



To: THA Housing Authority Staff
From: Michael Mirra, Executive Director
Date: April 27, 2020
Subject: Executive Emergency Authorization #9: A Moratorium on Time Limit Expirations for Voucher Participants

Michael Mirra

THA Board Resolution 2020-03-18(1) allows the Executive Director (or his designee) to take emergency actions during the COVID-19 pandemic that he deems necessary to ensure continued operations of Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) while protecting its employees, clients, vendors, partners and the community as a whole.

This Executive Action permits THA, during the coronavirus pandemic, to continue paying housing assistance payments (HAP) for households beyond their normal time limit expiration date to August 1, 2020.

1. TIME LIMITED PROGRAMS

THA administers the following time-limited programs:

1.1 Housing Opportunity Program (HOP)

HOP is a fixed-subsidy rental assistance program with a 5-year time limit for work-able households. As of 2013, HOP replaced THA's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program for newly assisted households. (Executive Action #5 waived the normal rules to allow participants who lost income due to the pandemic to request a reduction in their share of the rent.)

1.2 Child Housing Opportunity Program (CHOP)

CHOP is a fixed-subsidy rental assistance program with a 3-year time limit for work-able households. CHOP provides rental assistance to families who need housing to prevent or shorten their child's foster care placement or to house a teenager aging out of foster care. (Executive Action #5 waived the normal rules to allow participants who lost income due to the pandemic to request a reduction in their share of the rent.)

1.3 Family Unification Program Youth (FUPY)

FUPY is an income-based rental assistance program with a 3-year time limit for work-able households. FUPY is a program under which Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) are provided to Youth at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years old who:

- left foster care at age 16 or older or will leave foster care within 90 days
- are homeless; or,
- are at risk of homelessness.

1.4 College Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)

CHAP is a fixed-subsidy rental assistance program with a 5-year time limit. CHAP provides rental assistance to homeless and near homeless college students enrolled with one of THA's post-secondary partners. Executive Action 6 provides additional waivers to participants of this program during the pandemic. (Executive Action #5 waived the normal rules to allow participants who lost income due to the pandemic to request a reduction in their share of the rent.)

2. EXISTING HARDSHIP POLICIES

2.1 Housing Opportunity Program (HOP)

HOP participants may apply for a 90-day extension of housing assistance for an unforeseen loss of income. This loss must occur within 90 days prior to program exit. HOP participants may also apply for an extension of up to 1-year to allow for the completion of or continued participation in a self-sufficiency activity that is likely to increase earned income.

2.2 Child Housing Opportunity Program (CHOP)

The CHOP does not have a stand-alone hardship policy. In the absence of one, it defaults to the HOP policy.

2.3 Family Unification Program Youth (FUPY)

FUPY does not have a policy that would permit an extension of its time limits.

2.4 College Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)

CHAP participants may apply for a 30-day extension of housing assistance if they are at-risk of losing their housing and have a shelter burden greater than 40%.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 THA Landlord Advisory Committee

THA's Landlord Advisory Committee reviewed this temporary policy change and did not offer any objections or additional feedback.

3.2 Northwest Justice Project

Northwest Justice Project (NJP) generally supports the moratorium on time limits. NJP asked that we consider staggering the time limit expirations once they are reinstated.

4. ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF IMPACTED PROGRAM EXITS

Over the next 120 day days, 15 time-limited households are scheduled to exit THA's programs. By October 1, 2020 an additional 12 households are scheduled to exit. These anticipated exits do not include CHAP households. Their eligibility is determined and tracked by the post-secondary partners.

5. LENGTH OF EXTENSION OF HAP BEYOND DEADLINES

THA will continue to pay HAP for time limited households scheduled to exit THA programs between March 1st and August 2020. THA will review this Executive Action in June. If no further action is taken, these households will receive their final HAP on August 1, 2020; at that time the normal rules governing extensions shall apply. This means that at that time the households can apply for the 3-month hardship extension or the 1 year extension under the normal rules.

This policy change is effective as of March 1, 2020.

Cc: Derek Young, THA Chair