

## LANDLORD FAQ

**COVID-19, Coronavirus, continues to impact people throughout the country. The health and safety of our employees and clients is a priority. Out of an abundance of caution, Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) is closed to the public until further notice.**

We realize you may have many questions and concerns that need to be addressed. We will continue to provide updated information regarding DHA's operations on our website, [www.decaturhousing.org](http://www.decaturhousing.org). Additionally, you may call or email Carmen Harris or Carrie Hayes, if you have questions. Staff contact information can be found on DHA's website. Most staff are working remotely but your call will be returned. We appreciate your patience.

We would like to address some of your Frequently Asked Questions, FAQs, below.

**Q. Will I get paid during the COVID-19 crisis?**

**A.** Yes. HUD has not indicated that funding is suspended or delayed.

**Q. I received more/less money from DHA this month, why?**

**A.** Changes in the family's income and/or composition will change the amount of rent paid by the family and by DHA. For example, when the family receives more income, the family's share of rent increases and DHA's portion decreases. The rent to owner remains the same.

**Q. Do participants have to pay rent during this time?**

**A.** Yes. Families should continue to pay their share of rent to the owner. If the family is unable to pay their rent, the family should make payment arrangements with the landlord. If rent payments are deferred, the family's rent will be due at some point in time. Participants can be evicted **for non-payment of rent, even though the hearing may be held at a later date.**

**Q. Does the tenant have to pay rent if they lose their job or their hours are reduced?**

**A.** Participants should immediately notify their landlords and attempt to make payment arrangements. We ask landlords to work with families at this difficult time. Participants should notify their Housing Specialists immediately if they or a family member loses their job, or they are working fewer hours. The family's rent will be adjusted, and DHA will notify the owner and participant in writing of the new rental amount.

**Q. Can a landlord give the tenant an eviction notice?**

**A.** Per Atlanta Legal Aid, landlords are still able to file new eviction cases, either electronically or in person. Eviction warrants are being served and answers may be filed. The moratorium only prevents the eviction cases from being scheduled for hearings. As soon as the Judicial Emergency is lifted, any pending eviction case will be scheduled for a hearing, likely within a few weeks. We ask landlords to work with families at this difficult time.

**Q. Can I accept DHA's share of rent if I evict my tenant for non-payment of the family's share of rent?**

**A.** If you accept rent from DHA, you cannot file an eviction for non-payment of rent since you received and accepted rent on behalf of the family.

**Q. When will DHA conduct in-person Annual inspections?**

**A. In-person Annual HQS inspections will resume July 7, 2020.** Although, in-person inspections were suspended in accordance with HUD's CARES Act waivers, owners are not relieved of their responsibility to maintain the unit in accordance with HQS. Inspectors will wear a mask and gloves during the inspection. To ensure the health and safety of our inspectors and the family, participants will be asked if they or a household member is experiencing a cold, cough, or flu-like symptoms, or has been around someone with a cold, cough, or flu-like symptoms or is self-quarantining. If so, the inspection will be rescheduled in thirty (30) days. If the participant or a household member is unwell when the inspector arrives, the inspection will be canceled and rescheduled later. The family is expected to practice social distancing during the inspection and may be asked to stand outside while the inspection is conducted.

**Q. When will DHA conduct in-person Special HQS inspections?**

**A. In-person Special HQS inspections will resume July 7, 2020.** Although, in-person Special inspections were suspended in accordance with HUD's CARES Act waivers, owners are not relieved of their responsibility to maintain the unit in accordance with HQS. Inspectors will wear a mask and gloves during the inspection. To ensure the health and safety of our inspectors and the family, participants will be asked if they or a household member is experiencing a cold, cough, or flu-like symptoms or self-quarantining. If so, the inspection will be rescheduled in thirty (30) days or DHA will use an alternate method to conduct the Special inspection. If the participant or a household member is unwell when the inspector arrives, the inspection will be canceled and rescheduled later or DHA will use an alternate method to conduct the Special inspection. The family is expected to practice social distancing during the inspection and may be asked to stand outside while the inspection is conducted.

