HATC
Housing Authority of Travis County

Agency-Specific Waiver Request

Extension of Zero HAP Period for Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Participants

A. Description of MTW Activity

HATC requests an Agency-Specific Waiver of 24 CFR § 982.455(a) to allow Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) participants who are actively enrolled in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program to remain on the HCV Program for up to twelve (12) consecutive months after the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) has been reduced to zero.

Under current regulations, assistance terminates after six consecutive months of zero HAP. HATC proposes to extend this period to twelve months solely for households actively participating in the FSS Program and in good standing.

If a family's HAP increases above zero during the twelve-month period, HCV assistance will continue without interruption. Families whose HAP remains at zero for twelve consecutive months will be terminated from the HCV Program in accordance with HATC policy.

This activity is intended to remove disincentives to employment by allowing FSS participants who experience increases in earned income to maintain program participation while they stabilize financially and continue working toward successful completion of their FSS Contract of Participation.

B. Statutory Objective

This activity supports the following MTW statutory objectives:

- Give incentives to families with children where the head of household is working, seeking work, or preparing for work by participating in job training, educational programs, or programs that assist people in obtaining employment and becoming economically self-sufficient.
- Reduce cost and achieve greater cost effectiveness in Federal expenditures.
- Increase housing choice for low-income families.

C. Justification

Participation in the FSS Program is designed to increase earned income and promote long-term economic independence. As participants obtain higher-paying employment, many experience reductions in their Housing Assistance Payment and may reach zero HAP before they have accumulated sufficient financial reserves to successfully transition from housing assistance.

The current six-month zero-HAP termination requirement may discourage participants from increasing earned income or accepting employment opportunities due to concerns about losing housing assistance before achieving financial stability.

By extending the zero-HAP period to twelve months for active FSS participants, HATC will:

- Encourage sustained employment and wage growth.
- Reduce the benefits associated with increased earned income.
- Improve FSS completion and graduation rates.
- Allow families additional time to stabilize financially before exiting the HCV Program.
- Reduce administrative costs associated with terminating assistance and processing future applications for families whose income later decreases.

This activity applies only to active FSS participants and is intended to support successful transition to self-sufficiency.

D. Hardship Policy

Because this activity extends rather than limits assistance, no hardship policy is required.

E. Impact on Residents

The proposed activity is expected to have a positive impact on participating families by reducing barriers to employment advancement and providing additional housing stability while families work toward financial independence.

No participant will receive less assistance than is currently available under existing HUD regulations.

F. Impact on the Agency

The activity is expected to have minimal financial impact because participating households are receiving zero Housing Assistance Payments during the extension period.

Administrative efficiencies are anticipated through reduced program exits, fewer reinstatements or new admissions resulting from temporary income fluctuations, and improved FSS program outcomes.

G. Impact on the Community

The activity supports local workforce participation and economic mobility while promoting housing stability for working families. The waiver is also expected to improve landlord retention by reducing unnecessary turnover among households that remain lease compliant but have temporarily reached zero HAP due to increased earnings.

H. Metrics

HATC will monitor the effectiveness of this activity using the following performance measures:

Metric	Baseline	Annual Goal
Number of FSS participants utilizing the 12-month zero-HAP extension	TBD	Track annually
Percentage of participating households that remain employed during the extension period	TBD	Increase annually
Percentage of participating households that successfully graduate from the FSS Program	TBD	Increase annually
Number of households that resume HAP within the 12-month extension period	TBD	Track annually
Number of households that successfully exit the HCV Program after twelve months of zero HAP	TBD	Track annually

I. Authorization Requested

HATC requests HUD approval of an Agency-Specific Waiver of 24 CFR § 982.455(a) to permit Housing Choice Voucher families actively participating in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program to remain assisted for up to twelve (12) consecutive months after the Housing Assistance Payment is reduced to zero.