



OFFICE OF PUBLIC & INDIAN HOUSING

August 27, 2024

Dear Executive Director,

I'm in Phoenix today meeting housing and health professionals discussing, among other topics, the threat posed to our residents due to high temperatures over extended periods. With temperatures on track to top 110 degrees this afternoon, I wanted to take this opportunity to again urge you to implement the [guidance we issued in June](#) that allows you to take immediate action to mitigate the impact of extreme heat for Public Housing residents.

Summary of the New Guidance

While Federal regulations prohibit PHAs from including the cost of in-unit air conditioning in a family's utility allowance, families in Public Housing may request individual relief from utility surcharges or excess utility supplier bills, especially for factors affecting utility usage not within their control.

Because severe or extreme heat can pose a danger to everyone, PHAs may choose to grant requests for relief for any family in Public Housing because of these conditions. PHAs can choose to grant such relief for specified periods of extreme heat, or they could choose to provide such relief throughout the entirety of the cooling season, as they deem appropriate. When relief is granted, the PHA may increase the family's utility allowance or waive surcharges related to the use of air conditioning.

When a PHA grants individual relief, either by increasing a utility allowance or waiving utility surcharges, that increases the PHA's Operating Subsidy eligibility, so the cost is ultimately covered by HUD.

Finally, and importantly for your decision-making right now, HUD specified in the notice that “For 2024, PHAs may immediately begin to grant individual relief requests on the basis of severe or extreme heat before providing a new utility allowance notice or updating their ACOP or lease.”

We've also created a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document covering the new individual relief policies, and suggestions on how to quickly implement individual relief for severe and extreme heat.

Investing in Cooling Technology

As you are thinking about helping families afford cooling expenses, I also want to provide you with additional resources regarding adding or upgrading cooling technologies. We have partnered with ENERGY STAR to provide you with some helpful materials and have also attached some tips about finding products and hiring a qualified installer.

Funding to pay for some of these technologies is becoming more widely available. For example, Heat Pumps are eligible for up to an \$8,000 point of sale rebate through the Department of Energy’s Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate Program available through State Energy Offices. You can track the progress of your State to see the status of those funds [as they launch their programs](#). Additionally, funding for insulation, air sealing, ventilation and wiring is available both through the rebate program and through the [Weatherization Assistance Program](#).

I encourage you to look at additional funding [resources](#) on the [HUD Funding Navigator](#). You may also want to consider participating in one of the Energy Branch programs to help you keep the savings you create.

Both the [Energy Branch](#) and the ENERGY STAR website contains helpful tips about how lower your energy bills and ENERGY STAR even offers a [Treasure Hunt](#) for your team to walk your buildings looking for energy savings. On our [Extreme Heat webpage](#), you can find additional technical assistance resources on how to respond to the danger posed by extreme heat.

Thank you for your work to ensure that all HUD program participants have safe, decent homes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard J. Monrochi".

Richard J. Monocchio
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Indian Housing

Energy Efficient Cooling Technologies to Consider

- If installing window air conditioning units make sure they are properly installed, sized and meet ENERGY STAR ratings: [Room AC Factsheet | ENERGY STAR](#)
- Window-based Heat Pumps are an alternative to consider and add both efficient heating and cooling at the same time.
- Mini-Splits which are extremely efficient, ductless and add both heating and cooling: [2024 Mini Split Heat Pumps Fact Sheet | ENERGY STAR](#).
- [Heat Pumps work in every climate](#), many thousands of units have been successfully installed in cold climates.
- As a longer-term and larger scale solution Geothermal Heat Pumps are another option to consider. Geothermal Heat Pumps are also eligible for the Investment Tax Credit (ITC).
- Consider adding insulation or sealing drafts/ducts so as not to lose the cooled air generated through the walls/windows/ducts.

Resources for Finding ENERGY STAR Products and Installers

- [Product Finder | EPA ENERGY STAR](#) – all product pages include guidance on buying and when to replace
 - [Central Air Conditioners \(Ducted\)](#)
 - [Geothermal Heat Pumps](#)
 - [Heat Pumps \(Ducted\)](#)
 - [Heat Pumps \(Mini-Split\)](#)
 - [Mini-Split Air Conditioners](#)
 - [Room Air Conditioners/Heat Pumps](#)

- [Find Credentialed Contractors | ENERGY STAR](#)
 - [Tips for Hiring a Heating and Cooling Contractor](#)

Additional Resources

- [ENERGY STAR website for Multifamily Housing](#) contains helpful information about getting started with Energy Conservation, Benchmarking and Water Management.
 - Evaluate possible building package retrofits using [Retrofit Decision Tool](#).
 - Find helpful information about Energy Efficiency and Benchmarking with the [Build for the Future Guides](#)
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