



Rental Assistance Demonstration RADBlast!



To All PHAs Undergoing RAD PBRA Conversions

Dear RAD participant:

The VISTA Tenant Engagement and Community Economic Development Project (TECDev), which is also known as the Rental Assistance Demonstration Community Engagement Initiative (RAD CEI) and is part of AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), is facilitating the participation of national service volunteers with tenants at certain multifamily housing properties converting (or with completed conversions) to Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). In August 2014, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) entered into an Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) to fund the activities of AmeriCorps VISTA members nationwide. This collaboration is run by CNCS and their partner, Equal Justice Works (EJW), which provides VISTA members to serve at several host sites. EJW is a non-profit organization that manages the day-to-day activities of VISTA members in this project.

These VISTA members engage tenant leaders and residents, in collaboration with property ownership, management, and other community partners, to advocate for themselves and for services in the community, including increased educational opportunities, access to job training or job placement, crime prevention or reduction, public health and healthcare, youth development, and other social challenges. We are writing to make sure you are aware that VISTA members have already initiated their work or in some cases, will shortly. You may have seen or could soon see a VISTA member on your property. They work with service providers, including private, governmental, non-profit, and other organizations in the community, to build capacity in ways that will ultimately lead to greater opportunities for the community and the individuals who live there.

The activities assigned to VISTA members are compatible with HUD's regulations regarding the right of tenants to create and maintain tenant organizations, as well as allowing non-tenant community organizers to assist tenants in the establishment or operation of tenant organizations. However, the primary focus of their work is on connections to service providers and community organizations, so that your residents can

maximize their access to the social and economic opportunities available to them and so that your property can be the most impactful platform for each resident's individual success. As previously mentioned, you may have already encountered TECDev / RAD CEI VISTA members at your development or you may encounter them in the near future.

HUD appreciates and recognizes the commitment that you have made to provide and maintain quality low-income housing, as well as your participation in RAD, and we encourage a cooperative relationship among ownership, property management, tenants (individually and through tenant organizations), and the community of organizations surrounding each property.

If you have any questions regarding this initiative, please feel free to contact us at rad@hud.gov.

Thanks,

The RAD Team