

EXISTING HOUSING DIVISION COVID-19 FAQs

Are you open?

The Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) is currently **closed to walk-in traffic**; however, our staff is continuing to work to ensure a continuation of our services. You must call ahead of time to schedule appointment and meet with someone in our office. You must comply with social distancing, sanitize your hands upon entry and face masks are required. Our office hours remain the same - Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 4:30 pm. If you need our assistance, please email sec8info@hawaiicounty.gov or call 808-959-4642.

Do you provide Emergency Rent Assistance?

Unfortunately, the OHCD is not able to provide emergency rental assistance.

Will my landlord be paid?

Yes. We do not anticipate any disruptions to our Housing Assistance Payments (HAP).

My employment income has been affected by the COVID-19 shutdown. When should I report the change?

You may report decreases in your income to have your rent portion reviewed. You must report increases in your income within 30 days of the increase. You must report income changes in writing. We understand that some employers are paying their employees during this shutdown, some employees are using their sick/personal leave, and some employees may be covered by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. If you are out of work but still being paid the same amount because of one of the above reasons, you DO NOT need to report this change.

My self-employment is affected by the COVID-19 shutdown? How should I report this?

Please report your changes in writing following the instructions below.

How do I report a change in my income?

Please report your change in writing along with any documentation that shows the change in income. A housing specialist will review your documentation and let you know if any other forms of verifications are needed. Please email us your changes at sec8info@hawaiicounty.gov, fax to 959-9308, mail to 1990 Kino'ole Street, Suite #102, Hilo, HI 96720 or drop it off.

How do I submit documents to your office?

You may submit documents to our office via email to sec8info@hawaiicounty.gov, fax to 808-959-9308, mail to 1990 Kino'ole Street, Suite #102, Hilo, HI 96720, or by dropping them off.

If you submit information via email by sending a picture of a requested document, please do your best to ensure the picture is clear and covers the full document.

In order to drop something off, you will need to use our drop box, which has been installed on the outside of the building, closest to Poke-to-Go. Your original documents will be mailed back to your address on file within 10 business days.

How long will it take for my change to be processed?

The Existing Housing (EH) Division will process all changes as quickly as possible. The amount of time it takes us to process these changes depends on the number of changes reported to us and if you have provided all required documents. Please know that all our staff is focused on processing these changes as quickly as possible to ensure our Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) are accurate and appropriate based on your income.

I haven't been able to find a unit and my voucher is about to expire. Can I get an extension?

Though each situation will still be reviewed individually, extensions can be granted during this time. Please submit your request in writing prior to the expiration date of the voucher and explain the reason for an extension. If approved, we will contact you with the updated expiration date. Please email us at sec8info@hawaiicounty.gov.

I'm due for an Annual Inspection. When will it be?

Qualified units will be inspected once every 24 months. Units with life-threatening and/or eight or more deficiencies at the next inspection will continue to be inspected annually. Owner/agents are encouraged to conduct regular inspections for lease compliance.

I'm moving to a new unit. Will these changes affect my move?

No. We are still conducting move-in inspections so that lease-ups may be completed, and we are making arrangements for landlords to sign their HAP Contracts without coming into our office. Please make sure you are checking with the landlord. Some management offices are closed or have altered their office hours during this shutdown and you would need to make arrangements with them to complete the move-in process.

Families no longer have to wait until a new unit passes the initial OHCD inspection to move in. Families may now choose to move into a new unit with non-life-threatening deficiencies. If the contract rent is determined reasonable and the family occupies the unit, Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) may begin. To avoid suspension or termination of the HAP, the owner will have 30 days to complete the repair(s) to the unit. Upon notification, the OHCD will re-inspect the unit to confirm. Failure by the owner to repair the unit will enable the family to receive a voucher to search for a suitable unit.

I received an eviction notice from my landlord. What do I need to do?

You should contact legal services for questions regarding evictions:

Legal Aid Society of Hawaii (LASH) 1-800-499-4302

LASH Q & A COVID-19 Impact: Housing issues: <https://tinyurl.com/uxm7wt6>

I received a move-out notice from my landlord and/or I gave my landlord notice to vacate. What do I need to do?

We recommend talking to your landlord to see if this notice can be postponed until after the shutdown period. If your landlord is still requiring that you move out of the unit based on the notice provided, you can send a copy of that notice to our office via email at sec8info@hawaiicounty.gov, fax to 808-959-4642, mail it in or drop it off to start the moving process.

How can I contact you to ask a question?

If your question is not addressed in this FAQ, you can call our office at 808-959-4642. You can also email us at sec8info@hawaiicounty.gov. Please understand that we will respond as quickly as possible. You do not need to leave/send multiple messages.