



Questions and Answers from Meetings with Yamacraw Village Residents

October 5, 2020

Will we, the tenants, have to find our own place to live, or will the Housing Authority help us finding a place?

You will receive relocation assistance, which means that before being relocated you will meet with HAS staff to go over your relocation rights. Depending on the circumstances, you will be relocated to another property managed by us, and in this case you will be offered a unit selected by us. However, you may be eligible to receive a replacement voucher and lease an apartment in the private market utilizing it – in this case, the responsibility of finding a unit is yours, although the Section 8 staff will be available to provide you with listings, etc.

Who decides if the resident receives a voucher or not?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has regulations guiding eligibility for Tenant Protection Vouchers. The Housing Authority cannot offer you a voucher if you do not meet HUD's criteria.

Will we get our security deposits back when moving out of Yamacraw?

When the time to move out comes, the unit you occupy will undergo a “move-out” inspection as usual. You will be responsible, as applicable, for damages in your unit. Therefore, your deposit may be utilized to cover the expense of repairing these damages, if any. If your unit is in good condition, your deposit will be returned.

Will we receive a separate letter for the next meeting?

Yes. The Housing Authority will send a Notice to all residents when it receives authorization from HUD to demolish Yamacraw. The notice will be sent 90 days before the relocation begins, and will trigger a series of individual meetings between the Housing Authority and residents of Yamacraw.

October 6, 2020

Are we supposed to be relocated by February 2022?

Your relocation will begin approximately 90 days after HUD approves our application. HUD may take up to one year to review the application, therefore the Housing Authority does not know when it will happen. You would be relocated by February 2022 if HUD approval is given in or before October 2021.

Notes:

1. Duplicate questions were excluded from this document.
2. Residents were offered a two-week period to comment and ask questions through mail and email.

Can we be relocated back to Yamacraw?

The redevelopment plans for Yamacraw are still under evaluation. In the future, if the Housing Authority decides to build new affordable housing units on the Yamacraw site, you may be offered a new unit and the opportunity to go back.

October 7, 2020

Can a replacement voucher be used to rent a public housing unit?

No, a voucher can be used to rent a privately owned unit, not a public housing unit. If you accept a voucher and later on decide to go back to a public housing site, you will need to re-apply.

To where will my family be relocated?

All decisions about relocation will be made after HUD approval is given, and after the Housing Authority had time to meet individually with your family to understand your household composition and special needs. Depending on the duration of your Yamacraw lease, you may be offered a Tenant Protection Voucher, or you may be relocated to a similar unit in another property managed by the Housing Authority.

What can make me not get a voucher?

If at the time of HUD approval you have been occupying a Yamacraw Village unit for less than 24 months, a voucher is unlikely to be issued. Also, all your relocation rights are dependent upon you keeping your lease in good standing (keeping your unit clean, making rent payments on time, etc.)

October 8, 2020

If I am in the Section 8 waiting list and am relocated, do I move up on the list?

No, you do not. If eligible, you may be offered a Tenant Protection Voucher, but if you are not eligible, being relocated will not result in higher priority with the Housing Choice Voucher program.

How will this affect families with special needs in getting a unit?

If you are a resident of Yamacraw at the time HUD approves the Inventory Removal application, and you are in good standing as a resident, the Housing Authority will make sure to meet with you individually and assess your needs. We follow Fair Housing rules – housing will not be withheld due to special needs.

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October 9, 2020

Once construction is completed will we have the option to go back to Yamacraw?

If the Housing Authority decides to build new affordable housing units on the Yamacraw site, residents who had been relocated to other conventional public housing neighborhoods may be offered the opportunity to go back.

I do not want to go to a high rise, will I get a unit on first floor?

Individual meetings with residents will be hosted by the Housing Authority to analyze the size of your unit, number of persons in your household, and any special needs your family may have. We will do our best to match your needs to an available unit.

Once Yamacraw has been demolished, is it still HUD's property?

Yes, The Housing Authority is requesting to HUD to keep control of the property.

Is the cost of repair the sole reason for Yamacraw being demolished?

Yes. The capital needs of the property are beyond what the Authority can fund.

October 14, 2020

When will the demolition begin?

Not anytime soon. We are applying for demolition in 2021, and make take HUD up to one year to review our request. Demolition will likely begin in 2022.

When was Yamacraw built?

In 1941.

What if we do not want to be relocated to the housing we are offered?

You can decline a unit that is offered to you, but keep in mind we have only a certain amount of available units and another unit may not be offered.

How many other properties like this does the Housing Authority have?

Four other properties (Frazier Homes, Single Family Homes, Stillwell Towers, and Patterson Terrace).

How about properties for people who are not low income?

These are mixed-finance properties with market rate units. Market rate units set their own rents, and are not income restricted.

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October 15, 2020

A basic qualifier for the voucher is 2 years occupying a Yamacraw unit?

Yes, a voucher will be available only for those residents occupying a unit for more than 24 months prior to HUD approval of demolition request. However, you can decline a voucher if you want to be relocated to another public housing property.

