

# The Family Handbook

## A Guide for Families Participating In the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program



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# Table of Contents

<b>REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>HOW THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM WORKS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A THREE WAY PARTNERSHIP IN THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM ....</b>	<b>5</b>
Responsibilities of the Housing Authority	
Responsibilities of the Owners/Managers	
Responsibilities of the Family	
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Reporting procedures	
Family obligations	
<b>REGULATIONS AND POLICIES YOU MUST FOLLOW .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DENIAL OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>INFORMAL HEARING AND REVIEW PROCESS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>STEPS TO ASSISTANCE .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN RENTING A UNIT .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>MOVING PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR INSPECTION .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PORTABILITY PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ANNUAL ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Annual Recertification	
Annual Inspection	
Interim Review	
Enterprise Income Verification System	
<b>FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>LEAD-BASED PAINT HAZARD .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>FEDERAL PRIVACY STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP STATUS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>FAIR HOUSING AND DISCRIMINATION “DON’T BE A VICTIM” .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>24 CFR 982.551 “FAMILY OBLIGATIONS” .....</b>	<b>21</b>



## Housing Authority's Goal

It is the Housing Authority's goal to provide excellent service to the families participating in its section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Housing Authority will make every effort to inform you of the program rules, and advise you of how these rules affect you. Since federal regulations are not

always easy to understand, it is very important to ask questions if you are not sure of something. Do not hesitate to contact the Housing Authority if you have a question or a problem that pertains to the Housing Choice Voucher Program.



## Language Barriers

If English is not your first language, and you are unable to understand this handbook, upon your request, every effort will be made to provide someone to assist you.

## Request for Reasonable Accommodations

Persons with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation in order to utilize the housing program and any related services. The Housing Authority will make all reasonable efforts to be flexible in assisting persons with disabilities to participate in the program successfully.

Requests for accommodation will be verified to ensure that the accommodation is reasonable. If you are in need of an accommodation please contact our office:

Email: [hacfl@hacfl.com](mailto:hacfl@hacfl.com)

Phone: (954) 556 – 4100

Fax: (954) 556-4104



A "reasonable accommodation" is a change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice or service that may be necessary for a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, including public and common-use spaces. Since rules, policies, practices and services may have a different effect on persons with disabilities than on other persons, treating persons with disabilities exactly the same as others will sometimes deny them an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.

[Joint Statement of the Departments of HUD and Justice: Reasonable Accommodations under the Fair Housing Act]. An individual with a disability is defined as: "Any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such impairment." In general, a physical or mental impairment includes: hearing, mobility and visual impairments, chronic alcoholism, chronic mental illness, AIDS, AIDS Related Complex, and intellectual disability/intellectual developmental disorder that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include walking, talking, hearing, seeing, breathing, learning, performing manual tasks, and caring for oneself.

## How the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Works

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program is federally funded and administered locally by housing authorities. The rules and regulations are determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as approved by the U.S. Congress.



The program provides rental assistance that is paid directly to landlords on behalf of low-income families residing in approved rental units.

Once a family is determined eligible for assistance and receives a Housing Choice Voucher (voucher), the family must find an acceptable rental unit. After a rental unit is selected, the family and the landlord complete and return the paperwork provided to the family by the Housing Authority. Then, the Housing Authority must approve the rent, approve the owner, approve the location, inspect and approve the unit, and sign a contract with the landlord. Finally, the family must sign a lease with the landlord with the same terms and conditions as the contract.

The landlord will collect two payments each month—one from the Housing Authority and the other from the family. The assistance the family receives is based on the family's income, the number of bedrooms on the voucher and in the unit, and the rent and utilities paid by the family.

The family pays a minimum of 30 percent of its monthly-adjusted income for rent and utilities. However, the family may not pay more than 40 percent of its monthly-adjusted income for rent and utilities at the time the unit is initially approved.

To continue to receive assistance, the family must follow the rules of the program. If the family fails to comply with program requirements, such as failing to pay rent for any reason, the family's participation in the program may be terminated and/or the family may be required to repay assistance provided on behalf of the family.

The program provides for family mobility and the family is entitled to transfer its voucher anywhere in the United States that has a Housing Authority to administer the family's assistance.



## A Three-Way Partnership Within The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

The three-way partnership within the Section 8 HCV Program is between the Housing Authority, the tenant, and the landlord.

