

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION IS AS EASY AS ONE, TWO, THREE!

1. GET READY!

Select a good tenant. Screen your Housing Choice Voucher tenant just like any other tenant.

Submit paperwork. Submit inspection request form, lease and other documents.

Make your unit ready. Clean and repair your rental unit so that it ready for inspection and occupancy.

2. GET SET!

Be present at the inspection. Learn if repairs are needed and make them immediately.

Charge a fair rent. Agree to a rent that is no more than the rent you charge to non-subsidized tenants and others charge to non-subsidized tenants in the market area for similar units. Side payments (in addition to the agreed rent are illegal.)

Sign and submit your rent subsidy contract documents.

3. GO!

Your subsidy payments will begin. The HACC will pay your subsidy directly to you each month.

Maintain you unit. Throughout the lease term make unit repairs as needed. Make sure your unit is ready for its annual inspection.

Evaluate your annual rent increase. Propose a rent increase that is no greater than the rent you charge to non-subsidized tenants or the rent charged by others to non-subsidized tenants in the market area.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
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HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM



LANDLORD'S GUIDE TO PROGRAM SUCCESS

UNDERSTANDING THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Housing Authority of the County of Cook (HACC) receives funds from HUD to provide rent subsidies to a limited number of low-income persons. The subsidies are provided to families, elderly, handicapped and other single persons who are on the HACC waiting list. All persons may apply to the HACC waiting list when the waiting list is open.

Applicants are selected from the waiting list in sequential order and are invited to submit voucher applications. Thereafter, the HACC determines whether applicants are income eligible. After eligibility determinations are made, groups of eligible applicants are assembled and provided information about voucher program requirements and issued a Housing Choice Voucher. The HACC does not screen applicants for their suitability to rent rental units.

Voucher holders are required to undertake a housing search. During this process they must locate the rental unit of their choice and a landlord willing to rent the unit under the voucher program. Voucher Holders may not choose to rent from a landlord who is an immediate family member. Landlords are required to review voucher holders for tenancy just like any other prospective tenant.

In this regard, landlords should perform normal tenant screening functions. This may include verifying the voucher holder's income,

employment, credit history and former landlord references. When renting a unit with voucher subsidy, tenants are required to abide by HACC and HUD rules and to comply with all of the requirements of the landlord's lease. Tenants who fail to comply with the landlord's rules and lease requirements, risk eviction and the loss of voucher subsidy.

After the landlord has screened the voucher holder and made the decision to rent the unit, the landlord must complete a simple HUD form that will result in the rental unit being inspected. However, prior to HACC inspection, the landlord should make the unit ready. This preparation includes insuring that the unit is clean, safe and in good repair. Thereafter, the HACC will inspect the unit to determine whether it meets HUD's minimum Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

The HACC must also approve the rent the landlord will charge for the unit. The landlord should ensure the unit rent is not more than the rent the landlord charges to non-subsidized tenants in the same building. In addition, the rent must also not be greater than the rents charged for similar units in the market area.

After the HACC approves the rental unit and the rent, the HACC will enter into a Housing Assistance Payments Agreement with the landlord. The landlord and the tenant will enter into the landlord's lease, the tenant will move into the unit and the subsidy payments will begin. The HACC will pay the rental subsidy directly to the landlord and the tenant will pay the tenant's share of the rent directly to the landlord. During the term of the lease,

the landlord will perform normal owner functions that include collecting the tenant's share of the rent, maintaining the rental unit and enforcing the lease.

Each year the HACC reexamines the tenant's income and performs an inspection of the rental unit to ensure that it continues to meet HQS requirements. If the landlord decides to increase the rent, the HACC must also review the rent increase to ensure the proposed rent is not greater than the rent the landlord charges to non-subsidized tenants or the rent charged by other property owners for similar rental units in the market area.

SUMMARY: On an overall basis, a tenancy that is voucher subsidized is similar to a non-subsidized tenancy. However, the HACC plays a role in ensuring that the landlord receives a substantial portion of the unit rent on a regular monthly basis directly from the HACC. In addition, through its voucher program, HACC broadens the pool of eligible renters and decreases the impact of a soft rental market on landlords.

Tenants have a role to play. They are required to abide by the rules imposed by HACC and the landlord, to maintain the rental unit, pay their portion of the rent timely and not otherwise violate the landlord's lease. Tenants must also maintain any utilities that are their responsibility to maintain.

The rest is up to landlords who must screen tenants and selection only good tenants, submit required paperwork timely, maintain rental units in compliance with Housing Quality Standards and charge a fair rent.