Will the size of my apartment increase if I have another child at the time of relocation?

The size of the unit you will be transferred to will be determined after HUD approves the application, when we meet with you to discuss your relocation plan, and will be based on your family's composition and its need at the time.

Do you have a sample of what the property will look like after demolition?

No, we are still evaluating options for the redevelopment of Yamacraw.

Why are they doing renovation if they are going to demolish?

The Housing Authority decided to complete some roofing work because HUD may take months to approve the application, and we want to make sure units are not presenting leakage during this time.

So the relocation won't start until after approval of your application?

Yes, correct.

October 22, 2020

Do you know where you will relocate us?

After HUD approves our application, will be time for HAS to look at units that are available in other public housing developments (Frazier Homes, Stillwell Towers, Single Family Homes, Patterson Terrace). You will be relocated to an available unit of compatible size, in one of these developments. If at the time of approval you have more than 24 months living in Yamacraw, you will be offered a voucher. If you accept it, you will be responsible for selecting a unit (with assistance of HAS Section 8 Department).

Do you have to be employed to live in Single Family Homes or Patterson?

Residents living in these properties usually have higher incomes because some utilities are paid by the residents and not by HAS.

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October 23, 2020

Do we have an option to relocate to The View at Oglethorpe?

No, The View at Oglethorpe is a mixed-finance property that was built on the former Hitch Village land, but it is not public housing. You cannot be relocated to a non-public housing property, and The View is a property funded by tax credits, with some Section 8 units, therefore under a different program.

But can a voucher be used at The View?

Only in the market-rate units, yes.

October 26, 2020

Will be my choice to move to another public housing unit or receive a voucher?

You will be eligible for a voucher if at the time of HUD approval you have been occupying a unit in Yamacraw for more than 24 months. If you are offered a voucher, you can accept it or deny it. If you deny, you can be relocated to another public housing unit.

If I receive a Section 8 voucher, how long it will take for me to find a place to stay?

I believe there is a maximum of 120 days to use the voucher. Details will be provided after HUD approval in our individual meetings with your household, when we confirm your eligibility for a voucher and discuss the process.

October 27, 2020

When you say applying, do you mean filling out an application form?

The application that the Housing Authority plans to submit to HUD is a big set of documents that include the recent Capital Needs Assessment, information about these meetings, and some other information that are important to support our recommendation to demolish Yamacraw Village.

Is there anything residents can do speed up the process?

No – the application submission and review take time, and there is nothing you can do to expedite the process.

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How long have you been working on this redevelopment plan?

In 2019 we began working on the analysis of the Capital Needs Assessment, which was submitted in September. Since then, we have hosted a series of Workshops with our Board, which approved our Repositioning Plan in May. We have been working on the Section 18 application deliverables since then.

Will we still be in Yamacraw for another year?

It depends on the time HUD will take to review our application and if approval will be given. We are planning to submit the application in February 2021. If HUD approves the application within eight months, you would be relocated 90 days after that, which roughly is a year from now.

What will they do for seniors? Are seniors offered vouchers too?

Seniors have the same relocation rights as any other person, and will be offered vouchers if they are eligible for one.

If they decide to build Yamacraw from scratch, will it be affordable housing?

We are still evaluating the redevelopment options for Yamacraw, but our mission is to address the housing needs of the lower-income population in Savannah, and our desire is to build a new mixed-finance community on the same parcel of land.

So what is happening right now?

The Housing Authority of Savannah is currently preparing an Inventory Removal application to HUD, which is planned to be submitted in February 2021. You are not required to be relocated now, only after HUD reviews and approves the application.

October 28, 2020

Does the eligibility for the voucher start from the date of move-in or from the date of application?

From the date your lease was signed. The unit should have been occupied for 24 months or more to be eligible for a voucher at the time HUD approves a Section 18 application.

October 30, 2020

Will the Housing Authority move my personal belongings?

Yes, and we will cover reasonable moving expenses.

If you have a baby, do you have priority in getting a Section 8 voucher?

No, having a baby does not give your higher priority to receive a voucher.

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Is it guaranteed that I will get a voucher at the time of relocation, since I have been living in Yamacraw for more than two years?

No, because your relocation rights are also dependent on your good standing with your lease, and availability of a voucher.

Is employment a consideration in receiving a voucher?

No, you do not have to be employed to receive a voucher, however having income will help you funding 30% of a unit's rent, and therefore will result in more housing options.

How is the money determined for a Section 8 voucher?

The Section 8 Department calculates the voucher's value based on what you can afford for a unit (30% of your income) and the average rent of the unit you need (number of bedrooms, etc).

Are you going to pay for moving expenses giving residents a check?

The Housing Authority has a contract with a moving company and we will directly pay them. For the transfer of your utilities, you will submit your receipt and the Authority will give you a reimbursement check.

November 2, 2020

What if I have a retroactive payment, how would it affect my process of moving?