Responsibilities of the Housing Authority	Responsibilities of the Owner	Responsibilities of the Family
Determine if an applicant is eligible for rental assistance.	Conduct all tenant screening, selection and leasing activities.	Provide complete and accurate information to the Housing Authority.
Explain all the rules of the program to all qualified families.	Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract and lease.	Make a reasonable effort to find a place to live that is suitable and qualifies for the program.
Issue a Housing Choice Voucher and, if necessary, assist the family in finding a place to live.	Collect from the tenant any security deposit, share of the rent, and charges for tenant damages to the unit.	Cooperate in attending all appointments scheduled by the Housing Authority.
Approve the unit, the owner, and the lease.	Enforce tenant obligations under the lease.	Take responsibility for the care of the assisted housing unit.
Make housing assistance payments to the owner in a timely manner.	Pay for utilities and services (unless paid by the tenant under the lease).	Comply with the terms of the lease with the owner.
Ensure annually that both the family and the unit continue to qualify for the program.	Maintain the unit in accordance with housing quality standards, except for conditions that are the tenant's responsibility.	Comply with the Family Obligations of the Housing Choice Voucher, such as reporting all changes in income, assets and family composition within 10 days.
Ensure that owners and families comply with the program rules and the owner complies with the contract.	Comply with all Fair Housing laws.	Do not engage in criminal activities
Provide families and owners with prompt and professional service.	Ensure a safe and secure living environment.	Obtain permission from the landlord and the housing authority prior to allowing someone to move in.
Upon request, provide a reasonable accommodation to a disabled family member.	Agree to allow reasonable modifications for a disabled tenant at the disabled tenant's expense.	<b>Never</b> withhold rent for any reason while you are being assisted under the Section 8 HCV Program.



# Responsibilities

**Your Responsibilities.** An important responsibility is to always keep the Housing Authority up-to-date on your household status. In other words, the Housing Authority must be notified whenever there is a change in your household income, composition, or assets. **Failure to report a change within 10 days of its occurrence may result in termination of your rental assistance benefits and/or repayment of housing assistance payments.**

*Remember: Your Housing Specialist is just a phone call away!*

## Reporting Procedures

You must report changes in writing to your housing specialist at the Housing Authority offices at 500 West Sunrise Blvd Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311. You may also fax or email the information directly to your housing specialist. The information will be placed in your file and you will be notified if more information is needed or if there are any changes to your assistance.

Changes in income include, but are not limited to:	Changes in household composition include, but are not limited to:	Changes in assets include, but are not limited to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New job (even if it's a second job);</li> <li>➤ Termination of job;</li> <li>➤ Pay raise or overtime pay;</li> <li>➤ Child or spousal support;</li> <li>➤ Pension, SSA, SSI, &amp; Cal-Works;</li> <li>➤ Any lump-sum payments;</li> <li>➤ Regular payment of bills or other expenses by someone not living in the assisted household;</li> <li>➤ Regular monetary or nonmonetary gifts by someone not living in the assisted household;</li> <li>➤ Business income.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New baby;</li> <li>➤ A death in the family;</li> <li>➤ Any person who lives with you (sleeps, eats, bathes in your unit) must be reported. A guest must have another residence and is limited on the number of days per year s/he can stay with you;</li> <li>➤ Any person who moves out of your unit;</li> <li>➤ Additions to your household (you must always obtain your landlord's and the Housing Authority's approval before someone moves in).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New bank accounts;</li> <li>➤ Changes in banks or accounts;</li> <li>➤ Property or vehicles;</li> <li>➤ Stocks, bonds, or certificates of deposit;</li> <li>➤ Inheritance;</li> <li>➤ Insurance settlement;</li> <li>➤ Life insurance with a cash value;</li> <li>➤ Gifts;</li> <li>➤ Collections for investment, such as a stamp or a coin collection;</li> <li>➤ Annuities;</li> <li>➤ Lottery or gambling winnings.</li> </ul>

## Family Obligations

- ✓ *Pay your portion of the rent and utility bills on time;*
- ✓ *Provide and maintain appliances as agreed to on the lease;*
- ✓ *Maintain the dwelling in the best possible condition;*
- ✓ *Repair any damages caused by your household within thirty (30) days or, in the event the damage is life-threatening, within twenty-four (24) hours. Damages beyond normal wear and tear caused by any member of your household or any of your guests are your responsibility.*



## Regulations And Policies You Must Follow

Your participation in the rental assistance program may be terminated if you or any member of your household commit any of the following violations:

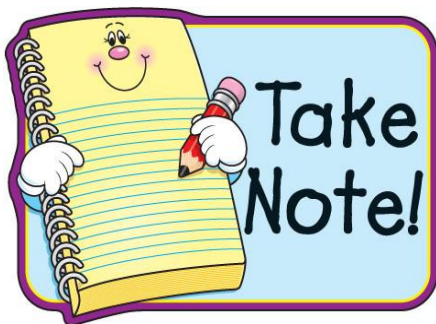
- Fail to allow the Housing Authority to inspect your unit at a reasonable time after you have received reasonable notice;
- Commit serious or repeated violations of the lease;
- Fail to notify the Housing Authority and the property owner (landlord), in writing, at least 30-days before you move out of your unit;
- Fail to promptly give the Housing Authority a copy of any eviction notice received from the property owner (landlord);
- Reside in another residence other than the assisted unit;
- Allow people not approved by the Housing Authority to reside in your unit. The Housing Authority must approve any new residents before they move in and you must report immediately if anyone moves out of your unit;
- Fail to notify and receive approval of the Housing Authority prior to taking in a foster child or a live-in aide;
- Fail to receive Housing Authority and the property owner's approval before engaging in legal profit making business activities in the unit. These activities by family members may be allowed if they are incidental to the primary use of the residence;
- Sublease, assign, transfer, or otherwise re-rent the unit. You may not rent out rooms in the unit;
- Withhold rent without Housing Authority knowledge and permission.
- Fail to supply any information or certification requested by the Housing Authority to verify that (1) your family is living in the unit, or (2) your family is absent from the unit, including any information or certification on the reason(s) for the absences. The Housing Authority must be notified within fourteen (10) days of any absence from the unit;
- Own or have any financial interest in the unit (except for mobile home owners);
- Receive other federal, state, or local housing subsidies for the unit;
- Fail to (1) supply any information that the Housing Authority or HUD deems to be necessary, (2) disclose and verify social security numbers, (3) sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information, and (4) notify the Housing Authority in writing when the family is away from the unit for an extended period of time;
- Provide information that is untrue and/or incomplete;
- Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program;
- Participate in illegal drug or violent criminal activity;
- Rent a unit from an owner who is your, or any member of your family's, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother, unless you receive Housing Authority approval that the unit would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member with disabilities. This rule only applies to new admissions and moves.



