

## What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program? (Section 8)

The housing choice voucher program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHAs). The PHAs receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program.

A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the family's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. This unit may include the family's present residence. Rental units must meet minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by the PHA.

A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays a difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

## What are the Rules and Regulations of the Housing Choice Voucher Program?

When the family is settled into a new home, the family is expected to comply with the lease and program requirements. Listed below are some of the Family Obligations that the tenants must abide by or face possible termination from the program:

### The Family Must Not:

- **Commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease**
- **Commit Fraud, Bribery, or any other corrupt criminal act in connection with the program.**
- **Engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent 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.**
- **Engage in the abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.**

## What is the Process for Terminating a HCV Tenant?

1. Once a crime report is received from your agency, the investigator determines if the offense warrants a termination. Usually, the crime must be violent or drug related in nature, but HCV tenants and their household members understand that they are not to engage in any criminal activity according to their "Family Responsibilities" form they sign every year.
2. Once a violation has been established, a Termination Notice is sent to the tenant and their landlord advising Broward County Housing Authority's intent to terminate their HCV benefits.
3. The tenant has 10 days to respond to request a termination hearing and provide evidence and testimony to defend themselves.
4. If a hearing is requested, an informal hearing will be set in which an impartial hearing officer will preside. If needed, the responding officers will be subpoenaed to testify on their report and observations.
5. Upon concluding the hearing, the hearing officer has 10 days to render a decision.
6. If the decision to terminate is upheld, the tenant's HCV benefits will be terminated. This does not mean the tenant is evicted! Once terminated, the landlord will not receive any rental subsidy from BCHA. It is up to the landlord to evict the tenant for non payment of rent.

**What does the Investigator look for in your Reports?**

**1. STATEMENTS**

Any statements made by the suspect and /or tenant establishing a nexus to the Section 8 property.

**2. IDENTIFICATION**

Any identification or indicia (mail, keys, utility bills) linking the suspect to the property.

**3. PROBATION / PAROLE**

If the suspect and or tenant is on probation or parole at this address (please include Parole / Probation officer's name and contact number)

**4. PREVIOUS CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

If this is a problem site, any evidence of past criminal behavior is helpful since tenants are to report whether or not they were arrested every year on their Section 8 applications.

**Goals of the Investigations Unit**

- Proactive in educating our recipients on prevention of fraudulent activities.
- Serve as a deterrent to engage in fraudulent activities for other participants by terminating their assistance of those who commit fraud.
- Reduce financial losses.
- To accurately verify and document all program violations which come to the attention of this Agency.
- To recoup financial losses, terminate and prosecute families if necessary.



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*Building On Success*

**INVESTIGATIONS  
UNIT**



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**HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (sometimes referred to as “Section 8”) is the largest federal low-income housing assistance program. Families are awarded vouchers to help pay the cost of renting housing on the open market. Because vouchers are provided to particular tenants to live where they choose, they are often referred to as “tenant-based” assistance.

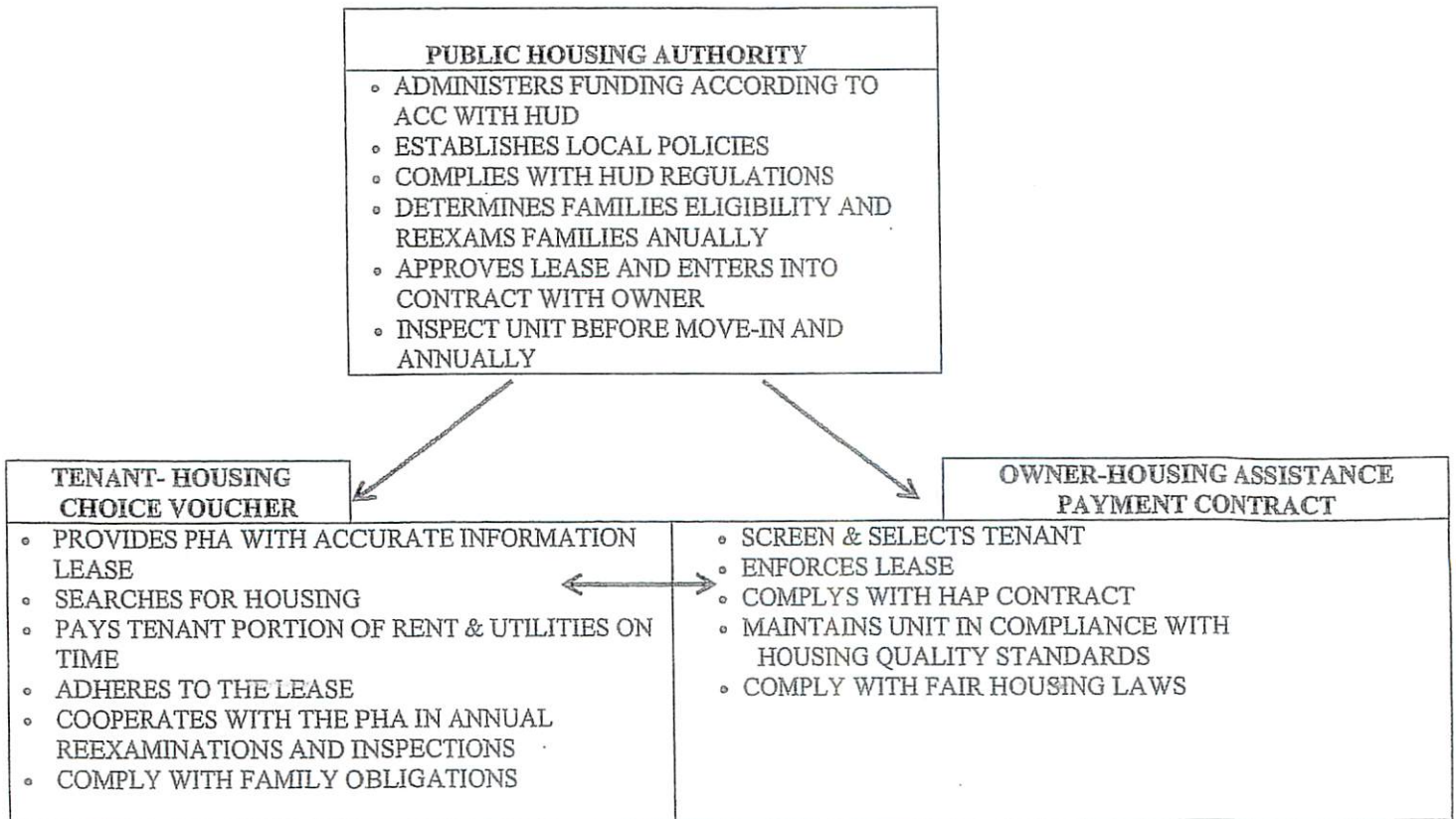
The voucher program is funded at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). At the local level, the program is run by Public Housing Authorities (PHA’s).

