

Chapter 13

OWNERS

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INTRODUCTION

Owners play a major role in the HCV program by supplying decent, safe, and sanitary housing for participating families.

The term “owner” refers to any person or entity with the legal right to lease or sublease a unit to a participant in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.4(b)]. The term “owner” includes a principal or other interested party [24 CFR 982.453; 24 CFR 982.306(f)], such as a designated agent of the owner.

Owners have numerous responsibilities under the program, including screening and leasing to families, maintaining the dwelling unit, enforcing the lease, and complying with various contractual obligations.

The chapter is organized in two parts:

Part I: Owners in the HCV Program. This part discusses the role of an owner in the GRHC’s HCV program and highlights key owner rights and responsibilities.

Part II: HAP Contracts. This part explains provisions of the HAP contract and the relationship between the GRHC and the owner as expressed in the HAP contract.

For detailed information about HCV program responsibilities and processes, including GRHC policies in key areas, owners will need to refer to several other chapters in this plan. Where appropriate, Chapter 13 will reference the other chapters.

PART I. OWNERS IN THE HCV PROGRAM

13-I.A. OWNER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION [HCV GB, pp. 2-4 to 2-6; HCV Landlord Strategy Guidebook for PHAs]

Recruitment

The GRHC is responsible for ensuring that very low-income families have access to all types and ranges of affordable housing in the GRHC’s jurisdiction, particularly housing outside areas of poverty or minority concentration. A critical element in fulfilling this responsibility is for the GRHC to ensure that a sufficient number of owners, representing all types and ranges of affordable housing in the GRHC’s jurisdiction, are willing to participate in the HCV program.

To accomplish this objective, GRHCs must identify and recruit new owners to participate in the program.

If the GRHC will be conducting outreach events, the GRHC must ensure that notices and communications during outreach events are provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other communications-related disabilities. The GRHCs will also take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs to persons with limited English proficiency.

Retention

In addition to recruiting owners to participate in the HCV program, the GRHC will also provide the kind of customer service that will encourage participating owners to remain active in the program.

GRHC MTW Flexibilities

As funding permits, the GRHC in efforts to incentivize and increase landlord participation in its tenant-based assistance programs will further expand its Landlord Incentive program. These incentives assist in the MTW and GRHC goals of increasing housing choice for participants and increasing landlord participation. The incentives are as follows:

- **Monetary Incentives**
 - New landlords receive \$1,000 dollars after an executed HAP contract.
 - Returning landlords that have not signed a HAP contract for more than 12 months; receive \$1,000 after an executed HAP contract.
 - Current participating landlords, receive \$500 per new unit that has an executed HAP contract, up to a three (3) unit maximum.
 - A referral bonus of \$200 to current participating landlords for each new landlord that executes a HAP contract. Limited to up to 5 Referrals.
 - Vacancy Claims (One (1) month of Contract Rent)
 - The GRHC will offer a vacancy loss payment worth one (1) month’s contract rent, payable upon execution of a new HAP contract with the GRHC. If the unit is vacant for less than a full month, the payments will be prorated based on the number of days the unit is vacant.
- **Non-monetary Incentives:** Landlord portal Landlord workshops and outreach/flyers – for current and new landlords, Streamlining the inspection process - using reminder software specific automations, and a landlord liaison - streamlining the landlord’s on-boarding process and serve as a single point of contact.

13-I.B. BASIC HCV PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The GRHC will assist families in their housing search by referring them to an online database of available units in the community, in which participating landlords are encouraged to advertise available units. The GRHC will pursue all means that provide information about available units, throughout its jurisdiction.

When a family approaches an owner to apply for tenancy, the owner is responsible for screening the family and deciding whether to lease to the family, just as the owner would with any potential unassisted tenant. The GRHC has no liability or responsibility to the owner or other persons for the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy. See chapters 3 and 9 for more detail on tenant family screening policies and process.

