U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE TO TENANTS DISPLACED FROM THEIR HOMES

Introduction

This booklet describes the relocation payments and other relocation assistance provided under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (URA) to tenants displaced from their homes. This includes any family or individual that must move as a direct result of rehabilitation, demolition or acquisition for a project in which Federal funds are used.

If you are notified that you will be displaced, it is important that you **do not move** before you learn what you must do to receive the relocation payments and other assistance to which you are entitled.

This booklet may not answer all of your questions. If you have more questions about your relocation, contact the Agency responsible for the project. Ask your questions before you move. Afterwards, it may be too late.

Summary of Relocation Assistance

As an eligible tenant displaced from your home, you will be offered the following advisory and financial assistance:

- **Advisory Services**. This includes referrals to comparable and suitable replacement homes, the inspection of replacement housing to ensure that it meets established standards, help in preparing claim forms for relocation payments and other assistance to minimize the impact of the move.

- **Payment for Moving Expenses**. You may choose either a:

  -- **Payment for Your Actual Reasonable Moving and Related Expenses**, or
  -- **Fixed Moving Expense and Dislocation Allowance**.

- **Replacement Housing Assistance**. To enable you to rent, or if you prefer, buy a comparable or suitable replacement home, you may choose either:

  -- **Rental Assistance**, or
  -- **Purchase Assistance**.

If you disagree with the Agency's decision as to the relocation assistance for which you are eligible, you may appeal that decision.

General Questions

How Will I Know I Am Eligible For Relocation Assistance?

You should receive a written notice explaining your eligibility for relocation assistance. You should not move before receiving that notice. If you do, you may not receive relocation assistance.

How Will The Agency Know How Much Help I Need?

You will be contacted at an early date and personally interviewed by a representative of the Agency to determine your relocation needs and preferences for replacement housing and advisory services. The interviewer will ask certain questions about you and other members of your household, including questions about your income. It is to your advantage to provide the information so that the Agency can assist you in moving with a minimum of hardship. The information you give will be kept in confidence.

How Soon Will I Have To Move?

If possible, a mutually agreeable date for the move will be worked out. You will be given enough time to make plans for moving. Unless there is a health or safety emergency, you will not be required to move without at least 90 days advance written notice of (1) at least one "comparable replacement home" that is available to you and (2) the earliest date by which you must move.

What Is A Comparable Replacement Home?

A comparable replacement home is:

- Decent, safe, and sanitary.
- Functionally equivalent to (and equal or better than) your present home.
- Actually available for you to rent.
- Affordable.
- Reasonably accessible to your place of employment.
- Generally as well located with respect to public and commercial facilities, such as schools and shopping, as your present home.
- Not subject to unreasonable adverse environmental conditions.
- Available to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

What is Decent, Safe, and Sanitary Housing?

Decent, safe, and sanitary housing is housing that:

- Meets applicable housing and occupancy requirements.
- Is structurally sound, weathertight, and in good repair.
- Contains a safe, adequate electrical wiring system.
- Has adequate living space for the occupants.
- Has a kitchen with a sink, hot and cold running water, and connections for a stove and refrigerator (if you were displaced from a housekeeping unit).
- Has a separate, complete bathroom with hot and cold running water.
- Has heating as required by climatic conditions.
- Has an unobstructed exit to safe, open space at ground level.
- Meets standards protecting occupants from lead-based paint hazards.
- If you are physically handicapped, is free of any barriers which would preclude your reasonable use of the unit.

Will The Agency Help Me Find A Replacement Home?

Yes. You will be provided with referrals to housing that has been inspected to ensure that it meets established standards. If possible, you will be referred to at least three comparable replacement homes.

The maximum financial assistance for which you may qualify will be based on the cost of the most representative comparable replacement home that is available to you. Promptly after you become eligible for relocation assistance, the Agency will inform you of such unit and the maximum payment available.

Once the Agency representative has a clear understanding of your needs and preferences, he or she will work with you to assure that you are given the best possible choice of housing. The Agency will offer you appropriate transportation to inspect these units.

