

Virgin Islands Housing Authority

St. Thomas

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Office of the Executive Director

RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM (RAD) RESIDENT INFORMATION NOTICE (RIN)

Dear **Resident of Wilford E. Pedro:**

We are inviting you a resident meeting to talk about the Virgin Islands Housing Authority's (VIHA's) plans to convert **98 units at the Wilford Pedro (VQ001000025)** development from the public housing program to Section 8 project-based rental assistance under the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). VIHA must conduct two meetings with the residents before we can submit an application to HUD.

VIHA is committed to ensuring the safety of its residents during the COVID-19 crisis: therefore, the resident meetings will be conducted on-line for those with mobile phones, computers or other devices that can access the meeting remotely. For those who cannot attend a meeting on-line, meetings will be held at a designated area on-site at **WILFORD E. PEDRO** located at:

Wilford Pedro
53 Estate Whim
Frederiksted, St. Croix 00840

The meetings will be conducted in **two (2) meetings with three (3) back-to-back sessions beginning at 9:00 a.m., and 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 22nd, 2020.** To ensure proper social distancing, in-person attendance at the on-site meetings will be limited to **10** residents per



session. Outdoor seating and covering will be provided along with refreshments. Seating will be set at a minimum of six (6) feet apart providing further safety and social distancing. You will be able to email questions to WilfredoPedroPH1DRM@gmail.com or contact Peter Clark, VIHA's Director of Modernization and Development at 340.713.2357.

The meeting information is as follows:

MEETING #1

Date: Tuesday, December 22nd, 2020
Place: Wilford E. Pedro – (limited to 10 Individuals at a time) OR Options to Join Online/Via Telephone

Zoom: <https://us05web.zoom.us/j/6442719206?pwd=WmZTc1hjNFhYUUEE5S051NnZSTjIzUT09>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Wilfredo-Pedro-Phase-1-Development-Resident-Meetings-103946594922791>

Toll Free Call-in: (877) 853-5257, Meeting ID: 488398, Password: 406331

Time:

Session # 1:	9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.
Session # 2:	10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.
Session # 3:	11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

MEETING #2

Date: Tuesday, December 22nd, 2020
Place: Wilford E. Pedro - Covered Outdoor Seating Area OR Options to Join Online/Via Telephone

Zoom: <https://us05web.zoom.us/j/6442719206?pwd=WmZTc1hjNFhYUUEE5S051NnZSTjIzUT09>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Wilfredo-Pedro-Phase-1-Development-Resident-Meetings-103946594922791>

Toll Free Call-in: (877) 853-5257, Meeting ID: 488398, Password: 406331

Time:

Session # 1:	2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Session # 2:	3:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Session # 3:	4:00 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.



RAD is a voluntary program run by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Under RAD, HUD will change the way it provides rental assistance to the property from public housing to a long-term Section 8 assistance contract. The Section 8 program would make it easier for us to access money to repair and improve the property, either now or in the future.

**This letter describes your rights under RAD and explains how
a RAD conversion might affect you.
Whether we participate in RAD or not,
you will still get rental assistance.**

Your Right to Information

With this letter, we have included “Attachment #1,” which is a description of our current plans for the property. At the meeting, we will describe the RAD program and our current ideas in more detail. If we submit an application to HUD and are accepted into the program, we will have at least one additional meeting with you about our plans. You have the right to hear about major changes in the plans for the project, and we will invite you to additional meetings if key features of the plans change. You also have a right to organize and to form a resident organization to serve as your voice and to help you become well informed about the RAD plans.

Your Right to Rental Assistance

Our decision to participate in RAD does not affect your rental assistance eligibility. You are not subject to new eligibility screening. If we satisfy all HUD requirements and the property is placed under a Section 8 Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract, you have a right to ongoing rental assistance as long as you comply with the requirements of your lease. In most cases, your rent will not change with the conversion from public housing to Section 8. In the rare event that your rent calculation would change (most commonly, when you are paying a “ceiling rent”), the increase would be phased in overtime.



Your Right to Return

You have a right to return to an assisted unit once any construction work is done. However, we may need to move you during construction, and your post-construction home may be a different unit than your current home.

If you believe the plans prevent you from exercising your right to return, you have the right to object to the plans. RAD program rules require us to make sure that anyone who wants to return can do so.