If the owner is willing, the family and the owner must jointly complete a Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA, Form HUD 52517), which constitutes the family's request for assistance in the specified unit, and which documents the owner's willingness to lease to the family and to follow the program's requirements. When submitted to the GRHC, this document is the first step in the process of obtaining approval for the family to receive the financial assistance it will need in order to occupy the unit. Also submitted with the RTA is a copy of the owner's proposed dwelling lease, including the HUD-required Tenancy Addendum (Form HUD-52641-A). See Chapter 9 for more detail on request for tenancy approval policies and process.

HUD regulations stipulate requirements for the approval of an assisted tenancy.

The owner must be qualified to participate in the program [24 CFR 982.306]. Some owners are precluded from participating in the program, or from renting to a particular family, either because of their past history with this or another federal housing program, or because of certain conflicts of interest. Owner qualifications are discussed later in this chapter.

The selected unit must be of a type that is eligible for the program [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. Certain types of dwelling units cannot be assisted under the HCV program. Other types may be assisted under certain conditions. See chapter 9 for more detail on unit eligibility policies and process.

The selected unit must meet HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and/or equivalent state or local standards approved by HUD [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. The GRHC will inspect the owner's dwelling unit at least biennial to ensure that the unit continues to meet HQS requirements. See chapter 8 for a discussion of the HQS standards and policies for HQS inspections at initial lease-up and throughout the family's tenancy.

The GRHC will determine that the proposed rent for the unit is reasonable [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. The rent must be reasonable in relation to comparable unassisted units in the area and must not be in excess of rents charged by the owner for comparable, unassisted units on the premises. See chapter 8 for a discussion of requirements and policies on rent reasonableness, rent comparability and the rent reasonableness determination process.

At initial lease-up of a unit, if the gross rent exceeds the applicable payment standard, the GRHC will ensure that the family share does not exceed 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)]. See chapter 6 for a discussion of the calculation of family income, family share of rent and HAP.

The dwelling lease must comply with all program requirements [24 CFR 982.308]. Owners are encouraged to use their standard leases when renting to an assisted family. The HUD Tenancy

Addendum includes the HUD requirements governing the tenancy and must be added word-for-word to the owner's lease. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the dwelling lease and tenancy addendum, including lease terms and provisions.

The GRHC and the owner will execute a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract (Form HUD-52641). The HAP contract format is prescribed by HUD. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the HUD requirements for execution of the HAP contract.

13-I.C. OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES [24 CFR 982.452]

The basic owner responsibilities in the HCV program are outlined in the regulations as follows:

- Complying with all of the owner's obligations under the housing assistance payments (HAP) contract and the lease
- Performing all management and rental functions for the assisted unit, including selecting a voucher-holder to lease the unit, and deciding if the family is suitable for tenancy of the unit
- Maintaining the unit in accordance with the Housing Quality Standards (HQS), including performance of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance
- Complying with equal opportunity requirements
- Preparing and furnishing to the GRHC information required under the HAP contract
- Collecting the security deposit, the tenant rent, and any charges for unit damage by the family.
- Enforcing tenant obligations under the dwelling lease
- Paying for utilities and services that are not the responsibility of the family as specified in the lease
- Allowing reasonable modifications to a dwelling unit occupied or to be occupied by a disabled person [24 CFR 100.203]
- Complying with the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) when screening prospective HCV tenants or terminating the tenancy of an HCV family (see 24 CFR Part 5, Subpart L; 24 CFR 982.310(h)(4); and 24 CFR 982.452(b)(1))

13-I.D. OWNER QUALIFICATIONS

The GRHC does not formally approve an owner to participate in the HCV program. However, there are a number of criteria where the GRHC may deny approval of an assisted tenancy based on past owner behavior, conflict of interest, or other owner-related issues. No owner has a right to participate in the HCV program [24 CFR 982.306(e)].