# Denial or Termination of Assistance

The Housing Authority may deny program assistance for an applicant, or terminate program assistance for a participant, for any of the reasons listed below:

- The family violates a Family Obligation
- Any member of the family has ever been evicted from federally assisted housing in the last five years.
- Any member of the family commits fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt act in connection with any federal housing program.
- Any member of the family commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity.
- Any family member is illegally using a controlled substance.
- Any family member's abuse of alcohol interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
- The family currently owes rent or other amounts to the Housing Authority or to another Housing Authority in connection with Section 8 or any housing assistance program under the 1937 Housing Act.
- If the family breaches an agreement with the Housing Authority to pay amounts owed to a Housing Authority, or amounts paid to an owner by a Housing Authority;
- A family participating in the FSS program fails to comply, without good cause, with the family's Contract of Participation.
- The family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior towards Housing Authority personnel.
- The Housing Authority must permanently deny eligibility or terminate the assistance of any person convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamines.



## Withdrawals

*Occasionally, families who have been certified eligible to participate in the Section 8 Voucher program decline initial program participation or choose to withdraw from the program after receiving assistance. Keep in mind that if you withdraw from participating in the program, you will have to reapply if you happen to need assistance again in the future.*



## Informal Hearing & Review Process



If the Housing Authority sends a "Notice of Denial/Termination" to you, the notice will contain a brief explanation of the reasons for denial/termination of program participation. You have 10 business days from the date of the notice to request an informal hearing/review if you disagree with the notice.

You must request an informal hearing/review in writing and state why you are requesting an informal hearing/review. At the hearing/review, you will be given an opportunity to present written or oral objections. The hearing officer will notify you of the final decision and provide a brief explanation for the decision.

### **You may request an Informal Review to discuss any of the following issues:**

- A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment.
- A determination of the appropriate utility allowance for tenant-paid utilities from the Housing Authority utility allowance schedule.
- A determination of the family unit size under the Housing Authority subsidy standards.
- A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's action or failure to act.
- A determination to terminate assistance because the participant family has been absent from the assisted unit for a period of time that is greater than 30 consecutive days.



**\*\*\* The Housing Authority is not bound by the decision of the hearing officer if the decision exceeds the authority of the hearing officer or if it is contrary to HUD regulations or federal, state, and/or local laws.\*\*\***

## STEPS TO ASSISTANCE

After a family has been selected from the waiting list, several steps must be completed before a family can receive rental assistance.

### Housing Authority Determines Family's Final Eligibility

Family is selected from waiting list. Income and household composition is reviewed for final eligibility.

### Voucher Issued

When a family is determined to be eligible for the program and funding is available, the Housing Authority issues a Housing Choice Voucher at the required tenant briefing. Your Voucher indicates the number of bedrooms for which your family is eligible. This voucher size is based on HUD guidelines and the Housing Authority's written policy. The Housing Authority takes into consideration factors such as the total number of persons in the family. The housing standards help to make the best use of the funds HUD provides for housing costs, and to avoid overcrowding. The unit size for which you have been approved for is indicated on your Voucher.

### Expiration Date of Vouchers

Your Voucher is valid for **90 days**. It is important that you do not delay your housing search. If your Voucher expires before you find suitable housing, you will have to reapply. Keep track of all the units you look at during the search period, this information will aid you in requesting a voucher extension should your household qualify for one.

### Tolling the Voucher

When you locate a unit a Request for Tenancy Approval is turned in to the Housing Authority. If for any reason that unit is no longer available to you the Housing Authority will "toll" your voucher. This process allows the applicant/participant to be reimbursed the days lost while the first request was in process.

### The Payment Standard

- Is established by the Housing Authority
- The payment standard is based on up to 110% of Fair Market Rent established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Is based on the cost of housing and utilities for your area.
- Depends on the family composition and the bedroom size of the unit. For example, the payment standard is higher for families requiring 3-bedroom units than for families requiring 1- bedroom units.

### Voucher/Bedroom Size Maximum (Sleeping Rooms)

- a. No more than two persons should share a bedroom or living/sleeping area.
- b. Families may select smaller units than listed on the Voucher if the unit selected has at least one sleeping or living/sleeping room for each two persons in the household. The smaller payment standard will be used for the unit size. The Housing Authority may grant exceptions to the standards if circumstances presented by the family warrant an exception. (Example: Reasonable Accommodation).

