

Section 8

Housing Choice Voucher Program

A Landlord's Guide to Section 8 policies, procedures, and regulations



Dear Property Owner:

Thank you for your interest in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program administered by Perry Metropolitan Housing Authority (PMHA). This program is designed to help low income households bridge the gap between what they can afford to pay for rent based on their income and the actual rent for a market rental.

This program guide will provide an explanation of policies, procedures and regulations that govern the program. All Section 8 Voucher program assisted families and property owners must comply with the federal rules and regulations. PMHA will make every effort to keep you informed of Section 8 rules and how they effect your participation in the program. The success of the Section 8 program depends on PMHA being able to contract with property owners who have quality rental units.

The Section 8 Department will work very hard to provide you with professional, courteous and consistent service. We look forward to becoming your partner in providing affordable housing in Perry County. Should you have any further questions after reviewing this material, please contact the Section 8 staff at 740-982-8021. A staff guide is enclosed to help you reach the appropriate person for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

The Section 8 Department

LANDLORD'S GUIDE TO THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Being a Section 8 landlord can give you the satisfaction of making it possible for lower income families to enjoy decent, safe and sanitary housing. Landlords benefit as well by enjoying the following aspects of the program:

- Owners may use their own leases and set the terms (i.e. month-to-month, one year, etc.)
- Rent security
- Annual inspections of the rental unit
- Fair market rental rates
- On-time payments from Perry Metropolitan Housing Authority (PMHA) through direct deposit

Families are awarded a Housing Choice Voucher permitting them to find suitable housing of their choice from private market landlords who are interested in participation in the program. The renter pays a set amount, directly to the landlord, and the PMHA pays the difference. Other than expecting a portion of the rent regularly each month from PMHA, the relationship between the renter and landlord is the same type as with non-Section 8 renters.

WHAT IS THE SECTION 8 HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT PROGRAM AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Housing Assistance Payment Program was designed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assist low-income families in obtaining decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Eligible families will pay a portion of rent established by PMHA and based on the family's income. The difference between the portion of rent paid by the family and the contract rent will be paid on behalf of the family directly to the landlord by PMHA.

To participate in the Section 8 Voucher Program, a landlord must select a tenant that has an active voucher. Once an active voucher participate and landlord provide the needed information about the potential rental, the Housing Choice voucher office/employees would determine if the unit would be approved to be eligible for rental assistance on the program. The PHA will determine if the requested rent is reasonable. The family will not pay more than 40% of their adjusted monthly income toward the rent for the unit. This applies to any new admission or any family moving.

WHO ARE THE ELIGIBLE FAMILIES AND HOW DO THEY RENT A UNIT?

Families who have been issued a voucher by PMHA are eligible to look for a suitable unit and request a landlord's participation. It is the family's responsibility to seek and select a suitable unit.

DOES PMHA SELECT A FAMILY FOR THE LANDLORD'S UNIT?

NO. The landlord may screen prospective tenants through their own application process. A written application may be obtained and any necessary information can be verified just as an owner would do with an applicant that is not participating in the voucher program. Some suggestions might be checking credit/criminal background. If the applicant is on the voucher program, obtain the name of their case coordinator. The case coordinator may be able to provide information about the family's previous rental history.

ONCE I APPROVE A FAMILY, WHAT IS MY NEXT STEP?

The Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) is to be completed by the landlord and the applicant prior to returning the documents to the PMHA office. The RFTA is asking for lease approval by PMHA. Once received an inspection will be scheduled.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A UNIT TO BE INSPECTED?

We understand that every day your unit sits empty, you lose money. Every effort is made to process inspections quickly. It could take a couple of weeks for an inspection. If the unit fails the inspection, the landlord has a choice of making the repairs or cancelling the process.

WHEN SHOULD THE FAMILY BE ALLOWED TO MOVE INTO THE UNIT?

The families are counseled not to move into the unit until it has passed inspection. If the family moves in prior to the unit passing inspection, the tenant is responsible for paying the ENTIRE contract rent until the unit does pass inspection. Housing assistance payments begin the day after the unit passes inspection.

DOES THE PMHA PAY THE FAMILY'S SECURITY DEPOSIT?

NO. The family pays all security deposits and/or fees. Landlords can collect amounts that would normally be collected if the family were not on the Voucher program. Arrangements on how the landlord chooses to collect these payments from the family are agreed upon between the family and the landlord.

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP AFTER THE UNIT PASSES INSPECTION?

PMHA will prepare the lease and contract for signatures of the landlord and family.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FAMILY?

- Abide by the terms of the lease and contract
- Pay rent on time and take care of the housing unit
- Provide any utilities that are not furnished by the owner
- Provide and maintain any appliances the owner does not furnish
- Be responsible for damages to the unit or premises beyond normal wear and tear
- Comply with the HUD required family obligations under the program

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LANDLORD?

- Screen families who apply to determine their suitability as renters
- Comply with fair housing laws
- Maintain the housing unit by making necessary repairs
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Payment (HAP) Contract
- Collect the rent from the family, comply with, and enforce the lease

WHAT ARE PMHA'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

- Determine family's eligibility for participation in the Section 8 Program
- Approve units
- Determines the rental amount of a unit
- Determines the family's portion of rent to owner
- Determines family's eligibility annually
- Inspects subsidized units annually
- Ensure that owners and families comply with program rules
- Provide families and owners with prompt professional service
- Issue Housing Assistant Payments (HAP) in a timely manner

WHEN DOES THE LANDLORD RECEIVE PAYMENT FROM PMHA?

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) checks are direct deposited on the first business day of each month. The Leasing Department will inform the landlord when his/her first check will be deposited and the pro-rated tenant portion of the rent.

WHAT IF PAYMENT IS RECEIVED FROM PMHA BUT THE FAMILY DOES NOT PAY?

If the family does not pay their portion of rent, the landlord would pursue legal action as defined in the Ohio Landlord/Tenant Law just as if the tenant was not on the voucher program. PMHA cannot give legal advice and will advise both landlords and tenants to consult with an attorney.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

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