Owners Barred from Participation [24 CFR 982.306(a) and (b)]

The GRHC must not approve the assisted tenancy if the GRHC has been informed that the owner has been debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation under 24 CFR part 24. HUD may direct the GRHC not to approve a tenancy request if a court or administrative agency has determined that the owner violated the Fair Housing Act or other federal equal opportunity requirements, or if such an action is pending.

Leasing to Relatives [24 CFR 982.306(d), HCV GB p. 11-2]

The GRHC must not approve a tenancy if the owner is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the family. The GRHC will make an exception as a reasonable accommodation for a family member with a disability. The owner is required to certify that no such relationship exists. This restriction applies at the time that the family receives assistance under the HCV program for occupancy of a particular unit. Current contracts on behalf of owners and families that are related may continue, but any new leases or contracts for these families may not be approved.

Conflict of Interest [24 CFR 982.161; HCV GB p. 8-19]

The GRHC will not approve a tenancy in which any of the following classes of persons has any interest, direct or indirect, during tenure or for one year thereafter:

- Any present or former member or officer of the GRHC (except a participant commissioner)
- Any employee of the GRHC, or any contractor, subcontractor or agent of the GRHC, who formulates policy or who influences decisions with respect to the programs
- Any public official, member of a governing body, or State or local legislator, who exercises functions or responsibilities with respect to the programs
- Any member of the Congress of the United States

HUD may waive the conflict of interest requirements, except for members of Congress, for good cause. The GRHC will submit a waiver request to the appropriate HUD Field Office for determination.

Any waiver request submitted by the GRHC will include the following [HCV Guidebook pp.11-2 and 11-3]:

- Complete statement of the facts of the case;
- Analysis of the specific conflict of interest provision of the HAP contract and justification as to why the provision should be waived;
- Analysis of and statement of consistency with state and local laws. The local HUD office, the GRHC, or both parties may conduct this analysis. Where appropriate, an opinion by the state's attorney general should be obtained;
- Opinion by the local HUD office as to whether there would be an appearance of impropriety if the waiver were granted;
- Statement regarding alternative existing housing available for lease under the HCV program or other assisted housing if the waiver is denied;
- If the case involves a hardship for a particular family, statement of the circumstances and discussion of possible alternatives;
- If the case involves a public official or member of the governing body, explanation of his/her duties under state or local law, including reference to any responsibilities involving the HCV program;

- If the case involves employment of a family member by the GRHC or assistance under the HCV program for an eligible GRHC employee, explanation of the responsibilities and duties of the position, including any related to the HCV program;
- If the case involves an investment on the part of a member, officer, or employee of the GRHC, description of the nature of the investment, including disclosure/divestiture plans.

Where the GRHC has requested a conflict of interest waiver, the GRHC may not execute the HAP contract until HUD has made a decision on the waiver request.

In considering whether to request a conflict of interest waiver from HUD, the GRHC will consider certain factors such as consistency of the waiver with state and local laws, the existence of alternative housing available to families, the individual circumstances of a particular family, the specific duties of individuals whose positions present a possible conflict of interest, the nature of any financial investment in the property and plans for disclosure/divestiture, and the possible appearance of impropriety.

Owner Actions That May Result in Disapproval of a Tenancy Request [24 CFR 982.306(c)]

HUD regulations permit the GRHC to disapprove a request for tenancy for various actions and inactions of the owner.

If the GRHC disapproves a request for tenancy because an owner is not qualified, it may not terminate the HAP contract for any assisted families that are already living in the owner's properties unless the owner has violated the HAP contract for those units [HCV GB p. 11-4].

The GRHC will refuse to approve a request for tenancy if the GRHC becomes aware that any of the following are true:

- The owner has violated obligations under a HAP contract under Section 8 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f);
- The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program;
- The owner has engaged in any drug-related criminal activity or any violent criminal activity;
- The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with the HQS for units leased under the tenant-based programs, or with applicable housing standards for units leased with project-based Section 8 assistance or leased under any other federal housing program;
- The owner has a history or practice of failing to terminate tenancy of tenants of units assisted under Section 8 or any other federally assisted housing program for activity engaged in by the tenant, any member of the household, a guest or another person under the control of any member of the household that: (i) Threatens the right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents; (ii) Threatens the health or safety of other residents, of employees of the GRHC, or of owner employees or other persons engaged in management of the housing; (iii) Threatens the health or safety of, or the right to peaceful enjoyment of their residences, by persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises; or (iv) Is drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity;
- The owner has a history or practice of renting units that fail to meet state or local housing codes; or

- The owner has not paid state or local real estate taxes, fines, or assessment.