## Where to Live?

A family must locate a unit that meets the program rules. That can be where you live at right now or a totally different unit. The Housing Authority can help in some ways, but the family has the primary responsibility for finding a suitable unit to rent. **A family may have up to 120 days to locate a suitable unit based on necessary accommodations.** Should a family have to refuse a unit after a RFTA has been submitted, the Housing Authority may grant days lost by tolling the voucher.

## TIPS TO LOCATE SUITABLE HOUSING

Landlords advertise rental properties in different ways. Here are some ideas on where to start.

- ✓ Check the classified section of local newspapers.
- ✓ Ask friends and neighbors.
- ✓ Drive through neighborhoods where you may want to live and look for rental signs.
- ✓ Check community bulletin boards.
- ✓ Check with real estate offices.
- ✓ Check your briefing packet for the gosection8.com flyer.

# WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN RENTING A UNIT

There are many factors to consider as you search for suitable housing. Select a unit that meets your family's needs. Here are some factors and suggestions to consider:

- ◆ Does the unit size meet your needs?
- ◆ Is the unit close to family and friends?
- ◆ Condition of unit?
- ◆ Does it have air conditioning? Do you need or want it?
- ◆ Does it have dishwasher?
- ◆ Is there a washer/dryer or laundry room?
- ◆ Is there a yard? Will you have to take care of it?
- ◆ Do you have a pet? Is it okay to have a pet? Is there a pet fee?
- ◆ What utilities do you have to pay, gas, electric, oil, etc.?
- ◆ Yard or Pool ( Maintenance)
- ◆ Neighborhood and safety
- ◆ Are stores close by?
- ◆ Childcare
- ◆ Schools
- ◆ Work
- ◆ Public Transportation
- ◆ Bank
- ◆ Church



## When Applying for a Rental Unit

- Make an appointment and try to make a positive first impression.
- Leave your children with a babysitter.
- Go early and look around the neighborhood.
- Let the Landlord get to know you before asking if he/she accepts Section 8.
- Be prepared to furnish references if necessary.
- Make sure you have money for a security deposit and deposit for utilities if required.
- Take your Voucher and Request for Tenancy Approval with you.
- Your **Voucher Expires in 90 days** from the day you receive it.
- Turn your Request for Tenancy Approval into the Housing Authority **before** your Voucher expires.

## Questions for the Landlord

- How much is the rent?
- What utilities are **not** included in the rent?
- How much is the security deposit?
- Is there a person and phone number to call for repairs or maintenance?

## Security Deposit

The Landlord of the unit decides how much the security deposit will be. When you begin to search make sure that you have made plans in advance to have the money available for the security deposit and the deposit for utilities, if applicable. The Landlord may charge up to two months of the rent for the security deposit. The security deposit may not exceed amounts charged for unassisted units.

## Moving Procedures

Before you move, you must notify the Housing Authority and the landlord in compliance with state law and the lease. The Housing Authority must approve your move in advance and the Housing Authority will not transfer your assistance more than once in a 12-month period unless there are extreme mitigating circumstances.



### Follow these steps to transfer your assistance:

- After your initial lease term and with Housing Authority approval, give your landlord an advance thirty to sixty (30-60) day written notice as required by State law and the lease and provide a copy to your housing specialist .
- If your landlord gives you notice to move, send a copy to your housing representative right away. The Housing Authority does not advise on tenant-landlord law. If you believe your notice is deficient and you intend to not comply with the notice, you should seek legal advice and notify the Housing Authority of your intention.
- Make sure all of your belongings are removed from your unit by the end of the notice period.
- Leave the unit clean and in good condition.
- Never allow yourself to be evicted because you may lose your assistance.

***If you live in a high-poverty area, you should consider searching for a housing unit in another area. A low-poverty area may provide possible advantages to your family, such as improved employment and educational opportunities.***

### New Unit

- Pay the full security deposit and your portion of the rent to your new landlord.
- All moving costs and utility hookup charges are your responsibility.
- The initial lease period must be for a minimum of twelve (12) months.
- The Housing Authority will not transfer your assistance more than once in a 12-month period, so make sure that you are willing to stay at least one year.
- The Housing Authority cannot begin assistance on a new unit until it inspects and passes the unit and executes a contract with the landlord. If you move into a unit before this is done, you are responsible for full rent until the unit is approved.

**Releasing Information To Prospective Owners.** The Housing Authority will, upon request, provide the prospective landlord/manager your current address and the name and address of your current and previous owners.

**Jurisdiction.** The Housing Authority of the County of Fort Lauderdale serves the following cities:

Coconut Creek	Deerfield Beach	Lauderdale Lakes	North Lauderdale	Plantation	Weston
Cooper City	Fort Lauderdale	Lauderhill	Oakland Park	Pompano Beach	Wilton Manors
Coral Springs	Hallandale Beach	Lighthouse Point	Parkland	Sunrise	
Dania Beach	Hillsboro Beach	Margate	Pembroke Park	Tamarac	
Davie	Lauderdale-by-the-Sea	Miramar	Pembroke Pines	West Park	

***\*\*Important: Cities that lie outside the jurisdiction of the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority are: Hollywood.\*\****

## What You Should Know About Your Inspection

It is necessary for the unit where you plan to receive rental assistance pass a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection before payments will be made. The unit will also need to pass inspection each year for housing assistance payments (HAP) to continue. A failed inspection could delay the start of payments or endanger the continuation of payments. You must notify your housing specialist if your landlord fails to make repairs within a reasonable period of time to conditions that affect your assisted unit.

