COVID-19 FAQS
FOR HABC SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PARTICIPANTS

As we all deal with the rapidly developing and fluid situation arising from the spread of COVID-19, HABC’s greatest interest is the health, safety and well-being of our employees, clients and participants while ensuring that the rental assistance is paid on time for assisted households.

COVID-19 has disrupted the regular office hours, operations and services of the HABC including annual recertifications and interim certifications for changes of income. Our local circumstances have also impacted our ability to operate normal and communicate regularly with clients and staff to further mitigate or reduce the risk of infection.

Q: (Annual Re-exam) I am Section 8 Tenant and have an upcoming Annual Re-Examination?

A: HABC has closed all offices and suspended all in-person appointments. HABC has currently set up a remote link www.habcnj.org/recert for any Tenant participant needing to complete their upcoming Annual Re-examination. Participants can access and submit the annual recert packet to their assigned Assisted Housing Specialist via email. If your household does not know their assigned Assisted Housing Specialist, please submit an inquiry to info@habcnj.org. Kindly include in the subject of the email the full name of your Head of Household (AHS).

Documents necessary for recertification can be submitted electronically through the above referenced remote link. All documents can be submitted electronically, via pdf scan, uploaded or emailed photos. Documents can also be mailed in via the United State Postal Service please keep in mind, during this closure, mailed documents will not be processed in a timely manner and will result in delayed certification and may result in a late payment to your landlord.

If Tenant or any other household member absolutely has no access to email, then they may request for a physical Annual Packet be mailed to their physical address by their assigned Housing Specialist.

Q: (Communication) Given that HABC staff have shifted to teleworking, what is the best way to communicate and get in touch with my Assisted Housing Specialist?

A: The best way to communicate with HABC is electronically. HABC encourages all participants to communicate with their assigned Assisted Housing Specialist through email. Email addresses for all specialist can be found on our website at https://habcnj.org/assisted-housing-department/. Telephone communication with staff will be exceptionally difficult during this time. Staff will be able to retrieve voicemails during our closure; however we will not have the ability to return these calls. We are asking that anyone with questions please email their Specialist or the Authority at info@habcnj.org. We thank you for your patience and understanding during this time and look forward to a return to normalcy in the coming weeks.
Q: (HQS Inspections) My unit has an upcoming scheduled HQS Inspection, OR unit has already FAILED its Biennial/Annual Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection?

A: Currently, HUD has NOT exempted Section 8 units from HQS compliance. CGI, HABC’s contracted HQS Inspection Services provider, has suspended all inspections in Bergen County as of March 17, 2020. If a unit is scheduled for an upcoming HQS Inspection, the inspection will be re-scheduled for a later date and will not count as a FAIL. Presently, HABC is working with CGI to complete inspection requests on an emergency case by case basis.

HABC may grant 30-day extensions if Landlord or Tenant need additional time to complete repairs for ill household members or extenuating circumstances. Both Landlord & Tenant are encouraged to exercise good judgment and follow CDC Guidelines for Cleaning & Disinfecting.

Any inspection cancelation or 30-day extension request should be reported immediately to inspections@habcnj.org and the assigned Assisted Housing Specialist.

Where permissible under the program regulations the HABC will permit the submission of clear pictures of all rooms and videos of working doors, windows, faucets, toilet and shower. Please contact leasing@habcnj.org to see if your unit inspection is eligible photo/video submission.

Q: (Interims-Loss of Income) I am a Section 8 Tenant per diem / hourly worker and I have been laid off, OR I am taking a Temporary Leave?

A: Household should immediately file for either Unemployment Benefits or Temporary Disability & Family Leave Insurance Benefits. Interim loss of income should be reported to LossofIncome@habcnj.org, and attach Unemployment or Employer notification of Temporary Leave documentation that includes your last day of employment. HABC will await determination of benefits statement, and an interim will be completed. If 6-weeks from last day of employment expires and no unemployment or temporary disability benefit determination is made the HABC will completely remove the income retroactive the 1st day of the month AFTER the day of last employment.

If a household member receives a non-wage source of income or cash source of employment income, a signed self-statement will be used for an interim change to be processed. **If all sources of income are removed, a zero-income worksheet must be completed by household.

Q: (Leasing) I am a current Section 8 Tenant and I’m in the formal process of relocating or want to relocate?

A: For all current relocating Section 8 Tenants, if a prospective Landlord has already submitted or will submit a Request for Tenancy Approval (Landlord) Packet, then HABC’s Leasing Team will accommodate the Leasing Process.
If you are a current relocation client and have still been unsuccessful in your housing search, it is recommended you cancel the relocation attempt given the current health climate our County is in. You should notify your current Landlord that you will remain active in your current unit until such time passes and you are able to relocate with mobility normalcy. HABC will always keep your Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract active with your current Landlord as long you reside in the unit and the unit is HQS compliant.

For all Section 8 clients desiring to relocate, HABC has temporarily suspended all Relocation Requests and New Admissions. If you are a current Section 8 Tenant and your Landlord is insisting on your departure or in eviction proceedings, then it is recommended to contact Northeast NJ Legal Services. At the current moment Legal Aide is advocating for the suspension of all non-emergency eviction proceedings.

It is only under extreme and extenuating circumstances, to prevent homelessness, that HABC will consider and process new relocation and new admission requests of Section 8 participants.

All Leasing inquiries should be made to Leasing@habcnj.org

Q: (Portability) I want to Port my Section 8 housing voucher to HABC? I want to Port Out of HABC?

A: All new port-in requests have been SUSPENDED until further notice and the present health situation improves in the County of Bergen.

For all existing Port-In searching vouchers in our jurisdiction please refer to the ‘Leasing’ FAQ for additional and current information.

Any household requesting to Port Out of HABC’s jurisdiction should first check with the receiving Housing Authority if they are accommodating Port-in Requests. If the receiving jurisdiction is accepting portability requests, the household should complete the HABC Move Notice & Portability Request form.

All other Portability inquiries can be made to portability@habcnj.org.

Q: (Applications) I am an applicant on a Section 8 or Building Waiting List with HABC?

A: HABC has SUSPENDED all eligibility reviews & processing of HABC wait list applicants. If you have already been notified, and we are in the process of eligibility review determination or you have been scheduled for voucher issue, your application will remain in process until the present state of emergency has been rescinded and operations are returned.

For all other questions, wait list status questions, and updating information on your household can be completed here Waiting List Status Inquires & Updates. Information on all current open wait lists can be found here Open Waiting List(s)
Q: If you are in danger of homelessness or are homeless. Please contact and see if you’re eligible for any emergency services at:

   **Homeless hotline (NJ United Ways)**
   211 or [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org)

   **Bergen County Board of Social Services**
   201-368-4200
   [https://bcbss.com/](https://bcbss.com/)

   **Homeless Prevention Hotline**
   201-336-6490

   **Bergen County Housing Health and Human Services Center** *(Emergency Shelter)*
   201-336 6475

   **Center for Hope and Safety hotline** *(domestic violence)*
   201-944-9600
   [https://www.hopeandsafetynj.org/](https://www.hopeandsafetynj.org/)