In considering whether to disapprove owners for any of the discretionary reasons listed above, the GRHC will consider any mitigating factors. Such factors may include, but are not limited to, the seriousness of the violation in relation to program requirements, the impact on the ability of families to lease units under the program, health and safety of participating families, among others. Upon consideration of such circumstances, the GRHC may, on a case-by-case basis, choose to approve an owner.

Legal Ownership of Unit

The GRHC will only enter into a contractual relationship with the legal owner of a qualified unit. No tenancy will be approved without acceptable documentation of legal ownership (e.g., deed of trust, proof of taxes for most recent year).

13-I.E. NON-DISCRIMINATION [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641]

The owner must not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, or disability, in connection with any actions or responsibilities under the HCV program and the HAP contract with the GRHC.

The owner must cooperate with the GRHC and with HUD in conducting any equal opportunity compliance reviews and complaint investigations in connection with the HCV program and the HAP contract with the GRHC.

See Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity requirements in the HCV program.

PART II. HAP CONTRACTS

13-II.A. OVERVIEW

The HAP contract represents a written agreement between the GRHC and the owner of the dwelling unit occupied by a HCV assisted family. The contract spells out the owner's responsibilities under the program, as well as the GRHC's obligations. Under the HAP contract, the GRHC agrees to make housing assistance payments to the owner on behalf of the family approved by the GRHC to occupy the unit.

The HAP contract is used for all HCV program tenancies except for assistance under the Section 8 homeownership program, and assistance to families that own a manufactured home and use their assistance to lease the space for the manufactured home. See chapter 15 for a discussion of any special housing types included in the GRHC's HCV program.

When the GRHC has determined that the unit meets program requirements and the tenancy is approvable, the GRHC and owner will execute the HAP contract. See chapter 9 for a discussion of the leasing process, including provisions for execution of the HAP contract.

13-II.B. HAP CONTRACT CONTENTS

The HAP contract format is required by HUD, specifically Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract, Form HUD-52641.

The HAP contract contains three parts.

Part A of the contract includes basic contract information: the names of the tenant and all household members, the address of the contract unit, start and end dates of initial lease term, the amount of initial monthly rent to owner, the amount of initial housing assistance payment, the utilities and appliances to be supplied by owner and tenant, and the signatures of the GRHC representative and owner [HCV Guidebook, pp. 11-10 and 11-11]. The GRHC has made no modifications to Part A of the HAP contract.

Part B is the body of the contract. It describes in detail program requirements affecting the owner and owner roles and responsibilities under the HCV program. Most of the requirements contained in Part B of the HAP contract are outlined elsewhere in this plan. Topics addressed in Part B include:

- Lease of Contract Unit
- Maintenance, Utilities, and Other Services
- Term of HAP Contract
- Provision and Payment of Utilities and Appliances
- Rent to Owner: Reasonable Rent
- GRHC Payment to Owner
- Prohibition of Discrimination
- Owner's Breach of HAP Contract
- GRHC and HUD Access to Premises and Owner's Records
- Exclusion of Third Party Rights

- Conflict of Interest
- Assignment of the HAP Contract
- Written Notices
- Entire Agreement Interpretation

Part C of the contract includes the Tenancy Addendum (Form HUD-52641-A). The addendum sets forth the tenancy requirements for the program and the composition of the household, as approved by the GRHC. The tenant has the right to enforce the Tenancy Addendum against the owner. The terms of the Tenancy Addendum prevail over any other provisions of the lease.

