Mainely Landlords
For landlords with tenants who have Housing Choice Vouchers from MaineHousing

MANY OF YOU MAY HAVE HEARD RUMORS ABOUT POTENTIAL FUNDING CUTS AT THE U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which could affect rental assistance programs. We have been notified by our HUD representatives in Boston that we will receive less funding this year but that the exact amount of the decrease has not been determined.

Based on the information we received, we have decided to stop issuing vouchers to new program participants, except in the case of some special voucher types like Project-Based Vouchers targeted to a specific group of participants such as the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers for homeless veterans.

We will not resume issuing regular vouchers until our voucher count has decreased to the number that our projected funding levels will support. This does not mean that owners will not see any voucher holders as we will continue to project-based funding levels will support. This does not mean that owners will not see any voucher holders as we will continue to

Owner Eligibility:

- For rental units are targeted to a specific group of participants such as the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers for homeless veterans.

- We will not resume issuing regular vouchers until our voucher count has decreased to the number that our projected funding levels will support. This does not mean that owners will not see any new applications from MaineHousing voucher holders as we will continue to issue vouchers to current program participants who wish to move when they have completed their lease requirements.

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Lead Hazard Control Program
Grants, loans can make impact

Exposure to lead-based paint may be harmful to you, your family and your tenants. Lead-based paint still is found in a significant number of single-family and multi-family homes in Maine built before 1978, and is especially toxic to children under six years old.

MaineHousing’s Lead Hazard Control Program provides 0% deferred, forgivable loans (interest free with no monthly payments) to landlords, and grants to single-family households, in an effort to make lower-income homes in Maine lead safe.

Making homes lead safe may involve paint removal or stabilization, and window and door replacement.

This program provides up to $16,000 to eligible owner occupied single-family homeowners, and up to $10,000 per unit with a 10 unit maximum per landlord for lead safety improvements. For landlords, the entire amount of the deferred forgivable loan is forgiven after 5 years, provided the property isn’t refinanced or sold during that time and rental units are reserved for low-income tenants.

Homeowner eligibility: If you own a single-family home that was built before 1978, your income is at or below 80% of the area median income, and you have a child under age six years old living at home, you may be eligible. Priority is given to families whose children under age six years old test positive for elevated lead levels in their blood.

Landlord eligibility: If you own an affordable multi-family rental property that was developed before 1978, you may be eligible, provided that the rental units have at least one bedroom, half of the rental units are rented to tenants with household incomes of less than 80% of the area median income and half to tenants with household incomes less than 50% of the area median income. The rental units must be kept affordable for five years.

For more information, please contact the agency in the county where you live from the above list.

Mainely Landlords
Be part of MaineHousing’s Owner Excellence Program!

Learn more at MaineHousing.org

Your rental property is an investment
Don’t let it go up in smoke.

For help implementing a smoke-free policy for your rentals, contact the Smoke-Free Housing Coalition of Maine at (207) 874-8774 or info@smokefreeforme.org

Lauren Bustard
HCV Program Director

MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, familial status or receipt of public assistance in the admission or access to or treatment in its programs and activities. In employment, MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, age, familial status or receipt of public assistance in the admission or access to or treatment in its programs and activities. In employment, MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability or genetic information. MaineHousing will provide appropriate communication auxiliary aids and services upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing will also provide this document in alternative formats upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing has designated the following person responsible for coordinating compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination requirements and addressing grievances: Louise Patenaude, Maine State Housing Authority, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine 04330-4633, Telephone Number 1-800-452-4668 (voice in state only), (207) 626-4600 (voice) or Maine Relay 711.
HCV director: new guidance on VAWA protections

In other news, new guidance has been issued by HUD on the Housing Protections of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013. This act provides protections for those victims of domestic violence (female and male) that are participants in certain federally subsidized rental assistance programs, including the Housing Choice Voucher program.

