



OFFICE OF PUBLIC & INDIAN HOUSING

June 13, 2024

I was in Tucson, Arizona this morning to announce significant new guidance that allows all PHAs to take immediate action to mitigate the impact of extreme heat for residents in their homes: "[Responding to Extreme Heat in Public Housing – Eligible Expenses and Individual Relief for Excess Utilities Consumption.](#)"



PDAS Monocchio joins Regina Romero, Mayor of Tucson, and other city officials as well as officials from Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs' Office as they work together to establish vital cooling resources and ensure Tucson residents are safe this summer.

As you're reading this, temperatures in Tucson are cracking 100 degrees. The city is no stranger to high temperatures and managing extreme heat. But even communities used to the heat are taking extraordinary new measures to prevent injury and the loss of life in the face of increasingly severe conditions. That's why [I wrote to you about extreme heat in July of last year](#), encouraging you to use Capital Funds to create cooling spaces in common areas.

But I knew we needed to go further to give PHAs more decision-making power. Where cities and states are taking action earlier and with greater coordination, HUD and PIH are doing our part to make sure the individuals and families in your public housing communities don't have to choose between sweating the heat and sweating the cost of cooling their homes.

I want to share some highlights from this notice, which goes into effect immediately.

- PHAs already have the discretion to grant individual relief to families in Public Housing for excess utilities charges upon request. As of the publication of this new Notice, **PHAs may determine that, because extreme heat events pose a risk to everyone, all families have reasonable grounds to request such relief.**
- This allows PHAs to leverage Public Housing Operating Funds as **a legitimate operating subsidy expense** to help families afford to use air conditioning in their homes by increasing utility allowances or forgoing surcharges for the use of air conditioning or other cooling-related utilities.
- Although families must still request relief, **this notice shows how PHAs can streamline the relief request process.** For example, PHAs can notify residents that they will approve all requests on grounds of severe or extreme heat and PHAs can use a simple means for requesting relief, like checking a box to request a standard adjustment to their utility allowance.
- Because extreme heat poses a serious, imminent risk to public health, **you can begin to provide relief now** while working to update relevant policy documents. To help you incorporate this new guidance into your ACOP and utility allowance notices, I am attaching some sample language, as well as an example of a streamlined request form.

These are just suggestions. Ultimately, you have discretion to decide whether and how to grant this relief. Our ask is that you think broadly and comprehensively about how you can reduce the risks of extreme heat for all your residents.

Although it had cooled considerably from highs in the 100s yesterday afternoon, it was still 90 degrees at midnight in Tucson last night. As a reference point, we know babies should be napping and sleeping at indoor temperatures between 68 and 72 degrees to prevent overheating and the risk of SIDS.

With this new guidance, our sincere hope is that parents don't ever have to choose between the health of an infant and the cost of cooling. And that older Americans and people with chronic medical conditions don't have to risk their wellbeing because they worry about their utility bills. And frankly, that all individuals, families, and children in public housing are able to enjoy their homes in peace and climate-controlled comfort.

As you review the new guidance and begin to work to build consensus for implementation, please leverage our existing resources to learn more about the work HUD is doing to help you respond to the risks of extreme heat on [HUD's Extreme Heat page](#), and find additional resources including an [Extreme Heat Quick Guide](#) on [HUD Exchange](#).

Thank you for your help,



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

Sample Policy Language for Individual Relief Related to Severe or Extreme Heat

Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP)

Utilities Chapter

Subsection: Individual Relief

The **USA Housing Agency** may grant requests for relief from surcharges for excess consumption of PHA-purchased utilities or to permit the inclusion of such excess utility costs into utility allowances for resident-purchased utilities, on reasonable grounds as the **USA Housing Agency** deems appropriate.

Reasonable grounds include but are not limited to the special needs of the elderly, ill, or residents with disabilities, or other special factors not within control of the resident. The **USA Housing Agency** also considers severe or extreme heat as a reasonable ground to request relief.

