

FOOTHILLS REGIONAL HOUSING



HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER LANDLORD HANDBOOK

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Important to Remember

WHAT IS THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM?



The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, formerly known as Section 8, exists to give low-income households the ability to rent market-rate housing in the private rental market. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered at the local level by Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). Foothills Regional Housing (FRH) administers this program for Jefferson County.

HCV recipients pay about 30% of their income to private landlords and FRH pays the difference directly to the landlords. This allows low-income households to live in neighborhoods that might otherwise be out of reach, many of which have better access to education, jobs, and nutritious food, among other benefits. When landlords rent to HCV holders, the tenants still sign and abide by the landlord's lease. Landlords will also sign a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with FRH which guarantees the on-time payment of FRH's portion of rent.

Application Process and Eligibility

FRH operates the HCV program on a random lottery system. Every three years, FRH opens a wait list and eligible families apply for a spot on the wait list. When FRH has a voucher come available, either by a participant leaving the program or by receiving an additional allocation of vouchers from HUD, a household will be chosen at random from the waiting list and invited to apply. Applicants are screened to ensure eligibility for the program and once approved, will seek a rental unit on the private market.



Program Eligibility:

1. U.S. Citizen (at least one family member)
2. Household income below 80% of Area Median Income
3. Ineligible if convicted of sexual assault or drug felonies or for the manufacturing of controlled substances; has shown violence towards neighbors, staff or landlord; or has been evicted from an FRH program. May be ineligible if person(s) have drug related or violent misdemeanors in the past three years.

LANDLORD BENEFITS

FRH is always seeking landlords to join our HCV program. Please visit our website www.foothillsrh.org to join today!



At FRH we truly value our landlord partners and recognize we couldn't sustain this program without them. We'd love to have you as a partner and there are lots of benefits to joining the HCV program:

1. Guaranteed Monthly Income

FRH's portion of rent is guaranteed. Because HCV participants are paying truly affordable rent they are more likely to have enough money to pay in full.

If an HCV participant's income decreases, the portion of rent paid by FRH and the tenant is adjusted which means landlords will still receive full rent.

2. On-Time Payments

When you sign up for direct deposit with FRH you will receive an EFT of FRH's portion of rent each month on the first of the month. Tenants must follow your lease to remain in the HCV program, making them motivated to pay on time.

3. Have a Partner in the Housing Market

FRH will help you market your vacant units to our HCV participants looking for somewhere to live. If issues between you and your tenant arise FRH can help to mediate the situation.

4. Keep Tenants Longer

The average length of time an HCV participant stays in one rental is 8.75 years (HUD). This allows landlords to have reliable renters for multiple years, lessening the costs of making ready units and marketing vacancies, and ensuring you don't miss rent while looking for a new tenant.

5. Maintain Control Over Your Property and Policies

HCV tenants must qualify for the unit based on the landlord's screening criteria and sign the landlord's lease. Landlords can request a rental increase after the first year of tenancy. Though rare, HCV tenants are able to be evicted just as non-subsidized tenants are.

6. Free Property Inspections

All units must undergo a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection. These can help landlords identify minor maintenance issues before they snowball into something more severe and costly.

LEASING PROCESS

HOUSEHOLD FINDS A UNIT

After being issued a voucher, households will identify and apply for a unit that fits their needs. Landlords will screen HCV applicants as they would non-subsidized applicants and makes the decision to approve or deny the application.

REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL (RFTA)

Once the landlord and residents agree to move forward, they will fill out a RFTA. This is submitted to FRH to review the affordability of the unit based on the household's income. The landlord will also provide FRH with a copy of the proposed lease including HUD's tenancy addendum for subsidized renters. If the unit was built before 1978, a lead based paint disclosure must be submitted.

RENT REASONABLENESS

FRH will review the proposed rent to ensure that it is considered reasonable based on HUD-set Fair Market Rents for Jefferson County and in comparison to similar units in a 0.25 mi radius. FRH sets payment standards based on unit size and will not be able to approve tenancy in a unit that charges more than the payment standard.

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS) INSPECTION

FRH is required by HUD to inspect the units that HCV holders are to move into for basic health and safety standards. If a unit fails inspection, landlords have 30 days to remedy non-life-threatening failed items and will need to remedy any life-threatening failed items before FRH will sign the HAP and issue any payment. Inspections are conducted annually after the initial one.

RENEWAL

60 days before the end of the initial one-year lease term the landlord can submit a Request for Rental Increase to FRH if they wish to renew the tenants lease and to raise the rent. FRH will ensure that the rental increase still falls under FRH's payment standards and is considered reasonable. Landlords also have the ability to non-renew a lease with proper notice.

RESIDENCY

The tenants move in! The first month's HAP payment from FRH may be delayed up to 30 days due to processing but will be direct deposited on the 1st of every month after that (with landlord opting in to direct deposit). As with any other tenant, if they are found in breach of their lease landlords are able to pursue legal eviction. FRH staff is available to mediate issues before eviction is considered.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS (HAP) CONTRACT

FRH and landlords sign a HAP contract which guarantees FRH's portion of rent to be paid to the landlord each month so long as the owner is in compliance with the HAP contract. The landlord is required to submit a completed W-9 before the HAP can be executed.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER



LANDLORDS SHOULD TREAT HCV TENANTS AS THEY WOULD ANY OTHER NON-SUBSIDIZED TENANT.



LANDLORDS CAN AND SHOULD ENFORCE THEIR LEASE AGREEMENT, HOLDING TENANTS RESPONSIBLE.



HAP PAYMENTS CAN BE CANCELLED IF OWNER DOES NOT ENFORCE THEIR LEASE, TRIES TO SOLICIT ADDITIONAL RENT, ENGAGES IN DRUG-RELATED OR VIOLENT CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, AMONG OTHER REASONS.



IF OWNERSHIP / MANAGEMENT CHANGES, FRH MUST BE NOTIFIED IN WRITING.



LANDLORDS CAN AND SHOULD COLLECT A REASONABLE SECURITY DEPOSIT FROM TENANTS.



THE LEASE AGREEMENT IS SOLELY BETWEEN THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE LANDLORD - FRH IS NOT A PARTY TO IT.



LANDLORDS CAN EVICT TENANTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW AND THEIR LEASE AGREEMENT.



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