

# **Housing Authority of the City of Georgetown**

## **Housing Choice Voucher Program**

### **Owner Information Packet**



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## Voucher Program Owner's Guide

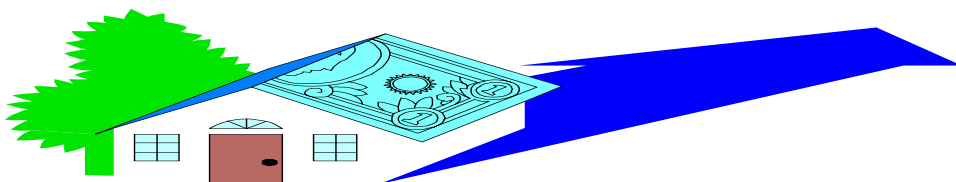
- The Housing Choice Voucher Program is a federally funded program, which helps families pay their rent.
- Families are able to select a unit of their choice in the private rental market.
- Families generally pay between 30 and 40 percent of their income toward rent and the Housing Authority pays the balance directly to the landlord.

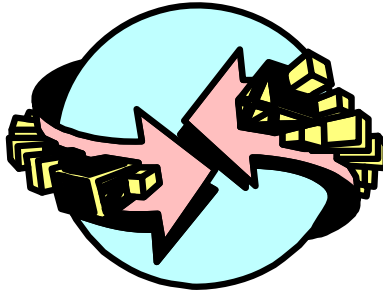
### Roles and Responsibilities

Section 8 balances relationships between owners, landlords, tenants and the Housing Authority.

### The Owner

- Thoroughly screens and interviews families who are potential tenants
- Maintains the property by making repairs in a timely manner
- Collects security deposits and tenant's monthly rent portion
- Manages the property and enforces the lease
- Explain and enforce Neighborhood Association Rules
- Complies with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payment Contract (HAP)
- Complies with all fair housing laws and equal opportunity requirements
- Notifies the Housing Authority if a tenant vacates the property
- Notifies the Housing Authority in writing of any repeated tenant lease violations or disturbances
- Notifies the Housing Authority of an owner change





## The Housing Authority

- ◆ Reviews all applications to determine eligibility for the program
- ◆ Explains and enforces the rules of the program to families and property/owners and managers
- ◆ Issues Vouchers to families
- ◆ Inspects the properties for compliance with housing quality standards
- ◆ Approves the property, owner, lease and rental amounts
- ◆ Sends housing assistance payments to the owner
- ◆ Conducts annual and interim re-exams of the family's income, family composition and adjusts rent portions if necessary

## The Family

- ✓ Provides the Housing Authority with complete and accurate information
- ✓ Reports changes in their household income and/or family composition
- ✓ Locates a suitable unit
- ✓ Pays owner security deposits and application fees
- ✓ Attends scheduled appointments and returns requested documents on time
- ✓ Maintains the property and repairs or reimburses the owner for any damages beyond normal wear and tear
- ✓ Complies with the terms of the lease
- ✓ Pays their portion of rent on time

## **APPROVING A TENANTS**

- ⇒ Owners are advised to screen families by their normal screening procedures. We encourage owners to research the family's tenancy history.
- ⇒ The Georgetown Housing Authority's admission of a family to participate in the program is not a representation by GHA about the family's expected behavior or the family's suitability for tenancy.
- ⇒ GHA may provide to the owner the family's current and prior address as shown on GHA records and the name and address, if known, of the landlord at the family's current and prior address. Such requests must be made in writing.

## **APPLICATION FEES AND SCEURITY DEPOSITS**

- 4 Are the responsibility of the tenant
- 4 The amount charged must not exceed the amount charged to unassisted applicants for a similar unit to avoid fair housing complaints

## **AFTER LANDLORD AND TENANT AGREE TO ENTER A LEASE**

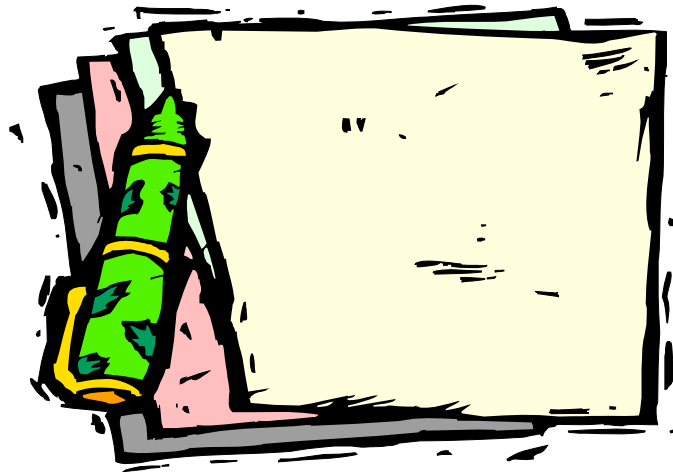
Submit a fully completed Request of Lease Approval (RLA).  
When the completed RLA is received an inspection will be performed.

### **Rent Limits**

- The rent requested must be comparable to similar, unassisted units.
- A rent reasonable study will be conducted, to determine if the requested rent is reasonable as compared to an unassisted unit when considering the location, quality, size, type, age, amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities provided.
- An HQS inspector must approve all requested rents for initial lease or any requested rent increases.