The Section 8 program was established in 1974. In 1998 Congress merged the two components of the tenant-based section 8 program - certificates and vouchers – into a single housing program (Housing Choice Voucher Program).

Broward County Housing Authority has been operating the program since 1975. Families can pay up to 40% of their annual adjusted income toward the rental of the unit to the owner. The Housing Authority makes monthly payments directly to the owner on behalf of the family.

The “Housing Assistance Payment” is the difference between the tenant’s portion and the actual rent. The family negotiates directly with the landlord to secure rental accommodations that best suit their need. The unit must meet HUD Housing Quality Standards and pass inspection before a contract is executed between the Housing Authority and Landlord.

**HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM IS A THREE WAY PARTNERSHIP**



# HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

## SYSTEMS

- ❖ ALL UTILITIES ARE ON AND SAFELY OPERATING
- ❖ WATER HEATER IS INSTALLED PROPERLY; EQUIPPED WITH RELIEF VALVE AND A DISCHARGE PIPE IS INSTALLED ON THE VALVE WITHIN 7 INCHES OFF THE GROUND
- ❖ MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATIONS ARE POSTED NEAR WATER HEATER
- ❖ PLUMBING IS PROPERTY INSTALLED, LEAK FREE AND VENTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH BUILDING CODE
- ❖ AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM IS INSTALLED AND OPERATING PROPERLY
- ❖ HEATING SYSTEM IS INSTALLED AND OPERATING PROPERLY
- ❖ ALL APPLIANCES ARE CLEAN AND OPERABLE

## ELECTRIC AND GAS

- ❖ NO EXPOSED WIRES OR OPEN ELECTRICAL PANELS
- ❖ PILOT LIGHTS ON GAS STOVES ARE IN PROPER WORKING ORDER
- ❖ ALL GAS APPLIANCES HAVE BEEN SERVICED ANNUALLY
- ❖ EACH BEDROOM HAS AT LEAST TWO ELECTRICAL OUTLETS OR ONE ELECTRICAL OUTLET AND AN OVERHEAD LIGHT
- ❖ ELECTRICAL OUTLETS, SWITCHES AND LIGHT FIXTURES MEET BUILDING CODES
- ❖ SMOKE ALARMS ARE INSTALLED AND OPERATIONAL ON EACH LEVEL OF THE UNIT
- ❖ CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS ARE INSTALLED IN ALL UNITS WITH GAS APPLIANCES
- ❖ NO PROPANE, NATURAL OR METHANE GAS IS DETECTABLE
- ❖

## DWELLING UNIT

- ❖ WALLS ARE CLEAN, PAINTED AND FREE FROM HOLES, PEELING, CHIPPING OR LOOSE PAINT
- ❖ UNIT IS FREE OF TRASH AND DEBRIS
- ❖ EACH BEDROOM HAS A WINDOW, AND THE WINDOW OPERATES PROPERLY
- ❖ STAIRS WITH FOUR OR MORE STEPS HAVE HANDRAILS IN ACCORDANCE WITH BUILDING CODES
- ❖ UNITS WITH 2 OR MORE BEDROOMS HAS ACCESS TO BATHROOM AND COMMON AREAS WITHOUT PASSING THRU A BEDROOM
- ❖ BATHROOM DOORS HAVE FUNCTIONAL LOCKS
- ❖ DOORS ARE INSTALLED, WHERE REQUIRED, THROUGHOUT THE UNIT
- ❖ CARPET AND RUGS ARE FREE OF STAINS AND TEARS AND THERE ARE NO TRIPPING HAZARDS
- ❖ UNIT IS FREE OF MOLD AND MILDEW
- ❖ NO SEWER ODOR IS DETECTABLE
- ❖ NO EVIDENCE OF INSECT OR VERMINE PRESENCE