13-II.C. HAP CONTRACT PAYMENTS

General

During the term of the HAP contract, and subject to the provisions of the HAP contract, the GRHC will make monthly HAP payments to the owner on behalf of the family, at the beginning of each month. If a lease term begins after the first of the month, the HAP payment for the first month is prorated for a partial month.

The amount of the HAP payment is determined according to the policies described in Chapter 6 and is subject to change during the term of the HAP contract. The GRHC must notify the owner and the family in writing of any changes in the HAP payment.

HAP payments can be made only during the lease term, and only while the family is residing in the unit.

The monthly HAP payment by the GRHC is credited toward the monthly rent to owner under the family's lease. The total of the rent paid by the tenant and the HAP payment is equal to the rent to owner as specified in the lease.

The family is not responsible for payment of the HAP payment, and the GRHC is not responsible for payment of the family share of rent.

The family's share of the rent cannot be more than the difference between the rent to owner and the HAP payment. The owner may not demand or accept any rent payment from the tenant in excess of this maximum [24 CFR 982.451(b)(4)]. The owner may not charge the tenant extra amounts for items customarily included in rent in the locality or provided at no additional cost to unsubsidized tenants in the premises [24 CFR 982.510(c)]. See chapter 9 for a discussion of separate, non-lease agreements for services, appliances and other items that are not included in the lease.

If the owner receives any excess HAP from the GRHC, the excess amount will be returned immediately. If the GRHC determines that the owner is not entitled to all or a portion of the HAP, the GRHC may deduct the amount of overpayment from any amounts due to the owner, including amounts due under any other Section 8 HCV contract. See Chapter 16 for additional detail on owner reimbursement of HAP overpayments.

Owner Certification of Compliance

Unless the owner complies with all provisions of the HAP contract, the owner is not entitled to receive housing assistance payments under the HAP contract [HAP Contract – Form HUD-52641].

By endorsing the monthly check from the GRHC, the owner certifies to compliance with the terms of the HAP contract. This includes certification that the owner is maintaining the unit and premises in accordance with HQS; that the contract unit is leased to the tenant family and, to the best of the owner's knowledge, the family resides in the unit as the family's only residence; the rent to owner does not exceed rents charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units on the premises; and that the owner does not receive (other than rent to owner) any additional payments or other consideration for rent of the contract unit during the HAP term.

Late HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.451(a)(5)]

The GRHC is responsible for making HAP payments promptly when due to the owner, in accordance with the terms of the HAP contract. After the first two calendar months of the HAP contract term, the HAP contract provides for late penalties if the GRHC fails to make the HAP payment on time.

Penalties for late HAP payments can only be imposed if 1) the penalties are in accordance with generally accepted local rental market practices and law governing penalties for late payment by tenants; 2) it is the owner's normal business practice to charge late payment penalties for both assisted and unassisted families; and 3) the owner charges the assisted family for late payment of the family's share of the rent.

The GRHC is not required to pay a late payment penalty if HUD determines that the payment is late for reasons beyond the GRHC's control. In addition, late payment penalties are not required if the GRHC intentionally delays or denies payment as a remedy to an owner breach of the HAP contract [HCV Guidebook p. 11-7].

Termination of HAP Payments [24 CFR 982.311(b)]

The GRHC will continue making housing assistance payments to the owner in accordance with the HAP contract as long as the tenant continues to occupy the unit and the HAP contract is not violated.

HAP payments terminate when the HAP contract terminates or when the tenancy is terminated in accordance with the terms of the lease.

If the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit, the GRHC will continue to make housing assistance payments to the owner until the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant.

The owner must inform the GRHC when the owner has initiated eviction proceedings against the family and the family continues to reside in the unit.

The owner must inform the GRHC when the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant and provide the GRHC with a copy of such judgment or determination.