**The Housing Authority will inspect the following areas for Housing Quality Standards (HQS) compliance:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Living Room</b>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Building Exterior</b>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Kitchen</b>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Heating and Plumbing</b>      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Bathroom(s)</b>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>General Health and Safety</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other Rooms Used for Living</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Garage</b>                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Secondary Rooms</b>             | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Outbuildings</b>              |

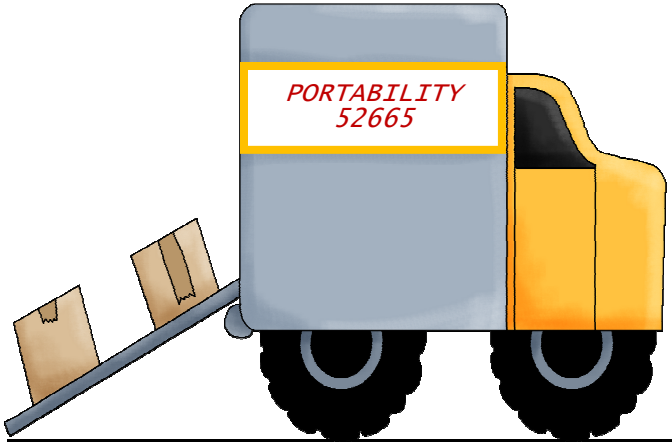
**The following is a listing of the conditions that must be verified by the Housing Inspector:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All major utilities (electricity, gas, water) must be turned on.  | <input type="checkbox"/> The hot water tank for the unit must have a pressure relief valve and a downward discharge pipe.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The cooking stove and oven must be clean and in working condition. There must be burner control knobs.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> There can be no tears, holes, or loose seams in carpeting or linoleum.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The refrigerator must be clean and in working condition.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs and railings, inside and out, must be secure. A stairway of four or more steps requires a railing.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The heating unit must be properly installed and vented and otherwise in good working order. Heater must be operational. | <input type="checkbox"/> There can be no mice, rats, insects or evidence of infestation.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There must be hot and cold running water in the kitchen and bathroom(s).  | <input type="checkbox"/> There <b>MUST</b> be a properly operating smoke detector on every level of the unit.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There must be a shower or bathtub that is in good working condition.  | <input type="checkbox"/> No cracking, chipping, scaling, or loose paint anywhere, inside or outside the unit if a child under the age of six resides or is expected to reside in the unit.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There must be a flush toilet that works and does not leak.  | <input type="checkbox"/> No excessive debris in or around the unit, such as an accumulation of boxes, paper, trash, wood, tires, machine or auto parts, batteries, paint cans, or old appliances. Derelict vehicles must be removed from the premises. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The bathroom must have a window or working ventilation fan.   | <input type="checkbox"/> No key locks on any interior doors  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There must be no plumbing leaks or plugged drains.  | <input type="checkbox"/> No A/C Units in the window (Unit <b>must</b> be in the wall.)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All accessible outside doors and windows must have working locks.   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least one exit door must be without a double keyed deadbolt lock.  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All electrical outlets must have cover plates in good condition with no cracks.   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There must be no missing, broken or badly cracked windows/window panes.   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The roof must not leak.   |  |

*For more detailed inspection standard information, read the HUD publication, "A Good Place to Live," located in your Housing Orientation Packet.*

## WHAT IS PORTABILITY?

**Portability.** Portability is the HUD term for the ability to move outside your housing agency's jurisdiction with continued rental assistance.



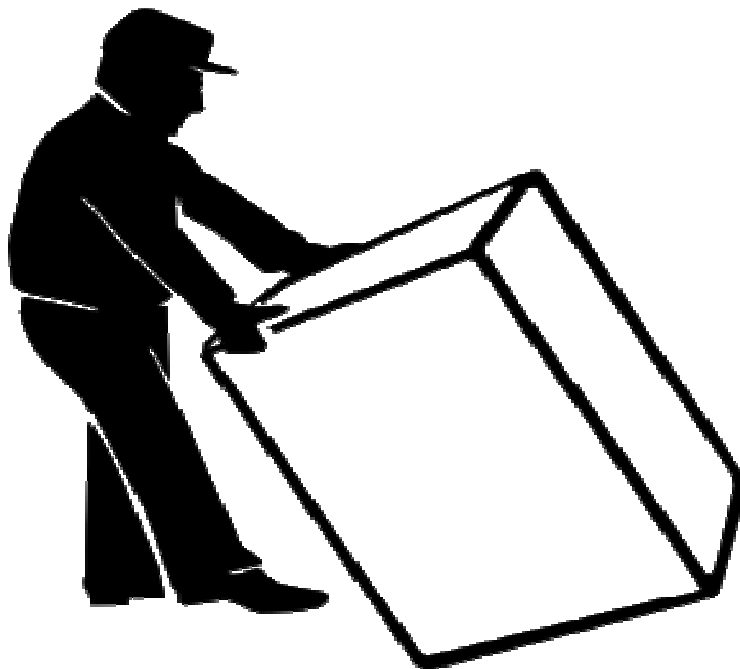
You can usually use your voucher across town or anywhere in the United States that has a housing authority to accept your voucher.

