



September 2007

## A Landlord's Guide To DHAP In Harris County

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### *What is the DHAP program?*

Effective September 1, 2007, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) will begin rolling out a program known as DHAP – short for Disaster Housing Assistance Program.

The DHAP program will replace the existing FEMA rental-subsidy program, which currently assists approximately 40,000 families affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita – about 8,000 of which reside in Harris County.

The DHAP program is the result of an interagency agreement between HUD and FEMA. It is designed to move families currently receiving rental-assistance toward self sufficiency.

#### *How do families qualify for the DHAP program?*

All Harris County families currently receiving rental-housing assistance through FEMA are eligible for the DHAP program; there is nothing they need to do at this point to qualify.

#### *How will HUD administer the DHAP program?*

HUD will administer DHAP at the local level through its extensive network of public housing agencies. Here in Harris County, this means the Harris County Housing Authority – which will take over payment of all rental subsidies from FEMA and its existing contractor (CLC).

HUD and the Harris County Housing Authority will begin ramping up the DHAP program on September 1, 2007 and will continue the transition process through October 2007.

#### *When will the Harris County Housing Authority start taking over FEMA's rental-subsidy payments?*

FEMA's existing contractor (CLC) will continue to make rental-assistance payments to landlords through October 2007. The Harris County Housing Authority will take over all rental-assistance payments after that – effective November 1, 2007.

#### **How To Get More Information**

Call or visit the Harris County Housing Authority's DHAP Center at:

**PHONE NUMBER**  
866-497-6036

**ADDRESS**  
8933 Interchange Drive  
Houston, TX, 77054

**HOURS**  
M – F: 8:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Sat: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**WEB SITE**  
[www.dhapharriscounty.org](http://www.dhapharriscounty.org)

***What will landlords need to do to facilitate the transition to DHAP?***

The transition to DHAP will require landlords to complete four tasks by November 1, 2007:

1. Sign a contract with the Harris County Housing Authority.
2. Sign a lease addendum with their tenants.
3. Allow the Harris County Housing Authority to inspect all units to ensure they meet health and safety standards.
4. Comply with rent reasonableness requirements if a rent increase is requested.

The Harris County Housing Authority will work with all landlords in September 2007 and October 2007 to facilitate these relatively simple tasks.

***How will payments work after the transition to DHAP?***

Once the Harris County Housing Authority takes over rental-assistance payments from FEMA and CLC, it will continue to pay subsidies at FEMA's current rates — through February 2008 (subject to rent reasonableness). After that, it will reduce the level of rental subsidy each month gradually to lead families toward self sufficiency. This means that families will have to begin paying a portion of their monthly rent – starting at \$50 on March 1, 2008 and increasing incrementally by \$50 each month thereafter, until the program permanently concludes one year later (on February 28, 2009). This means that tenants will be responsible for paying their rent in its entirety beginning March 1, 2009.

***Can landlords request a rent-increase during the DHAP program?***

Landlords should be aware that any request for a rent-increase will be subject to rent reasonableness.

***Who is responsible for collecting the tenant co-payments once they go into effect?***

Landlords will be responsible for collecting all co-payments directly from their tenants each month.

***Can families move to a new apartment under DHAP?***

Yes ... the program will allow families participating in DHAP to move one time. This includes moving within Harris County or moving to other cities within and outside of Texas. If the family is moving outside Harris County, the destination city must have a Public Housing Authority participating in the DHAP program. The families are responsible for any penalties related to breaking their leases; DHAP does not cover such penalties.

***Are FEMA-program landlords required to participate in the DHAP program?***

No ... FEMA-program landlords are not required to participate in the DHAP program. If a landlord chooses not to participate in the program, the family must move to a new property that is participating in the program. The Harris County Housing Authority will assist such families in finding a qualified property.

***What else will change under the DHAP program?***

There are other changes under the DHAP program designed to help families make the transition from rental-subsidies to full self sufficiency. First and foremost, the Harris County Housing Authority will assign each family a mandatory caseworker to help it with financial education, job training and social

services. The caseworker will also help the family understand their responsibilities as participants in the DHAP program.

***I have tenants that are participating in HUD's Disaster Voucher Program (also known as DVP). Do they need to transition to the DHAP program?***

No ... HUD's DVP program is a separate program that assists about 3,500 families in the Houston area – mostly the elderly and disabled, or people who were on Section-8 assistance prior to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The DVP program is administered separately from the DHAP program and rental-assistance payments will continue as they always have until the DVP program ends.

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