discharge Plan