

From: Financial Management Center

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Subject: HUD Guidance: Assisting Housing Choice Voucher Families from Non-operational PHAs under Portability

From a period beginning on September 6, 2017, areas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Florida and Georgia experienced severe storms and flooding from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. These hurricanes caused devastating damage to commercial and residential property and displaced tens of thousands of families from their homes. Many public housing agencies (PHAs) were incapacitated as a result of the disasters. A significant number of PHAs in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands remain non-operational.

Under the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, a voucher family may move to any jurisdiction that has a PHA that administers an HCV program and receive voucher assistance under the portability procedures of the program. HUD is developing detailed guidance on how PHAs may expeditiously assist HCV families displaced by these disasters when the initial PHA is non-operational.

A list of non-operational PHAs, those that are unable to complete their portability responsibilities, is available on [HUD's website](#)[i]. As of October 6, 2017, all PHAs in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are considered to be non-operational. HUD will update the list as PHAs become operational and able to complete their portability responsibilities.

In the interim, HUD is establishing the following alternative portability process. This process is for PHAs that are contacted directly by a family who:

1. is from an area covered by Presidentially declared Major Disaster Declarations (MDD) following Hurricanes Irma and Maria[iii]; and
2. wishes to exercise portability but their initial PHA is non-operational and unable to carry-out its administrative responsibilities as a result of the disaster.

Do not let portability PHA communication disruptions or portability billing concerns get in the way of assisting displaced HCV families from the Presidentially declared disaster areas impacted by these hurricanes. HUD will make sure that PHAs are paid for legitimate portability moves from the impacted areas.

If the incoming portability voucher family arrives without any documentation to verify their program status and the PHA has received no portability information from the initial PHA, the receiving PHA is advised to do the following:

- Obtain the name and SSN of the Head of Household of the family and the name of the initial PHA from the family.
- Determine if the PHA is presently non-operational for portability by checking the website. This list will be updated frequently, so it is important to check every time. The list of non-operational portability PHAs is available on [HUD's website](#).

- If the initial PHA is not listed as a non-operational PHA, the receiving PHA should attempt contact the initial PHA directly by telephone or email in order to help facilitate the family's portability move. However, if the receiving PHA is unable to contact the initial PHA by telephone or email, the receiving PHA should contact their local HUD Office of Public Housing for assistance. HUD will help to facilitate the communication or will advise the PHA to follow these alternate portability procedures.
- If the initial PHA is on the non-operational list, the receiving PHA initially verifies the family was receiving voucher assistance from the initial PHA on the date of the disaster through the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System existing tenant search.
 - If EIV confirms that the family receives HCV assistance at a non-operational PHA, the receiving PHA contacts Sonia Colón Miranda at [305-520-5076](tel:305-520-5076) or Sonia.I.Colon-Miranda@hud.gov at the Miami Field Office. The Field Office will confirm the household composition and verify the household members' DOBs, SSNs, immigration statuses and other relevant information over the phone. Due to Personally Identifiable Information (PII) security concerns, the information must be confirmed via phone. The PHA uses this information to ensure that no new members have been added to the household. The receiving PHA would then follow its normal procedures (determining unit size under its occupancy standards, issuing the family the receiving PHA voucher, etc.) in order for the family to lease the unit.
 - If EIV does not confirm the family receives HCV assistance at a non-operational PHA, the receiving PHA adds the family to its waiting list following normal procedures.
- It is likely that the displaced family's income may have been negatively impacted by the disaster and subsequent move. The receiving PHA may need to conduct a new reexamination for the family but must not delay issuance of the voucher or approval of the unit.
- The receiving PHA may choose to either absorb the family into their own program or choose to bill. Given the operational challenges billing presents in the case of non-operational PHAs, the receiving PHA is encouraged to absorb the family. However, the receiving PHA may still opt to bill. If the receiving PHA opts to bill, HUD will pay the receiving PHA directly. HUD will issue guidance on this modified billing and payment process.

HUD is in the process of establishing an alternative portability processing and billing system for the non-operational PHAs. HUD is also developing the process by which the HUD-50058 for the non-operational PHA will be coded "Port-Out" so that the receiving PHA may submit the HUD-50058 for the portability family. Further instructions will be issued shortly on where the receiving PHA will submit the portability billing/absorption information and the revised timelines for submission.

HUD will also be updating this information as necessary while the detailed guidance is under development. If you have any questions on how to assist HCV families displaced by the disasters, please contact your local Office of Public Housing. The Miami HUD office has offered

to review or pull information in PIC and EIV on behalf of non-operational PHAs, if necessary. Please contact Sonia Colón Miranda at [305-520-5076](tel:305-520-5076) or Sonia.I.Colon-Miranda@hud.gov. PHAs are reminded that all personally identifiable information (PII) protections shall still apply if HUD assists with verifications. PHAs should continue to adhere to their established policies to securely transmit PII.

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[i] Web address is https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv

[ii] The interim guidance covers MDDs DR-4335, issued on September 7, 2017, DR-4336, issued on September 10, 2017, DR-4337, issued on September 10, 2017, DR-4338, issued on September 15, 2017, DR-4339 issued on September 20, 2017 and DR-4340 issued on September 20, 2017.