If the Special inspection cannot be performed due to a family member's illness, as an alternative to conducting the in-person Special Inspection, DHA may use an alternative method to conduct special HQS inspections. DHA will notify the owner of the reported deficiency. For life-threatening deficiencies, the owner must correct the deficiency within 24 hours of DHA's notification. The owner will be required to self-certify that the life-threatening deficiency is corrected or provide documentation that the life-threatening deficiency does not exist within 24 hours. The tenant may be asked to verify that the deficiency was corrected. Failure to correct the deficiency in 24 hours will result in abated payments. DHA reserves the right to require supporting documentation of the completion of the inspection, including but not limited to photos, videos, or repair receipts to verify the repairs have been made.

For non-life-threatening deficiencies, the owner will be given 30 days to correct the deficiency or document that the deficiency does not exist. The owner will be required to self-certify that the non-life-threatening deficiency is corrected within 30 days. The tenant will be asked to verify that the deficiency was corrected. Failure to correct the non-life-threatening deficiency in 30 days will result in abated payments. DHA reserves the right to require supporting documentation of the completion of the inspection, including but not limited to photos, videos, or repair receipts to verify the repairs have been made.

**Q. Is DHA conducting move-in inspections?**

**A. Yes.** DHA is conducting initial inspections. **Units must be vacant.** Owners should thoroughly disinfect the unit after the previous resident moves out. The initial inspection will not be conducted if

the owner, property manager or representative is experiencing a cold or flu-like symptoms. The inspector will contact the owner the day before and prior to entering the unit to confirm that the owner, manager, or representative to be present during the inspection is not experiencing flu-like symptoms. The inspection will be rescheduled if the owner, manager, or representative is not well.

**Q. Can the family move into the unit before it passes initial inspection?**

**A.** No. The property **will not** be inspected if the family has moved into the unit.

**Q. Can families live anywhere in DeKalb County?**

**A.** As participants in Decatur Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program, families can live anywhere in DeKalb County except within the City of Atlanta or the City of Lithonia city limits. The City of Atlanta and the City of Lithonia have their own housing authorities.

**Q. How can I become a landlord on the HCV program?**

**A.** Complete the Register Property Packet and submit the required documents. The Register Property Packet can be found under Landlord Forms on the website.

**Q. How do I list my property?**

**A.** Several websites offer property listings including [www.georgiahousingsearch.org](http://www.georgiahousingsearch.org) and [www.gosection8.com](http://www.gosection8.com). Owners are encouraged to list their properties on these websites.

**Q. What are comparables?**

**A.** HUD requires housing authorities to ensure that rents charged by owners to Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program participants are reasonable and not higher than rent charged to unassisted tenants. Housing authorities must compare the rent for the voucher unit to rents for similar unassisted units in the marketplace. The determination of reasonable rent is based on the location, quality, size, unit type, age of the contract unit, amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities the owner must provide under the lease. DHA obtains comparables from the website, [www.socialserve.com](http://www.socialserve.com). Owners are strongly encouraged to list their assisted and unassisted units on this website. In accordance with the federal regulations, housing authorities cannot approve a requested rent if it is not reasonable.

**Q. Who pays the security deposit?**

**A.** The family is responsible for paying the security deposit to the owner.

**Q. Who pays the utility service deposits?**

**A.** If the family is responsible for paying the utility bill, then the family is responsible for paying the deposit.

**Q. Can the family pay more rent than DHA tells them to pay?**

**A.** No. It is a violation of the federal regulations for families to pay more rent than the amount calculated by the housing authority. That is called a side payment.

**Q. Can I increase the rent?**

**A.** Rent increases will be processed only at the family's annual recertification. The Notice to Increase Rent form can be found under Landlord Forms on the website. In accordance with the federal regulations, DHA cannot approve a rent increase if the requested rent is not reasonable and/or comparables cannot be obtained.