

Allen Metropolitan Housing Authority Section 8 Owner/Manager Handbook



AMHA
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Introduction

SECTION 8 HOUSING PROGRAMS

We appreciate your interest in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The program's Rules and Regulations are determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with some local discretion. This brochure will give you the information necessary to participate in this program. If you are unsure of anything, please don't hesitate to ask a Section 8 representative listed on page 3.

The Allen Metropolitan Housing Authority is interested in contracting with property managers and rental property owners who have decent, safe, and sanitary rental properties. We want landlords to be informed about the Section 8 program, state laws, and applicable city housing codes and good management practices for this to be a successful partnership.

Thank you for participating in our program.

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Executive Director

AMHA Board of Commissioners
Jonathan Nichols, Chairman
Carla Thompson, Vice Chairman
Sheri Gary, Member
Shannon Tyler, Member
Phyllis Montrose, Member

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Check out our web site at www.allenmha.com

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AMHA's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program's Three-Way Partnership

AMHA's Responsibilities:

- Determining family eligibility for Section 8 Program participation.
- Approve units and leases
- Review and approve rental amount for each unit.
- Determine family eligibility annually.
- Inspect subsidized units bi-annually.
- Conduct special inspections.
- Ensure owners and families comply with program rules.
- Provide families and owners with prompt, professional service.
- Calculate family share of the rent and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)
- Issue Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) in a timely manner.
- Establish utility allowances.

Owner Responsibilities:

- Screen families who apply to determine suitability as renters.
- Comply with fair housing laws.
- Maintain the housing unit by making necessary repairs.
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contract.
- Collect the rent due from the family and comply with and enforce the lease.

Family Responsibilities to the Owner and the AMHA:

- Abide by the terms of the leases.
- Pay rent on time and maintain and take care of the housing unit.
- Provide any utilities that are not furnished by the owner.
- Keep utility account current.
- Be Responsible for damages to the unit or premises beyond normal wear and tear
- Abide by AMHA Family Obligations.

Are you interested in participating in Section 8?

As a participating owner in the Section 8 Voucher Program, you are required to maintain your rental unit in compliance with local housing codes as well as HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS). It is the owner's responsibility to screen and select a tenant, execute the lease, execute the Housing Assistance Contract (HAP), collect the family's portion of the rent.

If you have one or more rental units that are vacant, please call post all of your listings on affordablehousing.com. Potential renters will contact you. These individuals will have a Housing Voucher that permits them to find a unit within 60 days of issuance. Remember, your job is to screen them for suitability. The Voucher Holder will ask you to complete a Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) form. When form is returned to AMHA, we will review the information to make sure that the family still qualifies for the program; the rent is within HUD guidelines and other criteria before scheduling an inspection.

You may also set up an account on assistconnect.com. This will allow you to set up inspections, request forms, ect.

Become a Section 8 Landlord in 5 Easy Steps:

1. Owner/Landlord finds Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program tenant known as a "Voucher Holder".
2. Owner/Landlord screens and approves tenant.
3. AMHA approves Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) and the unit passes Housing Quality Standards (HQS).
4. Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract and lease are signed.
5. Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) sent Owner/Landlord.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE INSPECTION?

A Section 8 Housing Inspector, trained in HUD's Section 8 Housing Quality Standards and other local requirements, will determine if your rental property meets appropriate criteria. See page 8 for a checklist. Walk through rental property prior to the inspection to make sure it will pass our inspection. Correct any deficiencies before we arrive to prevent delays.

Take advantage of the opportunity to meet our Inspector and discuss any inspection concerns you may have at the scheduled appointment. It will help you become more familiar with program requirements. You will be notified of any deficiencies and given a reasonable time to make required repairs. Contact us when all items have been completed to schedule a re-inspection. AMHA's payments will not begin until after the unit passes the inspection and there is a signed HAP Contract. If you allow a tenant to move in prior to this, he or she will be responsible for the full amount of the rent.

MOST COMMON FAIL ITEMS

- Non-working smoke detectors on every floor
- Missing or cracked electrical outlet covers
- Railings for 3 or more steps
- Peeling paint (interior or exterior)
- Broken window panes
- Inoperable stoves or refrigerators
- Missing stove burner control knobs
- Leaking faucets or other plumbing
- No discharge pipe on water heater pressure relief valve

LEAD BASED PAINT

You will need to become familiar with lead based paint concerns if your rental unit was built prior to 1978 and there is a child under the age of 6 in the household. If the Section 8 Inspector makes a visual observation of flaking, peeling, or otherwise un-secure paint surfaces, he/she will fail the unit. You or an approved contractor will be required to encapsulate or abate the surfaces using safe work practices. Next, an approved clearance test must be provided to AMHA before we can conduct a re-inspection or sign the HAP Contract. Please contact Inspection Department for more information or to receive a brochure on Lead Based Paint.

SECURITY DEPOSITS

We encourage you to collect the entire security deposit or one month's rent from the tenant. Don't forget to give the family a receipt. We suggest that you become familiar with state law regarding the use and the return of the family's security deposit.

LEASE AND HAP CONTRACT

We are required to review the Lease you propose to use and any additional rules. If everything meets program requirements, the AMHA will ask you to sign a Housing Assistance Contract (HAP). This contract is between the AMHA and the owner. You and the family will enter in a Lease.

RENT REASONABLENESS

AMHA will approve a contract rent based on the owner's proposed rent, the quality of the unit, comparable rent for a similar unassisted unit in the immediate market area, and the fair market rent established for the area by HUD.