# LEASE REQUIREMENTS

1. The lease between tenant and owner must be the same lease used for other unassisted tenants.
2. The terms and conditions of the lease must be consistent with State and local law.
3. The lease must specify utilities and appliances supplied by the owner and supplied by the family.
4. The lease must include the HUD required Tenancy Addendum which will be provided by the Housing Authority. The terms of the tenancy addendum prevail over any other provisions of the lease.



## The following is the process to use your own lease:

1. The lease effective dates must match the Housing Assistance Payment Contract (HAP).
2. The approved rent amount must match the HAP Contract.
3. The Housing Authority will need a copy of the signed lease between tenant and owner.

## **RECEIVING THE HOUSING AUTHORITY ASSISTANCE PAYMENT**

- ☑ The effective date of the first housing assistance payment can start the day the unit passes inspection if the tenant is already living in the unit or the date the tenant moves in to the unit.
- ☑ The tenant is responsible for any rents due prior to the contract effective dates.
- ☑ The owner can expect to receive the first Housing Assistance Payment 30 days after the unit passes inspection. Payments thereafter will be mailed the first week of the month.
- ☑ In order to ensure we are paying the legal owner of any property, we must verify proof of ownership by means of a Recorded Deed or management agreement.
- ☑ We also need a Tax I.D. number or Social Security number for tax purposes.

## **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE FAMILY'S RENT PORTION**

- During the terms of the lease, if the family has a change in income or family composition rent portion will be adjusted.
- A Rent Change Notice will be mailed to the family and the owner to reflect any changes in rent portions.

## **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE FAMILY'S INCOME AND COMPOSITION**

- Family must be recertified for the Section 8 program on a yearly basis.
- The unit must also pass HQS inspection annually.
- The rent portion will be recalculated and a Rent Change Notice will be mailed to owner and family.



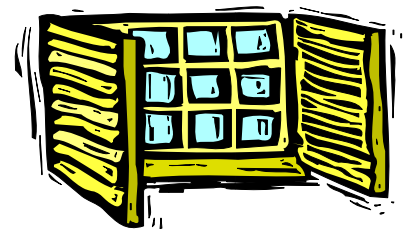
# HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

## OVERVIEW

Before the Housing Authority can make payments on behalf of a tenant family, the unit must meet HUD's minimum Housing Quality Standards (HQS). The Housing Authority will inspect the unit for HQS initially and annually. At the time of inspection, the unit should be "move in" ready. This will prevent delays in the housing assistance payments.

## **MOST COMMON HQS FAILED ITEMS**

- 8 Non-functioning smoke detectors
- 8 Missing or cracked electrical outlet covers
- 8 Railings not present where required
- 8 Peeling exterior and interior paint
- 8 Trip hazards caused by installed floor coverings (carpets/vinyl)
- 8 Cracked or broken window panes
- 8 Inoperable burners on stove or inoperable range hoods
- 8 Missing burner control knobs
- 8 Inoperable bathroom fan/ no ventilation
- 8 Leaking faucets or plumbing
- 8 No temperature/pressure relief on water heaters



## **PROPERTY OWNER/MANGER CHECK LIST**

- 1) *Free Advertising* - You may list units available for lease with us. You may fax, mail or call the department with information on available units. New and current families refer to these listings everyday.
- 2) *Select and Screen the applicant* - When a family with a Housing Choice Voucher approaches you, follow your regular screening procedure. We do not screen participants to determine their suitability as a tenant.
- 3) *Collect a Security Deposit, if you require one* - The tenant is responsible for paying the security deposit. Deposits may not exceed those charged to non-assisted tenants.
- 4) *Complete a Request for Tenancy Approval and return to our office* - The tenant will provide this form and this initiates the free inspection. It is very important that this document is completed thoroughly to enable us to expedite the inspection. Please call with any questions.
- 5) *Complete the W 9 and provide a recorded deed or management agreement* - In order to ensure we are paying the legal owner of the property, these documents are required. Housing Assistance payment cannot be released prior to receiving these documents.
- 6) *Inspection of the unit* - The unit must pass a Housing Quality Standards Inspection. The inspector will contact you to schedule an inspection within 5-7 days from receipt of the Tenancy for Lease Approval.
- 7) *Sign HAP contract with the Housing Authority* - A signed Housing Authority Payment Contract will require a signature from the owner or manager of the unit.
- 8) *Housing Authority Payments* – Payments will not commence until the unit has passed inspection, the tenant moves into the unit and the HAP is signed.
- 9) *After the initial lease is executed* - The Housing Authority's rent portion will be sent the first week of every month.
- 10) *Affordable rent for the tenant* – The tenant pays approximately 30% of their adjusted income towards rent. The tenant is responsible for paying their portion directly to the owner/manager by the due date set forth in the lease.
- 11) *The lease contract will be reviewed in one year* - You will receive a notice regarding lease renewal 60 days before the year-end.
- 12) *The tenant's rent portion is adjusted when the tenant's income or family compositions changes.*
- 13) *Notify us in writing when there is a change in ownership/management or address or if the family vacates the unit.*



**The Housing Authority of the City of Georgetown appreciates your support in providing rental units to the many families in need of quality affordable rental housing.**



