



## REDUCTION IN RENTAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS COMING

**Effective immediately we will be strictly enforcing the rules of the Housing Choice Voucher program.**

**There will be no second chances. Any violation of the voucher will result in termination from the program.**

The Voucher Program receives a limited amount of funds to provide assistance to as many households as possible. Unfortunately, the need for rental assistance far exceeds the amount of money we receive.

At one time we served 204 households. Currently we serve 145 and the amount of monthly assistance payments is more than the amount of money we receive from HUD.

If further reductions in housing assistance payments cannot be achieved, an across the board reduction for all participants may be necessary.

The reporting requirements have not changed. In the past we may have been more lenient on the deadlines but we can no longer afford to do that.

We must reduce program costs further or there will not be enough funds to pay rental assistance.

More households will need to be removed from the program.

**Households that do not comply with program requirements will be removed.**

Our mission is to provide affordable housing opportunities for lower income citizens of Dodge County in an environment which preserves the dignity of the client and in a manner which maintains the public trust.

We have a responsibility to ensure that the funds we receive are being used appropriately and that everyone is following the rules.

It is our job as good stewards of government money to ensure participants are complying with the terms of the program.

It is YOUR obligation to report changes in income and household status on or before the date of the change, pay your share of the rent and utilities, and be a good tenant by not violating the terms of the lease.

We need to work together so your family can have an affordable place to live.

We do not mean to imply that all program participants violate the program.

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# REDUCTION IN RENTAL ASSISTANCE **continued**

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A sample voucher form is included in this mailing. A review of some program requirements is listed on page 2 and 3. **If you do not understand your obligations on the program, you need to contact us so we can explain them to you.**

Each time your rent is adjusted a copy of the 50058 calculations form is included with the updated letter. This form details the members of your household and the income that is used to calculate your rental assistance.

Anytime this information changes you are required to report the change to us. If you do not have a copy of your most recent 50058 form, contact us so we can mail it to you.

**INCOME** – Tough anti-fraud initiatives including increased income matching and aggressive verification systems are being implemented.

You should review your 50058 form now. If the income information shown on this form is not accurate, you need to report it immediately.

**If the change is reported before August 31, 2005 and you have not received a prior warning about income reporting**, you will be allowed to remain on the program but a repayment plan may be initiated.

Income changes must be reported on or before the date you are aware of the change. For example,

- If there is a change in the child support payments from what is shown on the 50058 form, you need to contact us the day you receive the check or notice of the change.
- If you are starting a new job, you need to notify us as soon as you know your start date. **Do not** wait until you receive a paycheck.

- If you get a raise at work, you need to notify us as soon as you find out.

- If you are awarded unemployment benefits, you need to notify us as soon as you receive your letter.

- If you receive a letter for an increase in social security or disability payments, you need to notify us as soon as you receive the letter. (The only exception is the annual cost of living adjustment. This change will be processed at your annual certification.)

**Any** change must be reported right away. We will determine if or when an increase will take affect.

**Underreported income determined after August 31, 2005** will result in your termination from the program and a repayment plan will be initiated.

A household that owes money to any Housing Authority is not eligible to participate in the Voucher program or live in public housing anywhere in the United States.

**HOUSEHOLD MEMBER CHANGES** – Only the people listed on the 50058 form are allowed to live in your unit. If your 50058 form is not correct, you must contact us right away.

If a minor (under the age of 18) moves in or out of the household, you need to contact us as soon as you know of the change.

If an adult (over the age of 18) moves out of the household, you need to contact us as soon as you know of the change.

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# REDUCTION IN RENTAL ASSISTANCE continued

If an adult (over the age of 18) wishes to move into the household, this requires permission from the landlord and us. We need to complete the necessary paperwork and verify this person is eligible to reside in the unit. You must contact us prior to the person moving in.

Visitors – If allowed by your landlord, a person can visit up to 14 consecutive days but no more than 21 total days per calendar year. The limit is 21 days total per calendar year for all adult guests combined.

**UTILITY BILLS** – A utility allowance is factored when your rental assistance is calculated. You must pay your utilities to remain on the program.

The utility allowance we use is based on an average in the county. If you find your utility bills are too high, you may be eligible for energy assistance.

If you find the utilities in your unit exceed the utility allowance, you may need to consider moving to another unit.

**LEASE VIOLATIONS** – As always, if the court orders an eviction, you will lose your voucher. You will not be able to transfer this voucher to another property.

In addition, if your landlord does not renew your lease because of damage to the unit, repeated late rent payments or other serious lease violations and these claims can be verified, your voucher will be terminated. As a voucher holder, you are required to comply with the terms of your lease.

**RECERTIFICATION PAPERWORK, VERIFICATIONS AND INFORMATION REQUESTS** – Requests for information or verifications need to be returned in a timely manner.

If the information is not received on or before the deadline on the letter, a second request will be mailed.

If you do not respond to the second request, you will be removed from the program.

**The rental assistance is based on income, household members and adjustments such as utility allowances. If your information is not accurate, you may be receiving more assistance than you are entitled to.**

**To continue on the program you must report income and household information accurately, pay your share of the rent and utilities, and be a good tenant.**

**Households that do not comply with program requirements will be removed.**

**Thank you to the many program participants who already do this and will continue to do so.**

**If you have questions, contact our office.**

# CHANGES IN PORTABILITY OPTION

Portability is the option that allows a voucher holder to use his/her voucher in another county or state.

In the past the voucher holder was sometimes absorbed into the other Housing Authority's program.

If the other Housing Authority's budget did have enough money to support the additional voucher, the family's rental assistance was paid from the originating county's budget.

Effective immediately a portability

request will only be honored when the household is moving to a county that:

- 1) can absorb the voucher  
OR
- 2) where the payment standard is at or below the payment standard of Dodge County.

Every county has a limited budget and very few are able to absorb a portable voucher.

If you are interested in relocating to another area, we encourage you to apply to the waiting list in that area.

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## Payment Standard Changes

Each year HUD adjusts the Fair Market Rent amounts in Dodge County by bedroom size. This is the figure we use to calculate the payment standard.

In the past the adjustments were very small. Some bedroom sizes changed very little while others had a larger adjustment.

The amount of assistance paid in your behalf is the difference between 30% of your income and the payment standard. The higher the payment standard, the more subsidy that can be paid.

Payment standard changes took affect in October 2004. 0, 1 and 3 bedroom payment standards increased. If you receive this rate, your payment standard was or will be changed at the annual certification.

The 2 bedroom standard decreased \$1 while the 4 bedroom payment standard decreased \$5. If you receive this rate, your payment standard will be changed at your next annual certification after October 2005. (One year after the effective date of the decrease.)

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*Serving the county since 1972*

