

HOUSING MATTERS

SUMMER 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

As we mark the 4th anniversary of CVR New York, and the 20th anniversary of CVR Associates, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for participating in the CVR New York Housing Choice Voucher program.

We first informed you of the effects of Sequestration in Spring of 2013. At that time, due to funding cuts, we had to cease issuing vouchers to new families as other families left the program. At the end of 2014, we were able to resume issuing vouchers.

Unfortunately, we have found that the families we are issuing vouchers to are having a difficult time utilizing their vouchers to find a unit. We increased our 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom payment standards to attempt to help them, but we have found the same frustrating problem of families taking a long time to locate a unit, or failing to locate one at all.

We encourage you as a landlord to please make your units available to families looking for a unit. If you are currently discouraged from accepting a family with a voucher, please complete our survey on page 4 and let us know what we can do differently. Whether you supply an apartment to one of our participants, or you fill out our survey, you have our sincere gratitude.

Kind regards,

Felicia Ramos
HCV Program Director

UPDATE ON RENT INCREASE REQUEST GUIDELINES

Effective January 1, 2015, CVR New York no longer accepts deemed leases for Rent Increase Requests for properties covered by the Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA). For properties that fall under ETPA rent regulation, all Rent Increase Requests must include a Rent Increase Request Form attached with the lease renewal signed by both the tenant and the owner for a term of one or two years. If the lease renewal is not signed by both the tenant and the owner, we will not accept the request for a rent increase until both parties sign the lease renewal. If the tenant does not sign the lease renewal, you must provide proof that the lease renewal was sent to the tenant via certified mail.

Please be advised these are revised regulations from the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and we must comply with these regulations accordingly. DHCR can be contacted at (914) 948-4434 for more information about lease regulations. Rent Increase Requests can be faxed to (914)-930-5441 or submitted through the OwnerPortal.

Have you registered yet for the OwnerPortal?
<https://nyowner.hcvportal.org>

Housing Choice Voucher Program

OwnerPortal

e-mail info@cvrnewyork.com for assistance
with setting up your account

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LEASE RENEWAL PROCESS



As you may already know, tenants in rent stabilized apartments must be offered renewal leases. The lease agreements can be for one or two years, at the tenant's choice and is at a rate set by the local Rent Guidelines Board.

1. When an owner is generating a lease it must first be signed by the owner and the owner must date the renewal notice. Then the owner must send the renewal lease by certified mail to the tenant within 120 days and not less than 90 days before the current lease expires. (RTP-8 ETPA)
2. Once the renewal offer is made, the tenant has 60 days to choose their lease term (either a term of one year or two years), sign the lease and return it to the owner by certified mail.
3. If the tenant decides not to renew their lease within the 60 day timeframe, the owner can refuse to renew the lease and proceed with eviction proceedings after the expiration of the current lease. (All eviction proceedings must be done through the court system)
4. If the tenant signs the Renewal Lease Form and returns it to the owner, it is the owner's responsibility to return the fully signed and dated copy to the tenant within 30 days.
5. A renewal lease should go into effect on or after the date it is signed and returned to the tenant but no earlier than the expiration date of the existing lease.

NOTE: *Renewal leases must keep the same terms and conditions as the expiring lease unless a change is required to comply with federal or state law regulations. If an owner wishes not to renew a tenant's lease, the owner must give the tenant written notice of non-renewal within 120 days and not less than 90 days before the current lease expires.*

Rent Increase Requests with CVR New York

- Step 1:** Participating Property Owners must first fill out a Rent Increase Request Form with supporting documentation explaining the reasons for the request (e.g. Lease Renewal) OR submit their request online through the OwnerPortal
- Step 2:** CVR then ensures the unit has passed inspection and is not in abatement, and that the rent increase request is within reasonableness of the fair market rents of the area.
- Step 3:** Once Approved or Denied CVR then sends written correspondence to the Property Owner stating the decision of the request.

Please be advised unless the lease is signed by both the tenant and landlord we will not grant the rental increase.

CONGRATULATIONS, JENNIFER LENTINI

The Statewide Section 8 program (of which CVR New York is part) has the largest Family Self-Sufficiency program in the country. FSS helps families with vouchers learn the skills and strategies they need to pursue goals such as employment, education, and sometimes Homeownership. Our latest Homeowner is Jennifer Lentini, who moved to Homeownership in May.

