



## 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
- Bi-annual inspections of the rental unit
- Fair market rental rates
- On-time payments from the Housing Authority of Jackson County (HAJC) 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 HAJC pays the difference. Other than expecting a portion of the rent regularly each month from HAJC, 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 HAJC 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 HAJC.

To participate in the Section 8 Voucher Program, a landlord must select a tenant that has an active voucher. There is no ceiling on the amount of rent that can be charged for a unit as long as the contract rent requested is determined rent reasonable by HAJC and the family will not pay more than 40% of their adjusted monthly income toward the rent for the unit. (The family is given their maximum family share of rent at the time they receive their Housing Choice Voucher.) This applies to any new admission or any family moving. Families will have documentation of this amount should they be eligible for admission or a move.

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

Families who have been issued a voucher by HAJC 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 HAJC SELECT A FAMILY FOR THE LANDLORD'S UNIT?*

**NO.** The landlord must 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. A list of staff is provided in this information packet.



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

The Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) and the Request for Inspection (RFI) is to be completed by the landlord and the applicant prior to returning the documents to the HAJC office. The RFTA is asking for lease approval by HAJC and the RFI is formally asking for the unit to be inspected by a Housing Authority Inspector.

### *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. Typically it takes 2-3 business days to process an inspection. If the unit fails the inspection, the landlord has a choice of making the repairs or cancelling the process. Some frequently failed items are listed in this packet.

### *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 the unit passes inspection OR the effective date of the rental agreement (whichever is last). If the rental agreement begins AFTER the date the unit passes inspection, the HAJC payment will begin the effective date of the rental agreement.

### *DOES THE HAJC PAY THE FAMILY'S SECURITY DEPOSIT?*

**NO.** The family pays all security deposits and/or fees. Families can apply for a loan from HAJC that is paid directly to the landlord. Applicant tenants will have documentation of this loan they can provide.

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?*

The landlord is required to provide their own Lease/Rental Agreement. HAJC will provide a lease addendum that will be attached to the lease/rental Agreement. Once the Leasing Department receives a passed inspection, (usually with 5 to 7 working days) documents will be prepared for signatures.

### *WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FAMILY?*

The family is required to follow the terms of the signed lease/rental Agreement, Lease Addendum, and the Family Obligations. If the family violates the terms of any identified documents, the case coordinator for the family must be notified.



*WHEN DOES THE LANDLORD RECEIVE PAYMENT FROM HAJC?*

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) checks are direct deposited on the first business day of each month and again mid-month for new lease ups. 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 HAJC BUT THE FAMILY DOES NOT PAY?*

The Housing Assistance Payment is not considered rent under the Oregon Landlord/Tenant Law. If the family does not pay their portion of rent, the landlord would pursue legal action as defined in the Oregon Landlord/Tenant Law just as if the tenant was not on the voucher program. HAJC 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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