The Housing Authority may limit moves under portability, so contact your housing representative regarding the portability feature.

**Facts About Portability.** Keep in mind that different housing authorities may have different policies and deadlines. Different housing authorities may have different voucher payment standards and utility allowances that could affect the amount you pay for rent. You may also receive a different size voucher based on the new housing authority's occupancy standards.

As a new admission to the program, you may find you are not eligible for assistance in another jurisdiction due to different income limits. It is important that you find this out before you take advantage of portability.

**Portability and FSS.** If you are participating in a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, make sure that you discuss your move with your housing representative. If you cannot fulfill your FSS obligations in the new location, your FSS contract may be terminated and you may lose your escrow balance.





# Annual Activities

## Annual Recertification

HUD requires that all families be reviewed annually to determine continued program eligibility and the appropriate amount of assistance. This process is called the annual “recertification.” Approximately eight months after you are first approved for assistance, you will receive a recertification letter and packet from the Housing Authority. It is important that you promptly complete and return your packet and all requested information by the deadline. If you fail to return the requested information by the deadline, you will be notified that your assistance will be terminated. It is important that you promptly contact your housing authority representative if you receive a notice to terminate benefits.



## Annual Inspection

The Housing Authority must inspect your housing unit at least annually. Approximately eight months after you are first approved for assistance, you will be notified by letter or telephone of the date and time of your annual inspection. It is your responsibility to make sure that the head of household or spouse is available to allow the inspector to enter the premises. You must cooperate to avoid an interruption in or termination of your housing assistance. The inspector may not be able to answer questions regarding your case. You should contact your assigned housing representative to report changes in your situation or to ask questions about your case.

## Interim Review

Certain changes in your status may require a review by the Housing Authority. A review of your benefits may take place when your household composition or your income changes. In addition, the Housing Authority may review your status when it receives information indicating that you have violated your program obligations.

## Enterprise Income Verification System

Income and employment information reported by assisted households is compared to the income and employment information reported to HUD’s Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System. If there is a discrepancy between the income and employment information reported by you to the Housing Authority and the income and employment information reported to HUD’s EIV System by employers and agencies providing benefits, the Housing Authority will research the discrepancies and take the appropriate action if it is found that income and employment information was not reported, underreported, or reported late. The action that will be taken as a result of unreported or underreported income may include termination of program participation and/or repayment of overpaid housing assistance benefits.

# FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM



## Family Self-Sufficiency Program

**“THE FUTURE, YOUR PRIDE, OUR FAMILY”**

**The Family Self-Sufficient Program (FSS)** is one of the initiatives under the Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere (HOPE) program enacted in 1990 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

FSS offers a financial incentive to families through the establishment of an escrow account, which becomes available to the family upon successful completion of their Contract of Participation. This Contract is geared to meet the families' need for services. It also spells out the goals and objectives, which the family must fulfill during the contract term. The Contract for Participation is for five (5) years. This can be extended up to two (2) years so the family can meet their public assistance goal if needed. The Housing Authority will compute and credit any escrow to which the family is entitled. Upon successful completion of the contract, the Housing Authority disburses the amount, which has been escrowed to the family.

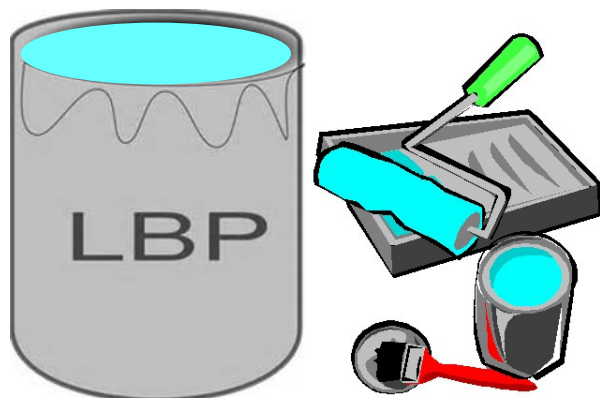


## Homeownership

In order to participate in the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Lauderdale's Homeownership Program, the family must meet all the requirements and complete all of the required training and counseling sessions within 3 months of receiving Section 8 Homeownership Voucher assistance. For information about the HACFL's Homeownership Program make an appointment with the FSS program Coordinator.

## Lead-Based Paint Hazard

Be aware that your family can be poisoned by lead based paint. Lead poisoning causes serious physical harm, particularly to small children.



Your family may be at greatest risk if:

- You have children under the age of six;
- You have selected a unit built prior to January 1, 1978; and,
- Your pre-1978 unit has chipping, peeling, scaling, and/or loose paint inside or outside.

If you live in a pre-1978 unit, be aware of the conditions of the unit. Although not all pre-1978 units contain lead-based paint, lead poisoning of your children may occur if the unit contains lead-based paint and:

- Your children eat paint chips;
- Your children chew on painted surfaces such as moldings or window frames;
- Your children play in soil underneath painted areas, such as leaves or painted siding that are, or had been deteriorating; and,
- Your children breathe dust created by deteriorating painted surfaces.