Your Right to Relocation Assistance

In some situations, we may need to relocate you from your unit temporarily to complete repairs or do construction. Since we are at the beginning of the planning process for the RAD conversion, we don't yet know whether you will need to move. You **do not** need to move now.

If we require you to move, you are entitled to certain relocation protections under the RAD rules, including, in all cases, advance written notice and detailed information about the move. The other specific relocation protections depend on the situation but may include advisory services, moving assistance, payments, and other assistance.

In some cases, you have additional rights under other Federal laws, such as the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, often referred to as the "Uniform Relocation Act." If the Uniform Relocation Act applies, we must give you a "General Information Notice," which is also referred to as a "GIN." **To make sure we are complying with the Uniform Relocation Act, we will provide you with a GIN at a later date. The GIN describes rights you have but may also describe situations that don't apply to you.**

Don't Put Your Rights at Risk!

You are always welcome to move based on your household's needs and personal goals. However, if the RAD effort will require relocation and you choose to move from the property on your own without waiting for



To: Notice to Residents

Re: RAD Resident Information Notice (RIN) – Wilford Pedro

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instructions from us, you may lose your eligibility for relocation payments and assistance. **If you want to preserve your relocation rights, please wait until you get a Notice of Relocation and instructions to move from us!**

The RAD conversion, and any relocation associated with it, must be implemented consistent with fair housing and civil rights requirements. If you need a reasonable accommodation due to a disability or have other questions about the RAD conversion, please contact Ms. Lydia Pelle, Chief Operating via email at lpelle@vihousing.org or Jimmy Farmer, Director of Asset Management at jfarmer@vihousing.org, who will assist you. If you need to appeal a decision made by us, or if you think your rights aren't being protected, you may Ms. Amabelle Aponte, HUD Engineer, Puerto Rico Field Office at Amabelle.Aponte@hud.gov.

Because we are very early in the process, the plans for the RAD conversion are likely to change. We are holding resident meetings to share our current ideas. We will keep you informed about major changes to these ideas as we develop our plans. You should also share with us any information you have on repairs that need to be made since you know the property best. We will give that information to the people who are helping us figure out what work needs to be done at the property.



We hope this letter gives you useful information about your rights. We also include with this letter a list of frequently asked questions and answers that may help you understand the RAD program better. We encourage you to come to the resident meetings to learn more about how the RAD conversion would impact your property and you.

Sincerely,

Robert Graham, CPM
Executive Director

Attachments: Attachment #1: Description of Redevelopment Plan
Attachment #2: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers



Attachment #1

Current Plans for the Property

Note: These plans may change as we do more research. As we improve the plans, we will consider the following: your opinions; an independent professional’s analysis of what needs to be repaired at the property; the cost to maintain the property for the long-term; and the financing we may be able to get.

VIHA plans to a transfer of assistance of 98- RAD project-based vouchers from the current Wilford Pedro site located at 58 Estate Whim, Frederiksted, St. Croix, USVI (Converting Project) to Stoney Ground site located at Parcel 1 (Matr. 22-b) Estate Stony Ground, Frederiksted, St. Croix, USVI (Covered Project) approximately .75 miles east of the Wilford Pedro Homes.

The project calls for the new construction of 98 RAD units. In addition to constructing 98 RAD units, the plan calls for providing 30 non-RAD (LIPH) units and providing open community space and amenities for the residents. VIHA is partnering with the developer, TRG Community Development, an affiliate of The Richman Group of Companies, to Master Plan the redevelopment to be located at the Stoney Ground property.

The transfer of assistance shall comply will all applicable Fair Housing and Civil Rights requirements. Per the Relocation Notice (Notice H 2016-17) Current residents of Wilford Pedro shall be given a Right to Return to the Converting Project once construction is complete.



Attachment #2 Frequently Asked Questions about RAD Conversions

Will a RAD conversion affect my housing assistance?

You will not lose your housing assistance, and you will not be subject to eligibility re-screening as a result of the RAD conversion. You can remain in your unit regardless of your current income. However, your PHA will continue to follow its annual and interim re-examination processes, including a re-examination of your income to adjust your rent. These requirements will be in your lease.

In a RAD conversion, your housing assistance will change from being public housing assistance to being Section 8 housing assistance under either the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program or the Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) program. The PHA chooses whether to convert the unit to PBV or PBRA.