If you would like to move to government-owned housing or obtain a Section 8 "housing voucher" or "certificate," let the Agency representative know of your interest. Generally, an eligible displaced person receives preference for such long term housing assistance. You will be given assistance in completing any required application forms.

What If I Find My Own Replacement Housing?

You have every right to find your own replacement housing. However, before you rent or buy, ask the Agency to inspect the unit to make sure that it is decent, safe, and sanitary. If the housing unit is not decent, safe, and sanitary, you will not receive a replacement housing payment.

What If I Encounter A Problem In Obtaining Housing Of My Choice?

If you encounter a problem in buying or renting housing of your choice, notify the Agency immediately. The Agency will look into the matter and try to resolve it. You will receive this help whether you were referred to the housing unit or found it yourself.

If you are unable to buy or rent a housing unit because of discriminatory practices on the part of a real estate broker, rental agent, lender, or a property owner, the Agency will help you file a formal housing discrimination complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or the appropriate State or local fair housing agency.

What Other Services Will I Receive?

In addition to help in obtaining a comparable replacement home, other assistance, as necessary, will be provided in order to minimize the impact of your move. This assistance may include referral to appropriate public and private agencies that provide services concerning housing financing, employment, health, welfare, or legal assistance. The range of services depends on the needs of the person being displaced. You should ask the Agency representative to tell you about the specific services that will be available to help you and your family.

What Is a Payment For Actual Reasonable Moving and Related Expenses?

You may choose to receive a relocation payment to cover the reasonable cost of your move. If you choose a Payment For Actual Reasonable Moving And Related Expenses, you may include in your claim the reasonable and necessary costs for:

- Transportation for you and your family.
- Packing, moving and unpacking your household goods.
- Disconnecting and reconnecting household appliances and other personal property (e.g., telephone and cable TV).

- Storage of household goods, as may be necessary.
- Insurance for the replacement value of your property during the move and necessary storage.
- The replacement value of property lost, stolen or damaged in the move (but not through your neglect) if insurance is not reasonably available.

The Agency will explain all eligible moving costs, as well as those which are not eligible. You must be able to account for any costs that you incur, so keep all your receipts. Select your mover with care. The Agency can help you select a reliable and reputable mover.

You may elect to pay your moving costs yourself and be repaid by the Agency or, if you prefer, you may have the Agency pay the mover. In either case, let the Agency know before you move.

What Is A Fixed Moving Expense And Dislocation Allowance?

If you choose a Fixed Moving Expense and Dislocation Allowance, you will receive an allowance which is based on the number of rooms in your home or the number of rooms of furniture you will be moving, as shown on a schedule. The Agency has a copy of the schedule and will help you decide whether choosing this allowance is in your best interest.

If you do not have a large amount of personal property to move, this payment should be more advantageous. No special documentation is required to support your claim. You need only move your personal property and complete the appropriate claim form in order to receive your payment.

How Much Rental Assistance Will I Receive?

You may be eligible to receive Rental Assistance for a 42-month period. The assistance is computed in the following manner:

The assistance needed for one month is determined by subtracting the "base monthly rent" for your present home from the cost of rent and utilities for your new home (or a comparable replacement home, if that cost is lower). That monthly need, if any, is multiplied by 42, to determine the total amount that you will receive. This amount will be paid directly to you. However, the Agency may elect to provide the assistance in monthly installments or other periodic payments. Generally, the base monthly rent for your present home is the lesser of: (1) the monthly rent and average monthly cost for utilities, or (2) thirty (30) percent of your average monthly gross household income.

Examples: Let's say that the monthly rent and average cost for utilities for your present home are $250; the monthly rent and estimated average utility costs for a comparable replacement home are $350; and your monthly gross income is $700. In this case your "base monthly rent" would be $210 because that amount (30 percent of your income) is less than the monthly cost of rent and utilities at your present home ($250).