RENT

A Section 8 Occupancy Specialist will schedule an appointment for you and the family to sign required paperwork. Every contract will be explained to you. Feel free to read it thoroughly and ask questions.

The family's share of the rent is based on their income. Normally this is between 30 to 40 percent of their adjusted monthly income. The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is the difference between the contract rent and the family's portion of the rent. It is a good idea to make arrangements with your tenant for their portion of the rent. Your HAP check will be sent to you around the third business day of each month as long as the family and unit meet housing criteria.

You will be notified in writing of any changes in the family's portion of the rent and the HAP payment.

ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

Each year we will verify the family's eligibility for the Section 8 program. Landlords and tenants receive notification of their upcoming recertification approximately 90 to 120 days in advance, allowing ample time to complete the necessary paperwork.

A bi-annual (every two years) inspection will be scheduled. If you have been conducting periodic inspections of the property, you will be aware of the condition of the unit. You may also want to attend the inspection to ask or answer any questions.

You will be sent a letter informing you of any failed items. All items must be repaired in accordance to HUD guidelines. If repairs have not been made in timely manner, Housing Assistance Payments will be abated. If repairs are made shortly after 30 days, HAP payments will resume but will be pro-rated beginning with the date of the passed inspection. In order to remove abatement, we will have to do a re-inspection. During the abatement period, you will not receive payment. If repairs are not completed by the abatement deadline, your contract will be terminated.

You will also be asked about making changes to the leases, including an increase in the rent. HUD publishes an adjustment factor each year that is used as a basis in our approval of future rent increases.

TERMINATION

The family may move after one year unless the Owner agrees to release them from the lease early. The family must notify AMHA and the owner usually 30 to 60 days in advance (depending on their lease requirements) prior to moving.

The Owner may terminate the Lease for the following:

- ❖ Serious or repeated violations of the terms and conditions of the Lease.
- ❖ Violations of Federal, State or Local law which directly relate to the use or occupancy of the unit or premises.
- ❖ Other good cause, including

- Failure to accept the offer of a new lease or revision
- Family history of disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property
- Living/housekeeping habits resulting in damages to the unit
- The Owner's desire to use the unit for personal or family
- Business or economic reasons, such as a sale of property, renovation of the unit or desire to lease the unit at a higher rent.

Please review the Lease for specifics and provide the AMHA with a copy of any notices given to the tenant.

EVICTION

We encourage all Landlords to become familiar with the Ohio Landlord Tenant Laws.

If you have not been involved in the eviction process before, we encourage you to obtain legal advice. The Occupancy Specialist assigned to your tenant may also be able to answer some questions or direct you to the appropriate agency.

AMHA TERMINATION OF THE FAMILY

Owners and tenant families will be notified at least 30 days in advanced if a family no longer qualifies for the Section 8 program. The letter will provide instructions on further participation.

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

The unit must be “DECENT, SAFE, AND SANITARY!” Make sure your unit will pass inspection guidelines. Check off problem items as you inspect your unit so repairs can be made prior to AMHA inspection.

BASIC BUILDING EXTERIOR

1. Are foundation, stairs, rails, gutters, roofs, and porches sound and free from hazards and deterioration?
2. Is there a handrail where there are three (3) or more steps?
3. If it is a mobile home, is it tied down?
4. Are the chimney and other brick structures free of loose bricks and mortar?
5. Is the paint chipping, peeling, or cracking?
6. Do all operable windows have locks and screens for summer use?

LIVING ROOM

1. Are there two working electrical outlets or one outlet and one permanent overhead light fixture?

2. Are ground floor windows lockable and are all windows and their frames in good condition?
3. Are walls, ceilings, and floors free from defects and clean?
4. Is there any peeling, chipping, or cracking paint in the room?

KITCHEN

1. Are all appliances working properly?
2. Is the plumbing working properly and free from leaks?
3. Is there one working outlet and one permanent overhead light fixture?
4. Are all windows lockable and free from defects?
5. Are all walls, ceilings, and floors free from defects and clean?
6. Is there any peeling, chipping, or cracking paint in the room?

BATHROOM

1. Are tub, sink, shower, and toilet working properly and in good condition?
2. Is there an operable and lockable window or a working exhaust fan?
3. Are walls, ceilings, and floors free from defects and clean?
4. Is there any peeling, chipping, or cracking paint in the room?
5. Is there a permanent overhead or wall light fixture?

BEDROOM

1. Is there a window present and in good condition? Does it lock if it is accessible from the outside?
2. Are there screens?
3. Are there two electrical outlets or one working electrical outlet and one light fixture?
4. Are walls, ceilings, and floors free from defects and clean?
5. Is there any peeling, chipping, or cracking paint in the room?

6. Is there a door for privacy?
7. Is there a closet present or nearby?

OTHER ROOMS AND AREAS

1. Is the furnace operable? Not acceptable are heaters that burn oil or gas and are not vented to a chimney?
2. Is the water heater operable and in good condition? Does it have a pressure relief valve and discharge line?
3. Are all rooms well lighted and free from trash and other debris?
4. Is the house and yard free from trash and other debris?
5. Is there a handrail for stairs with three or more steps, including the basement?
6. Is there a working smoke detector on every floor including the basement?

INSPECTIONS MAY BE SCHEDULED WITH THE AMHA OFFICE ONCE YOU AND THE TENANT HAVE AGREED ON RENTING THE UNIT.