

NOTICE TO HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER CLIENTS

NEW LAW PROTECTS VOUCHER HOLDERS WHEN THEIR RENTAL PROPERTY IS FORECLOSED

On May 20, 2009 a new federal law protecting your rights became law.

Section 8 housing choice voucher tenants have new rights regarding eviction from units that have been foreclosed upon.

The person who now owns your home as a result of the foreclosure must follow these rules.

First: If you have a lease for a fixed term -- such as one year -- and the lease has not expired, you have a right to remain in the unit and cannot be evicted (except for actions that you, members of your family or your guests take which constitute good cause) until the end of the lease term.

Second: if your lease ends in less than 90 days the new owner may not evict you without giving you at a minimum 90 days notice.

Third: the new owner wanting the property vacant before they sell it is not good cause for terminating the tenancy or for eviction.

Fourth: There is one exception to the rule that you may not be evicted during the term of your lease. If the new owner who acquired the property at foreclosure wants to occupy the unit as his or her primary residence, that owner may give you a 90-day notice to vacate your home even if your lease runs for longer than 90 days.

If the new owner tells you that you have to leave, offers you money to leave or gives you a notice of eviction, you should contact the Housing Opportunities Commission at: 240-773-9009, tell us what is happening and give us a copy of any notice.

General instructions to tenants:

If you receive an improper notice to terminate your lease, you should give a letter objecting to the termination to your landlord *before* the date for termination in the notice you received, and you **should** pay your rent. If you do not pay your rent, your landlord can serve you with a notice to pay rent or leave the property under state law.

If your landlord files an eviction complaint against you (some states call this an unlawful detainer action) based upon the termination notice, you should put in your answer, or tell the court if your state does not allow you to file an answer, that the termination notice is improper because the landlord should have served you with a 90-day notice or could not evict until the lease expired under the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act, Pub. L. No. 111-22, § 702 (2009).

You should make a copy of your letter for your records, send your letter to the new owner by certified mail, return receipt requested, at the address the new owner put on his/her notice to you. When you go to court in the eviction case, you should take with you copies of the letter you sent

to your landlord, the original and copies of your proof of mailing and green return receipt from the post office, the copy of the new law (which you can get on HOC's website or from the Customer Service Center) and a copy of your written lease if you have a written lease.

The judge may not know about the law because it is so new, but if you tell the judge about the law then it is his or her legal responsibility to enforce it, and make sure that you are not forced to move with less than 90 days notice or before the end of your lease term.