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AN OPEN LETTER TO LANDLORDS

In light of the additional funding cuts proposed to the Housing Choice Voucher program, and in an effort to be responsible managers of the shrinking federal dollars we receive to assist program participants – while at the same time not taking housing vouchers away from any of those families, we must take the following actions:

Suspend Contract Rent Increases. *Effective February 1, 2018:* DHA effectively suspended approvals for contract rent increases requested by participating landlords. With the drastic across the board and targeted program funding cuts over the past year, plus the 2019 draft budget plan released February 12th by the President that proposes cutting an additional \$8.8 billion, DHA must hold the line on planned spending at levels we are confident we have appropriate funding we can maintain and continue to honor all current Housing Assistance Payment contracts. We understand ours is a business relationship, but we hope that Congress will pass a budget that adequately supports future funding for the HCV program. It will be at that time that DHA can explore approving new rent increase requests.

Prorate Housing Assistance Payment on Move out Month. *Effective April 1, 2018:* DHA will no longer pay a full month of Housing Assistance Payment for an empty unit if the tenant vacates the unit on any day other than the last day of the month. The lease agreement requires written notification of moving date, which DHA also receives, so the expectation is that the tenants will move out as of that date. If a tenant occupies the unit after the indicated lease termination date, the tenant will be responsible for 100% of any rent owed to the landlord – just as it is for market tenants.

Adopt Small Area Fair Market Rent Payment Standards. *Effective April 1, 2018:* DHA will move from the 6-municipal area Fair Market Rent Payment Standards to Small Area Fair Market Rent Payment Standards based on zip code. This will increase both the number of payment standards for the vouchers, and likely pay landlords in opportunity areas a *higher* rent than they may have received in the past. This move will also likely *lower* rents for some landlords whose units were marginal at best but enjoyed the fact that their unit was in a “high-rent” area. This approach provides more assurances that the units receive rents more in line with their location, quality, size and unit type – plus any owner provided amenities, services, maintenance and utilities.

We fully expect DuPage County property owners will continue to enjoy the benefits the HCV program has compared to market tenant rentals, and DHA looks forward to continuing to serve you.

Kenneth E. Coles
Executive Director