



Happy New Year and thank you for your continued partnership with us in supplying affordable housing to our clients here in Snohomish County. Your participation, communication, and service allow our clients to find affordable housing. In October of 2022, HASCO held our first virtual information session regarding the rent increase process. This article is to recap that presentation while also providing you with some changes that have happened since the information session.

Policy

When the owner is changing the amount of the rent to owner, the owner must notify HASCO at least 60 calendar days before any such changes go into effect [24 CFR 982.308(g)(4)]. HASCO will agree to such an increase only if the amount of the rent to owner is considered reasonable according to the rent reasonableness standards which will be explained in more detail later in the article. If the requested rent is not reasonable, the owner must either reduce the requested rent increase or terminate the tenancy in accordance with the lease terms. No rent increase is permitted during the initial term of the lease [24 CFR 982.309(a)(3)].

Steps to completing the Rent Increase Form

1. The first step is to go to the HASCO website at www.hasco.org
2. From there, hover your mouse pointer over the header labeled “**Landlord Center**” and select “**Landlord Forms.**” Once the page updates to the Landlord section of the Agency Form page, select “**Rent Increase Request.**”
3. This opens a new window, which is a fillable pdf that states “**Rent Increase Request Form**” under the HASCO letterhead.
 - a. When submitting a rent increase HASCO requires all landlords to use this form and list a single rent amount. We are unable to accept notices with multiple rates.
 - b. If you are charging a Month to Month (MtM) fee, you must include the in the Requested Rent.
4. Next, fill in the “**Tenant Name, Unit Address**”, “**City & Zip**”, “**Owner or Authorized Agent Name**”, “**Owner or Authorized Agent Phone Number**” and “**Owner or Authorized Agent Email Address.**”

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5. Complete the **“Address and unit number (of unassisted comparable units)”** section, if applicable:
 - a. You must complete this section if:
 - i. The property has more than 4 units.
 - ii. If other units will be experiencing rent increases around the same time as the HASCO participant, you are allowed to include these “future” rent amounts
6. Answer both questions labeled **“Is this a Tax Credit Unit?”** and **“Have the utility responsibilities changed?”** by checking the appropriate box.
 - a. A new lease is only required when the lease terms change. For example, if the utility responsibility changes.
 - b. If the utility responsibilities will be changing, please include a note detailing what the tenant's new utility responsibilities will be. The assigned specialist will create a new HAP contract which you will sign and return to us.
7. Next, fill in the **“Current Rent”, “Requested Rent (Including MtM Fee)”** and **“Proposed Effective Date.”**
 - a. Rent increases will go into effect on the first day of the month following the 60-day period after the owner/manager notifies HASCO of the rent change, or on the date specified by the owner/manager, whichever is later.
8. Finally, sign and date the form and email this completed form to rentincrease@hasco.org.

Once the rent increase team receives the form, they will review it to ensure that it is complete. The rent increase specialist may reply asking for additional information. If no additional information is needed, they will forward the request to the proper housing specialist for them to review and start the rent reasonable process.

Rent Reasonable Process

Conventional Properties: To determine rent reasonableness, HASCO will average the rental amounts you provided. HASCO must certify that the rent charged to the housing choice voucher tenant is not

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more than the rent charged for other unassisted units. If the requested rent is the same or less than the average, your rent increase will be approved for the full amount. If the requested rent is higher than the average, an increase will only be approved up to the average.

If your property does not have more than 4 units, the specialist will forward your request to our Inspections Department, who will compare similar units in the same vicinity to determine rent reasonableness. Once the rent increases are approved, partially approved, or denied we will process the increase and mail out the proper letters or updated notices of rent.

Tax Credit Communities: First, we must calculate your new gross rent (Requested Rent + Utility Allowance) and compare that to the IRS's maximum allowable rent for tax credit properties. If the new gross rent is less than the maximum, the rent increase is automatically approved. If it is larger than the maximum, the specialist will ask our Inspections Department to assist with running rent reasonableness. With Tax Credit units, remember that the rent is capped based on either the reasonable rent or the unit size payment standard minus the unit size utility allowance. Once the rent increases are approved, partially approved, or denied we will process the increase and mail out the proper letters or updated notices of rent.

Virtual Information Session for Landlords

We are excited to announce that we will be hosting another Virtual Information Session this spring for all property owners, HAP Payees, and future property owners with the featured topic on the Lease Up Process.

- There will be two identical sessions to choose from: May 18, 2023, from 11:00AM to 12:30PM, or May 23, 2023, from 2:00PM – 3:30 PM.

Thank You

We hope this helps explain the rent increase process. Thank you so much for taking the time to read the newest issue of the HASCO digital newsletter! If you have not had a chance to review the previous issue, it can be located under “**Newsletters Archives.**” If you have any questions about this article or have other questions about being a landlord for Housing Choice Voucher holders, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Landlord Liaison directly at landlord@hasco.org.

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