Your children may be suffering from lead poisoning if they show the following symptoms:

- Crankiness or irritability over a long period of time.
- Little or no appetite.
- Frequent stomach aches.
- Frequent vomiting.

Sometimes your children may not appear sick at all, but they are being poisoned in a way that could damage their minds and bodies. If you believe your children have been exposed to lead-based paint, seek immediate medical attention. Your health care provider can test your children for lead poisoning.

You may receive Section 8 rental assistance in a pre-1978 unit, but the Housing Authority will not approve the unit if your children are under the age of six, and the unit's paint surfaces show signs of deterioration as indicated by cracking, scaling, chipping or peeling paint.

If the unit fails a Housing Authority inspection, your landlord will be given information on how to correct the problems. Your landlord must make the repairs in accordance with special lead-based paint rules and regulations. Your landlord must take all necessary steps to keep your family safe from harm.



## Federal Privacy Statement

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) collects and discloses data on applicants and participants in the Section 8 HCV Program in accordance with the U. S. Privacy Act of 1974 . The information is released to appropriate federal, state, or local agencies to verify information relevant to participation in the rental assistance programs and, when applicable, to other civil, criminal, or regulatory bodies.

For every participant, the Housing Authority completes a data collection form (HUD 50058) with information about household size, cost of rent, income and assets, and social security numbers. This information is used by HUD to develop budgets, evaluate, plan, monitor

programs, and prepare reports to the President and Congress. The information is also used to verify accuracy and completeness of income information and detect fraud.

HUD is permitted to ask for the information by the U. S. Housing Act of 1937 as amended, 42 USC, 1437 et. seq., the Housing and Community Development Act 1981, Public Law 97-35, 85 Stat., 348, 408.

Failure to disclose information or social security numbers constitutes grounds for denying eligibility or continued eligibility pursuant to Title 24 Code of Federal Regulations.

## Proof of Citizenship Status

Section 214, Part 812 of the Code of Federal Regulations states:

- All family members must submit evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status for verification.
- Verification or evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status must be submitted at the point of eligibility determination.



## Violence Against Women Act

On January 6, 2006, President Bush signed into law the Violence against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005. The law prohibits the denial of admission, termination of assistance, or termination of tenancy for lease violations, criminal activities, or other good cause if the violations occurred as a direct result of a family member being the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking. The restrictions are described in the Tenancy Addendum, which is the document provided by the housing authority that supplements the lease agreement.

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 ("VAWA") protects qualified tenants, participants, and applicants, and affiliated individuals, who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking from being denied housing assistance, evicted, or terminated from housing assistance based on acts of such violence against them.

All information provided to a PHA, owner or manager concerning the incident(s) of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking relating to the Victim (including the fact that an individual is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking) shall be kept confidential by the PHA, owner or manager, and such information shall not be entered into any shared database. Employees of the PHA, owner, or manager are not to have access to these details unless to afford or reject VAWA protections to the Victim; and may not disclose this information to any other entity or individual, except to the extent that disclosure is: (i) requested or consented to by the Victim in writing; (ii) required for use in an eviction proceeding; or (iii) otherwise required by applicable law.

# Fair Housing and Discrimination “Don’t Be A Victim”!



If you should have information about a landlord or manager engaging in any of the activities listed, please call the Security Officer at (954) 556-4100.

If you have reason to believe you are a victim of housing discrimination, you have the right to file a housing discrimination complaint. A complaint form is available from any HUD office. You should also report all information about violations of the Federal Fair Housing Law to HUD, even if you do not file a formal complaint.

To file a report with HUD, please call:  
Fair Housing Complaint Hotline:  
1- 800-669-9777.

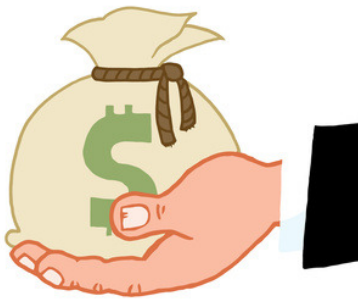
Hearing Impaired: **(TTY)** 1-800-927-9275

Beware of the following fraud schemes:

- Requesting money in return for filing a rental assistance application;
- Requesting money to move someone up on the rental assistance waiting list.

## Landlords/Managers Have A Responsibility To:

- Consider all qualified applicants equally;
- Indicate no preference when advertising or showing units;
- Give all applicants accurate and complete information about available units, occupancy dates, rental terms, and conditions;
- Refrain from making written or verbal inquiries about an applicant's ethnicity, religion, sex, disability, marital or familial status; and,
- Be consistent in applying rental policies.



## Landlords/Managers Must Never:

- Ask for money from tenants beyond the rental contract and standard credit check charges;
- Offer money and/or gifts to Housing Authority employees for favors; or,
- Pay or offer payment for “referral or finder fees” to Housing Authority employees for steering Section 8 recipients to vacant units.