As required by 24 CFR 965.508, the family must request individual relief in order to be granted such relief. Procedures for requesting relief, and additional details about the criteria for granting such relief, are provided in the information given to new residents upon admission, and in notices provided to all residents of proposed utility allowances, scheduled surcharges, and revisions thereof. Generally, residents wishing to request relief under this provision should contact the **USA Housing Agency** and provide written documentation to support a request for relief. Adjustments to utility allowances will be effective beginning the month for which the request was made.

The **USA Housing Agency** provides a streamlined procedure for families to submit individual relief requests on the grounds of severe or extreme heat, for relief of a standard form to use air conditioning, and it is the policy of the **USA Housing Agency** to approve requests from any family who submits a such a streamlined request.

Utility Allowance/Scheduled Surcharge Notice

[Following notice that outlines the utility allowances and scheduled surcharges]

Individual Relief

The **USA Housing Agency** will consider requests for relief from surcharges for excess consumption of PHA-purchased utilities or from payment of utility supplier billings in excess of the allowances for resident-purchased utilities, on reasonable grounds. Outside of the streamlined procedure described below, families may request such relief by providing the **USA Housing Agency** with an explanation of their circumstances and need for individual relief. Residents must provide written documentation to support a request for relief. Requests will not normally be acted upon without this documentation. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The **USA Housing Agency** has sole discretion to grant relief under this provision. The **USA Housing Agency** will evaluate this request, contact the family for more information as needed, and make a determination. Families have the option to present a grievance, following the **USA Housing Agency's** grievance procedure, if they are dissatisfied with the response to the request. If approved, adjustments will be effective beginning the month for which the request was made.

Individual Relief for Severe or Extreme Heat

The **USA Housing Agency** considers severe or extreme heat to be reasonable grounds for all Public Housing residents to request individual relief from surcharges for excess consumption of PHA-purchased utilities or payment of utility supplier billings in excess of utility allowances. Accordingly, the **USA Housing Agency** provides a streamlined option for families to make a standard request for individual relief.

The standard request for individual relief for severe or extreme heat covers reasonable use of air conditioning during the following period: **[May to September every year, unless the PHA specifies additional periods of time in virtue of unanticipated heat]**. If the resident lives in a building in which the residents purchase their own utilities, individual relief will increase their utility allowance during this period. If the resident lives in a building in which the PHA provides utilities and sets a utility allotment, individual relief will increase their utility allotment for this period. If the resident lives in a building in which the PHA provides utilities without setting an allotment but surcharges residents for the use of air conditioning, individual relief will eliminate this surcharge.

The **USA Housing Agency** will approve all requests for individual relief for this purpose, to provide relief of **[\$X per month for a 1-BR, ...]** for excess utilities consumption.

The **USA Housing Agency** provides the following streamlined option for requesting relief for this purpose, period, and amount: Residents who wish to request this form of relief may check a box on a form provided to all residents at admission and with enclosed with this utility allowance notice, and return the form to the **USA Housing Agency**. Submission of this form will constitute a request for individual relief for this purpose, period, and amount, and the **USA Housing Agency** will approve any such request.

The provision of this streamlined option does not preclude families from making other requests for individual relief, for other purposes, periods, or amounts, in line with 24 CFR 965.508. Families who wish to make other requests must follow the procedure for requesting such relief outlined in the notice provided to all residents that notifies them of proposed allowances, scheduled surcharges, and revisions thereof.

Streamlined Individual Relief Request Form Language

Name:

Address:

Date of Request:

[]

By checking this box, I am requesting that the **USA Housing Agency** grant me the following form of individual relief, on the grounds of severe or extreme heat:

[\$X] per month for reasonable use of air conditioning, which will result in [an increase to my utility allowance/no surcharge for the first \$X per month for excess utilities consumption above my utility allotment]

This relief will be provided from [May to September] each year, unless the **USA Housing Agency** determines that severe or extreme heat warrants providing it at other times as well. The **USA Housing Agency** will provide notice of such exceptional circumstances. This relief will recur each year.