



HUD HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER LANDLORD NEWSLETTER

AN OVERVIEW OF HCV LANDLORD RENT INCREASES



Landlords that participate in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program can increase their rents just as they do for market-rate tenants for the most part. Prior to implementing any rent increase, however, the landlord must get approval from the public housing agency (PHA).

To be eligible for a rent increase, the landlord must:

- Be in compliance with the program requirements.
- Have informed the tenant of the proposed rent increase in accordance with the lease.
- Provide the rent increase request to the PHA.

Once the PHA receives the rent increase request, it will evaluate whether the rent increase request is “reasonable.” The PHA determines if rent is reasonable in comparison to rent for other comparable unassisted units. Specifically, the PHA considers the location, quality, size, unit type, and age of the unit as well as any amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities that the landlord provides in accordance with the lease. The PHA might encourage you to submit documentation showing any improvements made to the unit since the family moved in or since your last rent increase.

Local PHAs might have specific guidance on how to submit a rent increase and their typical processing times. Often, a PHA will use a specific form for the rent increase which may ask for information similar to this.



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MEDIATION OFFERS VOICE TO LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

The New Hampshire Circuit Court Office of Mediation and Arbitration is operating two opportunities for landlords and tenants to resolve their differences through free, voluntary mediation.

In 2021, they piloted a mediation program in Concord where tenants and landlords who had filed an eviction writ, which summons the parties to court, could participate in a single mediation session prior to the court hearing. This demonstration was expanded to include the cities of Manchester and Nashua.



In November 2021, they also added an eviction diversion mediation program that is open to tenants and landlords who have not yet filed the eviction writ. Information promoting the program is printed on eviction notices and made available on flyers provided to advocacy organizations such as Community Action Partnerships of New Hampshire (CAPs) for distribution to landlords and tenants.

In the diversion program either party may request mediation by contacting the Office of Mediation and Arbitration by phone or email. New Hampshire Alternative Dispute Resolution Coordinator Margaret Huang explained that the initial contact acts as a triage. The Office will share information about diversion and other services including legal or rent assistance. She said that although the CAPs share service information, a surprising number of people are not aware of what services are available.

If mediation is the appropriate next step, the Office reaches out to the other party up to a total of three times to determine willingness to participate in the process. If both are amenable, the parties meet remotely by phone or video with a mediator. Mediation may remain virtual after the pandemic because it increases access for landlords and tenants located further from more urban court locations and clients in another type of mediation program expressed a preference for virtual meetings. A mediation prep form helps set expectations and find common ground. Under the diversion program, the number of meetings are not limited.

In its first 4 months, the diversion program had 21 cases that went to mediation, 12 of those have resulted in agreement. Because the program is new, the agreement types have not yet been analyzed. Agreement may not mean that a tenant remains long-term in the unit, but it does mean that the landlord and tenant saved the time and money required to go to court, and avoided a situation that some would consider intimidating.

Huang says that this program puts control in the hands of the landlord and the tenant rather than a judge, often parties have the opportunity for a frank discussion, and provides them a voice in the process. The voluntary surveys, though self-selecting, bear out her words: 94% said they would participate in mediation again, they felt respected in the process, and they felt that the mediator treated all parties impartially.

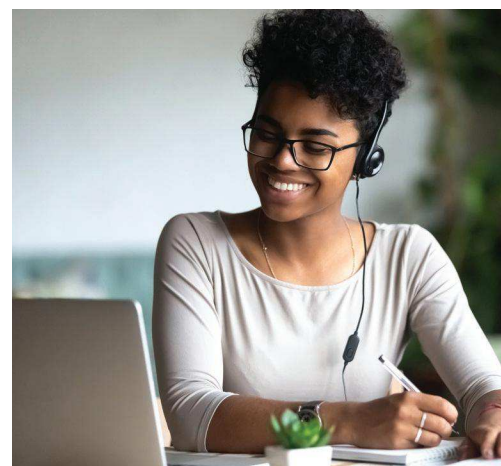
For additional information, please contact evictiondiversion@courts.state.nh.us or 603-271-6418.



A mediation prep form can be downloaded at <https://www.courts.nh.gov/resources/mediation/circuit-court-adr/landlord-tenant>

HUD HOSTS NEVADA SYMPOSIUM

HUD recently completed its second regional Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) landlord symposium in Nevada. The goal of this virtual symposium, like an earlier California symposium, was to improve the landlord experience with the HCV program by building connections between landlords and their respective housing authorities. HUD designed the symposium in three parts: In November 2021, landlords who rent in Nevada shared their experiences, concerns, and suggestions with the program. In feedback that echoed that from the 2018 HUD



Landlord Task Force

Listening Sessions,

these landlords agreed that they were proud to be able to offer affordable housing to families in need and that they appreciated the dependability of the housing subsidy payment.



Nevada's three PHAs administered more than 16,000 vouchers.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic had created significant changes. It had decreased important information sharing between landlords and tenants; landlords suggested that updates in procedures and regulations might be shared via email. Landlords working with some PHAs recommended PHAs continue the use of technology such as DocuSign, adopted during the pandemic, which had streamlined some paperwork.

In January, HUD brought the Southern Nevada, Nevada Rural, and Reno Housing Authorities together for a virtual workshop to brainstorm strategies around creating new avenues for communication and supporting landlords with additional online resources. Finally, in February, landlords and housing authorities joined in a session to connect, share updates, and discuss the workshop strategies. During the session Southern Nevada Housing Authority issued a call for landlords to participate in a landlord advisory group, which was immediately accepted by several landlords at the meeting. To learn more or see session presentations, visit [HUD HCV Landlord Task Force Events](#).

HUD HOSTS MIDWEST REGION VII VIRTUAL HCV LANDLORD SYMPOSIUM

Landlords and PHAs from Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska attended a virtual HUD HCV Landlord symposium on July 19-21, 2022. To support the symposium goal of attracting new landlords and improving the experience for existing landlords with the HCV program, HUD developed sessions on the first 2 days especially for landlords that included an HCV and special purpose voucher overviews, and inspections best practices. The third day featured resources for PHAs to use to improve their outreach and landlord relationships. Watch the [HCV Landlord Task Force Events](#) page for the recorded sessions and presentations to be posted!

RESOURCES

For additional information on the HCV Program and resources for landlords and PHAs, please visit the [HUD HCV Landlord Resources webpage](#).

Click [here](#) to join the HCV Landlord mailing list.