After the owner has obtained a court judgment or other process allowing the owner to evict the tenant, the GRHC will continue to make HAP payments to the owner until the family actually moves from the unit or until the family is physically evicted from the unit, whichever is earlier. The owner must inform the GRHC of the date when the family actually moves from the unit or the family is physically evicted from the unit.

13-II.D. BREACH OF HAP CONTRACT [24 CFR 982.453]

Any of the following actions by the owner constitutes a breach of the HAP contract:

- If the owner violates any obligations under the HAP contract including failure to maintain the unit in accordance with HQS
- If the owner has violated any obligation under any other HAP contract under Section 8
- If the owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program
- For projects with mortgages insured by HUD or loans made by HUD, if the owner has failed to comply with the regulation for the applicable program; or if the owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the mortgage or loan
- If the owner has engaged in drug-related criminal activity
- If the owner has committed any violent criminal activity

If the GRHC determines that a breach of the HAP contract has occurred, it may exercise any of its rights and remedies under the HAP contract.

The GRHC rights and remedies against the owner under the HAP contract include recovery of any HAP overpayment, suspension of housing assistance payments, abatement or reduction of the housing assistance payment, termination of the payment or termination of the HAP contract. The GRHC may also obtain additional relief by judicial order or action.

The GRHC will notify the owner of its determination and provide in writing the reasons for the determination. The notice may require the owner to take corrective action by an established deadline. The GRHC will provide the owner with written notice of any reduction in housing assistance payments or the termination of the HAP contract.

Before the GRHC invokes a remedy against an owner, the GRHC will evaluate all information and documents available to determine if the contract has been breached.

If relevant, the GRHC will conduct an audit of the owner's records pertaining to the tenancy or unit.

If it is determined that the owner has breached the contract, the GRHC will consider all of the relevant factors including the seriousness of the breach, the effect on the family, the owner's record of compliance and the number and seriousness of any prior HAP contract violations.

13-II.E. HAP CONTRACT TERM AND TERMINATIONS

The term of the HAP contract runs concurrently with the term of the dwelling lease [24 CFR 982.451(a)(2)], beginning on the first day of the initial term of the lease and terminating on the last day of the term of the lease, including any lease term extensions.

The HAP contract and the housing assistance payments made under the HAP contract terminate if [HCV Guidebook pp.11-4 and 11-5, pg. 15-3]:

- The owner or the family terminates the lease;
- The lease expires;
- The GRHC terminates the HAP contract;

- The GRHC terminates assistance for the family;
- The family moves from the assisted unit. In this situation, the owner is entitled to keep the housing assistance payment for the month when the family moves out of the unit.
- 180 calendar days have elapsed since the GRHC made the last housing assistance payment to the owner;
- The family is absent from the unit for longer than the maximum period permitted by the GRHC;
- The Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) between the GRHC and HUD expires
- The GRHC elects to terminate the HAP contract. The GRHC may elect to terminate the HAP contract in each of the following situations:
 - Available program funding is not sufficient to support continued assistance for families in the program [24 CFR 982.454];
 - The unit does not meet HQS size requirements due to change in family composition [24 CFR 982.403] – see chapter 8;
 - The unit does not meet HQS [24 CFR 982.404] – see chapter 8;
 - The family breaks up [HUD Form 52641] – see chapter 3;

The owner breaches the HAP contract [24 CFR 982.453(b)] – see Section 13-II.D.

If the GRHC terminates the HAP contract, the GRHC must give the owner and the family written notice. Once a HAP contract is terminated, no further HAP payments may be made under that contract [HCV Guidebook pg.15-4].

In all cases, the HAP contract terminates at the end of the calendar month that follows the calendar month in which the GRHC gives written notice to the owner. The owner is not entitled to any housing assistance payment after this period and must return to the GRHC any housing assistance payment received after this period.

If the family moves from the assisted unit into a new unit, even if the new unit is in the same building or complex as the assisted unit, the HAP contract for the assisted unit terminates. A new HAP contract would be required [HCV GB, p. 11-17].