Will a RAD conversion affect my rent?

Most residents will not have a rent increase as a result of a RAD conversion. However, if you are paying a flat rent in public housing, you will most likely have to pay more in rent over time. If your rent changes by more than 10% and requires you to pay more than \$25 per month in additional rent, your new rent will be phased in. If the increase in your rent is less than 10% or \$25 per month, the change in rent will be effective immediately.

How can I participate in the RAD planning process?

Prior to participating in RAD, HUD requires PHAs to:

- Notify all residents at the property about their RAD plans, and
- Conduct at least two (2) meetings with residents.



These meetings are an opportunity for you to discuss the proposed conversion plans with your PHA, ask questions, express concerns, and provide comments. These meetings are also an opportunity to tell the PHA what you think needs to be repaired at the property. The PHA can then consider that information when developing plans for the property. The PHA must have at least one more meeting with all residents of the property before HUD approves the final RAD conversion. This additional meeting is another opportunity for the PHA to keep you informed and for you to provide comments about the PHA's RAD conversion plans.

In addition to these resident meetings, your Resident Advisory Board (RAB) will also be consulted and have an opportunity to make recommendations on your PHA's RAD conversion plans during the PHA Plan public hearing process.

What if I need accommodations to participate?

Your PHA must make materials available in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and must make meetings accessible for persons with disabilities.

Your PHA must also provide language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency so that you can understand materials, participate in meetings, and provide comments on the proposed RAD conversion. This may include providing a written translation of the PHA's written documents and providing oral interpreters at meetings.

Will I have to move if my home or building is rehabbed?

If the repairs planned at your property are small, you will most likely be able to stay in your home during the renovation. If the repairs planned at your property are more extensive, you will most likely need to be relocated during rehabilitation. Even if you are required to move during the construction, you have a right to return to a RAD-assisted unit after construction is completed.



If relocation lasts longer than 12 months, you benefit from additional protections as a “displaced person” under the Uniform Relocation Act. In this situation, you will be able to choose between the permanent relocation assistance that you are eligible for under the Uniform Relocation Act and the temporary relocation assistance (including the right to return) that you are eligible for under RAD. This is your choice, and the PHA must work with you, so you have the information you need to make this choice.

What changes will I see in my lease renewal process?

At the time of the RAD conversion, you will need to sign a new lease. Unless there is good cause for eviction based on your actions, your new lease will continue to renew. Under both the PBV and PBRA programs, a property owner who tries to end your lease must give you notice. Grievance rights similar to the rights you have under public housing, and the owner must follow state and local eviction laws.

Will RAD affect my rights and participation as a resident in the development?

RAD keeps many of the resident rights available under public housing, such as the ability to request an informal hearing and the timeliness of termination notification. You also have a right to organize, and resident organizations will continue to receive up to \$25 per occupied unit each year.

Will RAD increase my ability to choose where I live?

In most cases, you will have a greater choice in where to live through the RAD "choice mobility option." This option is available under PBV after residing in a RAD property for one (1) year and under PBRA after residing in a RAD property for two (2) years. After the required time residing in the RAD property after conversion, you may request a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV). You will have priority on the HCV waiting list when an HCV is available.



Will I still be able to participate in self-sufficiency programs?

The public housing Family-Self-Sufficiency Program (PH FSS) helps families obtain and maintain living wage employment (income that covers a family's basic needs) by connecting residents to services. If you are a current participant in an FSS program, you will still be able to participate in FSS after the RAD conversion.

If your development converts to PBV, you will be automatically moved from the public housing FSS to the Housing Choice Voucher FSS program if your PHA has a Housing Choice Voucher FSS program. The rules for both public housing and Housing Choice Voucher FSS programs are very similar.

If your development converts to PBRA, you may continue your participation in FSS until your current contract of participation ends. New participants may enroll only if the owner voluntarily establishes an FSS program at the site.

The Resident Opportunities and Self Sufficiency-Service Coordinators Program (ROSS-SC) program provides public housing residents with coordinators to connect them to supportive services and empowerment activities.

If you are a current participant in the ROSS-SC, you can continue to participate in ROSS-SC until program funding is used up. Once the grant funds are spent, your PHA cannot apply for a new grant for a RAD property.

What if I need more information?

For more information, go to the RAD website, www.hud.gov/rad