We encourage our residents to solve their debt and pay outstanding amounts before being relocated to another neighborhood.

How do we know if your application was approved?

The Housing Authority will send you a Notice once the application is approved by HUD, letting you know your household will need to be relocated after 90 days.

Are there properties on the eastside of the City to which we can be transferred?

The other public housing developments managed by the Housing Authority are not located on the eastside. However, if you become eligible for a Tenant Protection Voucher, you can rent a private unit on the eastside.

Do you get the option to decide on the neighborhood?

The Housing Authority will match your family size, and needs, to an available unit in another public housing development. A unit will be offered to you but such offering will not be based on your preference, it is a matter of availability.

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November 4, 2020

What happens if they do not approve your application?

If HUD declines our Inventory Removal request, we will try to understand why – there may be missing documents or additional information we can provide to support our request. Nonetheless, the Authority will continue to fund capital improvements and the operations of Yamacraw Village, until an approval is given.

November 5, 2020

Are you going to still call it Yamacraw?

It is too early to know. The redevelopment of Yamacraw may include different partners, such as private investors, community leaders, public entities, and former residents. These partners will be responsible for creating a redevelopment plan, which may include the change in the property's name.

November 13, 2020

What happens to my security deposit?

Security deposits are used to repair damages in your unit beyond normal “wear and tear”, and unpaid balances owed to the property. However, if at the time of relocation your unit does not present dilapidation, and you do not have outstanding balances, your security deposit will either be returned, or transferred to another public housing property to where you will be relocated.

February 23, 2022

Why aren't you trying to repair the property? Aren't the people (of Yamacraw) just as valuable as the property?

The Yamacraw Village property is 81 years old and unfortunately some of the damages are beyond repair. Renovation of Yamacraw units is unfeasible and not cost-efficient. The public housing program has not provided enough funds to cover all necessary capital work.

When is the cutoff date for the 24 months in order for applicants to qualify for a voucher (TPV)?

TPVs may be offered to those residents living in Yamacraw units occupied within 24 months before HUD approval of our application. For example, if HUD approves our application in December 2022, that would be December 2020.

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What happens to the residents that do not qualify for a voucher (TPV) and if a (conventional) public housing unit is not available?

The Housing Authority of Savannah plans to request additional vouchers for those residents who may be living in Yamacraw Village for less than 24 months but for whom a comparable public housing unit is not available at the time of relocation.

What happens to residents that do not qualify for relocation services?

All residents in good standing with their leases at the time of HUD approval of our application will qualify to receive relocation assistance. Your eligibility for relocation would be impacted only if you are under termination due to a breach of your lease (i.e. criminal activities)

What happens to tenants that would like to move now (prior to the submission and approval of the section 18 application)?

You can move out of Yamacraw Village at any time if you feel is in your best interest, however, former residents who are not occupying Yamacraw units at the time HUD approves our application will not have relocation rights.

Will residents be relocated into other affordable housing communities if there are no public housing units available?

The Housing Authority of Savannah may relocate residents to other developments it owns, if developments are assisted by the Public Housing Program or Project-Based Voucher program. The Housing Authority cannot relocate residents to other communities if they are not owned and assisted by the Housing Authority.

When it is time to relocate, could the voucher be used in other states?

Yes.

When Fellwood was redeveloped, there were units available for purchase. Will this redevelopment offer the same or have similar options? Also will this redevelopment provide or offer housing for homeless persons?

We have not yet initiated a planning process for redeveloping the site. After receiving HUD approval for our application, the Housing Authority plans to select a Developer and engage with community stakeholders to establish a redevelopment plan.

Does anyone know exactly what will be redeveloped on the property at this time?

No, not yet.

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Is it possible and helpful to HAS staff for residents to apply for housing now and get on waiting list now at other apartments in order to assist with the relocation process?

Yes, however keep in mind we do not know how much time HUD will take to approve our application, so you may have a chance to move to another development even before we have received approval and have a voucher for you. If you receive a voucher, you will be able to move to a unit in the private market, so we do agree would be good if you already had a contact or a place where you would be interested in living.

Is the senior apartment located on Wheaton Street a Housing Authority property?

The new senior apartment complex just built on Wheaton Street is called Like Oak Landings and is not a property of the Housing Authority of Savannah.

There are some units in Frazier Homes that are boarded up. What happens if you relocate people to Frazier but then also decide to demolish it?

Frazier Homes underwent a Capital Needs Assessment in 2019 and at this time we are considering other methods of repositioning the property, which may include rehabilitation through the RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration) program. At this time Frazier will be one of the properties to which the Housing Authority may relocate Yamacraw Village residents to.

When you refurbish or redevelop Yamacraw housing and since HUD is not providing enough funds to maintain the upkeep of the homes, how will you maintain the houses once they are redeveloped?

The redevelopment of the Yamacraw site will rely on a plurality of other programs that will provide more stable funding than public housing and will ensure the long-term needs of the property can be addressed.

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