## ***Important***

*For your protection, always get a receipt for money paid out by you, whether by cash, check, or money order. Always request a written explanation for non-rent payments.*



## Federal and State Laws

### Fair Housing Laws

It is a violation of federal law for a housing provider to refuse to rent or sell a home, to offer unequal terms, quote different prices, or apply different policies on the basis of race, color, religion, disability or handicap, sex, familial status, or national origin. State law prohibits discrimination on the basis of marital status, ancestry, age, or familial status. Some of these laws are described below.



EQUAL HOUSING  
OPPORTUNITY

**FAIR HOUSING IS THE LAW!**

### State of Florida



Florida Fair Housing Laws - Florida, Fla. Stat. §§ 760.20-760.60 also prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, familial status or religion. Under these laws, apartment dwellers in all parts of Florida have the right to enjoy their housing without facing discrimination based on seven protected classes. While some states offer protections for additional classes, such as sexual orientation or marital status, Florida does not.

The **Florida Fair Housing** Act declares it illegal to discriminate in the sale, rental, advertising, financing, or providing of brokerage services for **housing**.

In Florida, aggrieved persons may file a civil lawsuit without two years after a discriminatory act occurs. If you feel that you have been discriminated against, contact the Florida Commission on Human Relations or your local housing authority.

### Federal Government

Civil Rights Act of 1866 protects the right of all persons to “inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey” real and personal property. Bases covered are race and national origin.

Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title VIII prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, and sex.

Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 bars discrimination in the sale or rental of housing on the basis of a disability or because there are children in the family, but exempts housing for older persons.





## **FAMILY OBLIGATIONS [24 CFR 982.551]**

- (A) The family must supply any information that the Housing Authority or U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determines is necessary in the administration of the program, including submission of required evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status.
- (B) The family must supply any information requested by the Housing Authority or HUD for use in regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition in accordance with HUD requirements. A change in Family Income, Composition or other relevant circumstances must be reported immediately to the Housing Authority.
- (C) The family must disclose to the Housing Authority any information they receive from HUD.
- (D) The family must disclose and verify social security numbers and must sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
- (E) Any information supplied by the family must true and complete.
- (F) The family must not damage the premises or unit (other than damage from ordinary wear and tear) or permit any guest to damage the unit or premises.
- (G) The family is responsible for any Housing Quality Standard breach caused by the family.
- (H) The family must allow the Housing Authority to inspect the unit in at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.
- (I) The family may not commit any serious or repeated violation and breach of the lease.
- (J) The family must notify the Housing Authority and the Landlord in writing before the family moves out of the unit, or terminates the lease on notice to the Landlord.
- (K) The family must promptly give notice to the Housing Authority a copy of any Landlord eviction notice.
- (L) The family must use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence.
- (M) The Housing Authority must approve the composition of the assisted family residing in the unit. The family must promptly inform the Housing Authority of the birth, adoption, or court awarded custody of a child. The family must request Housing Authority approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit.
- (N) Must promptly notify the Housing Authority if any family member no longer resides in the unit.
- (O) If the Housing Authority has given approval, a foster child or a live in aide may reside in the unit. The Housing Authority will annually request the family to justify and document the necessity for and verify services that the live in aide is providing.
- (P) Members of the household may engage in legal profit making activities in the unit, but only if such activities are incidental to primary use of the unit for residence by the members of the family.
- (Q) The family must not sublease or let the unit.
- (R) The family must not assign the lease or transfer the unit.
- (S) The family must supply any information or certification requested by the Housing Authority to verify that the family is living in the unit, or relating to family absence from the unit, including any Housing Authority requested information or certification on the purpose of family absence. The family must cooperate with the Housing Authority for this purpose. The family must promptly notify the Housing Authority in writing of absence from the unit.
- (T) The family must not own or have any interest in the unit.
- (U) The members of the family must not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program.
- (V) The members of the family may not engage in any drug-related activity, or violent criminal activity, or any other criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.
- (W) The members of the family must not use alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons in the immediate vicinity of the premises.
- (X) An assisted family, or members of the family, may not receive Section 8 tenant-based assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or for a different unit, under any duplicative federal, state, or local housing assistance program.
- (Y) The family must not owe rent and/or other monies to the Housing Authority or to another Housing Authority in connection with Section 8 or Public Housing Assistance.
- (Z) Family Self -Sufficiency (FSS) families must not willfully and persistently fails to fulfill their FSS obligations.

## Documents Provided to Me

The following documents have been provided to me on this date:

*(Check the documents you have received)*

- ☐ Family Handbook
- ☐ Housing Choice Voucher
- ☐ Housing Discrimination Complaint Form
- ☐ Fair Housing Brochure
- ☐ HUD Booklet "Good Place to Live"
- ☐ Utility Allowance Schedule
- ☐ HUD Required Tenancy Addendum
- ☐ Lead-Based Paint Brochure
- ☐ A Request for Tenancy Approval

It is my responsibility to locate suitable and eligible housing before the expiration date of my voucher, and notify the Housing Authority if I am having difficulty understanding the rules and regulations of the Housing Choice Voucher Program. I will comply with the rules and regulations for as long as I participate in the program.

Head of Household:

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Head of Household Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Adult Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Adult Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Adult Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Adult Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Housing Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_