Ms. Lentini now has a home to call her own, stating, "*No more worrying about a lease or a rent change. I have a sense of independence and accomplishment... Being a homeowner has created a stable place where my child can grow up and become acquainted with the same group of friends for the rest of her childhood.*"

When asked what advice she would give others, she stated, "*Be humble and get educated in the steps you need to take to get it done. Seek assistance with professionals and most importantly don't get discouraged if you need to make sacrifices, this is part of the process. It's also important to have support, but surround yourself with people that motivate you to become better.*"

We congratulate Ms. Lentini and wish her luck.

DON'T LOSE MONEY - HQS ABATEMENTS

When a unit fails inspection and CVR New York sends the owner a notification that their unit has failed, it is the owner's responsibility to send the Verification of Repairs to our agency (*or, in the case of an Emergency Failure, to remedy the item(s) within 24 hours*). Sometimes, property owners fail to repair their HQS deficiencies, or fail to report verification of the repairs within the timeframe given to them. There are also times when owners submit the Verification of Repairs, but there are failure items that cannot be closed out without a re-inspection (e.g. *no access to the mechanical area.*)

When a unit is not in compliance with HQS, the Housing Authority is required to then abate the Housing Assistance Payments. The failure notice lists the date by which Verification of Repairs must be submitted. There may also be emergency failure items (i.e. *deficiencies that threaten general health and safety of the tenants*) that must be remedied within 24 hours of the failed inspection. If a Verification of Repairs is not received by the due date, or an Emergency Re-Inspection fails, the payments will be abated for the entire period of time the unit is in noncompliance.

HAP payments can be abated for a period of 180 days. If the owner still fails to repair the fail items, they will receive a HAP Contract Termination Letter that will state that the HAP Contract with the owner will terminate prior to the end of the abatement period. During the period of abatement the tenant is still responsible for their portion of the rent. Tenants should not be penalized for the portion the Housing Authority pays on their behalf. The Owner and the Housing Authority have a contract in place: if the owner does not abide to the HQS Standards, the owner is in breach of the contract. Please be advised that no retroactive payments will be made to the owner for the period of time the HAP was abated and did not comply with our housing quality standards (NYS HCR Section 8 Administrative Plan 23.17).

Don't lose out on receiving your full HAP every month. Utilize the resources such as our **OwnerPortal** and our **Inspections Call Center** to make sure that your units are in HQS compliance. You can contact our Inspections Call Center at **914-294-2353**. You can also send a fax to our Inspections Department at 914-930-5441. Finally, you can e-mail our Inspections Department at newyork@cvrinspections.com.

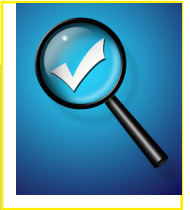
Housing Choice Voucher Program

OwnerPortal

With the Owner Portal you can view and track inspections, see results, submit Verification of Repairs forms, and request extensions for HQS Failures.

Sign up today at <https://nyowner.hcvportal.org> or e-mail info@cvrnewyork.com

INSPECTIONS CORNER



High Occurrences of HQS Failures:

1. No access to the mechanical areas
2. Top burners do not ignite (stove)
3. Outlet Hot/Neutral Reversed
4. Outlet – Open Ground

Please make sure when you have an inspection scheduled, you give our inspectors access to the mechanical areas (i.e. Boiler Room), the stove the tenant has works correctly, and the outlets in each room work properly.

Emergency HQS Failures

These are some of items that would have to be fixed within 24 hours:

1. Lack of security for the unit
2. Major plumbing leaks or floods.
3. Natural gas leak or fumes
4. Electrical Problems
5. No running hot water
6. No smoke detector or carbon monoxide detector in the unit or one located in the unit that is not operational

When there are emergency HQS failures, the inspector will go out to inspect the unit the next business days to confirm that all items have been repaired. If the items have not been fixed, the abatement period will begin and possibly the tenant will be relocated.



112 E. Post Rd. Ste. 102
White Plains, NY 10601

We are always looking for ways to improve our service and we value your opinion...Please complete our survey online:

<http://surveys.cvrnewyork.com>

Participants who complete the survey and supply a valid voucher number and email are automatically entered into a drawing to receive a \$50 gift card from Target!



Scan this QR code to be directed to the survey on your smart phone.



Housing Matters is a semi-annual publication for CVR New York's participating Landlords. Help us **Go Green** and request future issues electronically at addmyemail@cvrnewyork.com

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