



LANDLORD'S GUIDE TO THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Aurora Housing Authority, (AHA) an autonomous non-profit organization, contracts with HUD to administer housing assistance programs in Aurora.

The programs are administered in accordance with Federal Regulations. Income-eligible families participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program receive a rent subsidy to lease a privately owned housing unit of their choice which must be safe, decent and affordable. AHA pays the rent subsidy every month directly to the Landlord.

The Program is a partnership between the Landlord, the Tenant and AHA. The Landlord has an obligation to enforce the lease; AHA has an obligation to enforce the terms of program participation; and the Tenant has an obligation to abide by both the lease and the terms of program participation.

The Landlord manages the property, including:

- **Tenant screening and selection.**
- **Setting the security deposit in accordance with the local market.**
- **Collecting the security deposit and rent.**
- **Executing the customary lease agreement.**
- **Periodic property inspection and property maintenance.**
- **Lease termination.**

To participate in the program, a Landlord must enter into a Contract with AHA and a 12 month minimum lease with the Participant (tenant). The rental unit must meet Federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and the Landlord must agree to maintain the property to continue to meet HQS during the term of the contract. In return, the Contract guarantees prompt payment of the Housing Authority's monthly portion of the rent. Briefly, the following lists how the Housing Choice Voucher program works:

1. The Participant searches for a unit and contacts the Landlord regarding unit rental.
2. The Landlord screens the Participant for suitability as a tenant.
3. The Landlord completes the **Request for Tenancy Approval packet and prepares an unsigned lease, including unit address and rent amount.**
4. AHA reviews documents for completeness, conducts unit rent reasonableness, and schedules an inspection.
5. An AHA Inspector completes the unit inspection; the Landlord and Participant must both be present.
6. When the unit passes inspection:

- a. The Lease and Contract are executed.
- b. The Landlord collects the security deposit and the Participant's portion of the rent from the tenant.
- c. The Participant is authorized move into the unit with rent subsidy when the following three items are complete:
 - i. The unit passes HQS inspection.
 - ii. The lease is signed and dated by the Participant and Landlord.
 - iii. The HAP Contract is signed and dated by the Landlord and Housing Authority.
7. AHA will mail the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) check to the Landlord at the next scheduled check release date, after contract execution. If the participant is a portable participant, the HAP check will be held until payment is received from the initiating Housing Authority (possibly 75 or more days).
8. The lease may be terminated by mutual agreement (rescission) of the landlord and tenant at any time after the first year, or may be terminated without cause at the end of any lease term.
9. Participants who violate the lease and are evicted through court action will be terminated from the program.
10. Participants that violate program obligations will be terminated from the program.

Referral List: AHA provides a free referral service for landlords interested in listing available units. Landlords wishing to list their properties on the AHA referral list must complete an Amenities List. Units must be rent reasonable to be added to the referral list.

Screening and Selecting Tenant: Families determined eligible for participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program are not screened for suitability as tenants. It is the Landlord's responsibility to screen and select a tenant for the unit. AHA strongly encourages prospective Landlords to thoroughly screen all tenants.

Upon request, AHA will provide prospective Landlords the following information:

- The name, address and phone number of the current and previous landlords.
- Documented eviction history.
- Documented history of damage to rental units.
- Documented history of drug trafficking or violent criminal activity by family members.

Request for Tenancy Approval: Once the Landlord determines that a Participant will be a suitable tenant, the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) packet is completed by the Landlord and signed by both the Landlord and Participant. By executing the RFTA, the Landlord certifies the amount of rent most recently charged for the unit. The Landlord cannot charge more rent for the subsidized unit than for other similar unassisted units. AHA is not responsible for any part of the rent for the unit until a HAP Contract is executed. Leases should be executed for the first of the month.

IRS Form W9: The Landlord must complete an IRS Form W-9 before housing assistance payments will be made.

Unit Inspection: AHA will schedule a unit inspection after receipt of a completed RFTA packet and lease. Inspections are scheduled for week days during normal business hours. Both the Landlord and Participant must be present at the inspection.

The landlord must maintain the unit in accordance with HQS requirements and repair any normal wear and tear defect. The tenant is responsible for damage caused by their household or guests.

HQS Summary:

1. The living room and bedrooms must have a window that open and lock (screens recommended).
2. Kitchen and bath must have a fixed overhead light and one additional electrical outlet. All other rooms must have either an overhead light and one outlet, or two outlets.
3. Kitchen and bath must have hot and cold running water.
4. Basements used for human habitation must have two means of egress, one being the entrance door, and any window that meets the specification for sill height of 44 inches and the square foot area of 5.7 square feet of openable window area.

10 most commonly HQS failed items:

1. The smoke detector is missing or is not functioning.
2. The electrical outlet cover plates are missing or cracked.
3. A hand railing is not stable or missing.
4. There is peeling paint inside or out.
5. Windowpanes are cracked or broken.
6. Stove burners or range fans are not in good working condition.
7. The burner control knobs are missing.
8. There is no ventilation in the bathroom or the existing fan is inoperable.
9. There are plumbing leaks.
10. There is no temperature/pressure relief valve or drainage pipe on the water heater.