VAWA covers people who are subject to: domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The following outlines those protections that affect HCV participants:

Admissions:
• An applicant cannot be denied on the basis that s/he has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.
• Crimes against a survivor "directly relating" to the abuse are not grounds for evicting the survivor or terminating rental assistance.
• An incident of actual or threatened domestic violence doesn’t constitute a "serious or repeated lease violation" or "good cause" for eviction or subsidy termination.
• Landlords can only evict an HCV participant if they can demonstrate an "actual and imminent threat" to other tenants or employees at the property if the survivor is not evicted.
• HCV program administrators may terminate voucher assistance to the abuser while preserving assistance to the perpetrator.

Allowable Moves:
• If a survivor must move for safety reasons, VAWA allows for "Emergency Transfer Plans" and implement a process whereby the survivor is assisted in moving to another unit "Emergency Transfer Plans" and implement a process whereby the survivor is assisted in moving to another unit.

Evictions and Terminations:
• An applicant cannot be denied housing on the basis that s/he has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.
• Landlords can only evict an HCV participant if they can demonstrate an "actual and imminent threat" to other tenants or employees at the property if the survivor is not evicted.
• HCV program administrators may terminate voucher assistance to the abuser while preserving assistance to the perpetrator.

Lease Addendum:
• HUD now requires a Lease Addendum (see photo above) regarding VAWA rights to be completed and signed by tenant and landlord and submitted with any new lease for an HCV program participant.

Questions? Please contact me at Bustard@mainehousing.org or HCV Program Manager Allison Gallagher at agallagher@mainehousing.org.

We hope to meet many of you in person at one of the three landlord outreach scheduled for 2017. Almost 40 landlords attended the first one in Brewer on May 5. Two more will be scheduled for the fall.

MaineHousing’s Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) is making a change to its allowable smoke and CO2 detectors policy. Landlords and property owners are asked to read below to learn what is allowable.

HCV’s Inspections Services department now is allowing 10-year sealed lithium battery CO2 detectors as an alternative to hardwired with battery backup or wall outlet plug-in style devices.

Also, inspectors are allowing 10-year sealed lithium style smoke detectors in 1- and 2-unit buildings in place of the typical 9 volt or AA-style battery devices.

Our frequently asked questions along with answers are:

Testimonial

Landlord helps tenant bring family together again

I have read that the purpose of a good landlord is to keep things going – and going totally unnoticed.

Without Megunticook Realty’s attention to detail, our home would not be so well maintained. Without their groundskeepers, our yards would not look so nice and be safe to play in. Without their watchful gaze, my family would not feel so secure.

Most importantly, without the generosity of Mainehousing, my family would never have this wonderful opportunity to come back together in a community that is known for its strong family ethic.

I am truly grateful to Camden for being the town I am. I am thankful to Mainehousing for helping us move to this town, and to Megunticook Realty for its ownership and management of my apartment. This company is one of the major reasons why we are getting our children back.

- A happy tenant

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10-year sealed lithium battery detectors OK for use in units

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Almost 40 Bangor-Brewer area landlords and property owners attended our Landlord Lunch & Learn on May 5 at Brewer Housing Authority. MaineHousing is grateful to Brewer, Bangor, and Old Town Housing Authorities for their support in hosting this event. Participants listened to presentations from (above, from left) Housing Choice Voucher Program Director Lauren Bustard; HQS Inspections Team Leader Rob Seavey; Attorney Joseph Bethony of Gross, Minsky & Mogul Attorneys at Law; Josh D’Alessio, manager of homeless initiatives of Hope House; Loretta Tomes, project coordinator of Community Mediation Services; and Mel Clareage and Jill Johanning of Alpha One.

Thank you, too, to our partners: Northeast Restoration and Remodeling, Efficiency Maine, Machias Savings Bank, Sherwin Williams, Penobscot Community Health Care, Greater Bangor Apartment Owners and Managers Association, and Lowe’s.

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Landlord Lunch & Learn in Brewer!