-- If you rent a replacement home for $360 per month, including estimated average monthly utility charges, you will receive $5,880. That amount is 42 times $140 (the difference between the "base monthly rent" for your present home ($210) and the cost for a comparable replacement home ($350)).

-- If you rent a replacement home for $310, including estimated average monthly utility charges, you will receive $4,200. That amount is 42 times $100 (the difference between the "base monthly rent" for your present home ($210) and the actual cost of your new home ($310)).

To qualify for rental assistance, you must rent and occupy a decent, safe, and sanitary home within one year after the date you move. However, the Agency will extend this period for good cause.

If I Decide to Buy, Rather Than Rent, How Much Assistance Will I Receive?

If you buy a replacement home, you may be eligible for assistance to make a down payment equal to the amount you would receive if you rented a comparable replacement home (i.e., 42 times the amount obtained by subtracting the "base monthly rent" for your present home from the monthly rent and estimated average monthly utility costs for a comparable replacement home). A down payment assistance payment will be paid in a lump sum.

Example: Assuming the information in the prior examples, the downpayment assistance payment would be $5,880. That amount is 42 times $140 (the difference between the "base monthly rent" for your present home ($210) and the monthly rent and estimated average monthly utilities cost for a comparable replacement home ($350). The full amount of the payment must be applied to the purchase of the replacement dwelling.

Must I File A Claim To Obtain A Relocation Payment?

Yes. You must file a claim for each relocation payment. The Agency will, however, provide you with the required claim form, help you to complete it, and explain the type of documentation, if any, that you must submit in order to receive the payment.

If you must pay any relocation expenses before you move (e.g., a security deposit when you sign a lease for your new home), discuss your financial needs with the Agency. You should be able to obtain an advance payment to meet these costs. An advance payment may be placed in "escrow" or paid directly to a contractor to ensure that the move will be completed on a timely basis.

You must file your claim within 18 months after the date you move. However, it is to your advantage to file as soon as possible after you move. The sooner you submit your claim, the sooner it can be processed and paid. If you are unable to file your claim within 18 months, ask the Agency to extend this period.

Be careful not to confuse this 18-month period with the 12-month period within which you must rent (or buy) and occupy a replacement dwelling in order to be eligible for a replacement housing payment.

You will be paid promptly after you file an acceptable claim. If there is any question regarding your right to a relocation payment or the amount of the payment, you will be notified, in writing, of the problem and the action you may take to resolve the matter.

Will I Have To Pay Rent To The Agency Before I Move?

If the Agency acquires the property in which you live, you may be required to pay a fair rent to the Agency for the period between the acquisition of the property and the date that you move. Such rent will not exceed the market rent for comparable properties in the area.

Do I Have To Pay Federal Income Taxes On My Relocation Payments?

No. Section 216 of the URA states that you need not report relocation payments as part of your gross income for Federal tax purposes. For information on State or local income taxes, you should

check with the State or local income tax office in your area or with your personal tax advisor.

What If I Don't Receive The Required Assistance. Can I Appeal?

If you disagree with the Agency's decision as to your right to relocation assistance or the amount of a payment, or the adequacy of the housing to which you have been referred, you may appeal the decision to the Agency.

The Agency will inform you of its appeal procedures. At a minimum, you will have 60 days to file your appeal with the Agency after you receive written notification of the Agency's determination on your claim. Your appeal must be in writing. However, if you need help, the Agency will assist you in preparing your appeal.

If you are a low- or moderate-income person and are dissatisfied with the Agency's determination on your appeal, you may have an additional right to request administrative review of that decision (e.g., by HUD or the State).

You can expect a fair decision on any appeal. However, if you are not satisfied with the final administrative decision on your appeal, you may seek review of the matter by the courts.

I Have More Questions. Who Will Answer Them?

If you have further questions after reading this booklet, contact the Agency and discuss your concerns with an Agency representative. Call your local HUD office for assistance. Go to www.hud.gov to find out about your local HUD office.

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(Previous Edition Obsolete)