When the family moves from an assisted unit into a new unit, the term of the HAP contract for the new unit may begin in the same month in which the family moves out of its old unit. This is not considered a duplicative subsidy [HCV GB, p. 8-22].

13-II.F. CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP / ASSIGNMENT OF THE HAP CONTRACT [HUD-52641]

The HAP contract cannot be assigned to a new owner without the prior written consent of the GRHC.

An owner under a HAP contract must notify the GRHC in writing prior to a change in the legal ownership of the unit. The owner must supply all information as requested by the GRHC.

Prior to approval of assignment to a new owner, the new owner must agree to be bound by and comply with the HAP contract. The agreement between the new owner and the former owner

must be in writing and in a form that the GRHC finds acceptable. The new owner must provide the GRHC with a copy of the executed agreement.

Assignment of the HAP contract will be approved only if the new owner is qualified to become an owner under the HCV program according to the policies in Section 13-I.D. of this chapter.

The GRHC must receive a signed, written request from the existing owner stating the name and address of the new HAP payee and the effective date of the assignment in order to change the HAP payee under an outstanding HAP contract.

Within 15 calendar days of receiving the owner's request, the GRHC will inform the current owner in writing whether the assignment may take place.

The new owner must provide a written certification to the GRHC that includes:

- A copy of the escrow statement or other document showing the transfer of title and recorded deed;
- A copy of the owner's IRS Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification, or the social security number of the new owner;
- The effective date of the HAP contract assignment;
- A written agreement to comply with the terms of the HAP contract; and
- A certification that the new owner is not a prohibited relative.

If the new owner does not agree to an assignment of the HAP contract, or fails to provide the necessary documents, the GRHC will terminate the HAP contract with the old owner. If the new owner wants to offer the family a new lease, and the family elects to stay with continued assistance, the GRHC will process the leasing in accordance with the policies in Chapter 9.

13-II.G. FORECLOSURE [Notice PIH 2010-49]

Families receiving HCV assistance are entitled to certain protections set forth under the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act (PTFA). During the term of the lease, the new owner of the property does not have good cause to terminate the tenant's lease, unless the new owner will occupy the unit as their primary residence and has provided the tenant with at least a 90-day notice. In that case, the lease may be terminated effective on the date of sale, although the tenant is still entitled to a 90-day notice to vacate. Further, the new owner assumes interest in the lease between the prior owner and the tenant and to the HAP contract.

Any state or local law that provides longer time periods or other additional protections for tenants also applies.

If a property is in foreclosure, the GRHC will make all reasonable efforts to determine the status of the foreclosure and ownership of the property and will continue to make payments to the original owner until ownership legally transfers in accordance with the HAP contract.

The GRHC will attempt to obtain a written acknowledgement of the assignment of the HAP contract from the successor in interest. This will include a request for owner information, including a tax identification number and payment instructions from the new owner. Even if the new owner does not acknowledge the assignment of the HAP contract in writing, the assignment is still effective by operation of law.

The GRHC will inform the tenant that they must continue to pay rent in accordance with the lease, and if the new owner refuses to accept payment or cannot be identified, the tenant should pay rent into escrow. Failure to pay rent may constitute an independent ground for eviction.

In the event that the GRHC is unable to make HAP payments to the new owner due to an action or inaction by the new owner that prevents such payments (e.g., rejection of payments or failure to maintain the property according to HQS), or due to an inability to identify the new owner, the GRHC will either use the funds to pay:

The utilities that are the owner's responsibility after taking reasonable steps to notify the owner; except that if the unit has been or will be rendered uninhabitable due to termination or threat of termination of service, prior notice is not required. In the latter case, the GRHC shall notify the owner within a reasonable time after making the utility payment; or for the family's reasonable moving costs, including security deposit costs.

The GRHC will also refer the tenant, as needed, to the local legal aid office in order to ensure adequate protection of the tenant's rights and enforcement of the successor in interest's performance under the HAP contract.

See Section 12-III.B for a discussion of foreclosure as it pertains to owner termination of tenancy.