

**Manhattan Housing Authority
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program**

**Family Handbook:
Your Guide to the Section 8 HCV Program**



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Welcome to the Manhattan Housing Authority's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

The Section 8 HCV program is a federally –funded program that provides rental assistance to families who meet income and other eligibility guidelines. This **Family Handbook** will help you to understand your responsibilities as a program participant. It will also help to explain the roles the Housing Authority and the Owner/Agent of the unit will receive assistance for. We ask that you carefully read all of the information in this handbook. If you have questions regarding any of our policies or procedures or any other questions about how the Section 8 HCV program work, please feel free to contact us.

Section 8 HCV is a program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The rules and guidelines we must follow are set by HUD and the Housing Authority, or in some cases are federal laws passed by the U.S. Congress. Our agency must administer our programs in accordance with HUD guidelines and all applicable federal laws. Funding for the Section 8 HCV program is set by Congress, and changes from year to year. Because funding is limited, we can only assist applicants from our waiting list when more funding becomes available, usually when other families leave the program. This is why our waiting list time for applicants is usually 12-18 months.

Section 8 HCV program guidelines require the family to pay approximately 30% of their monthly adjusted income as the family portion of the rent each month. The Housing Authority pays the remaining rent amount directly to the owner or manager of the property. Section 8 HCV participants enter into a lease agreement with the owner or manager just like any other tenant, and must follow the terms of the lease in order to continue receiving assistance. Following the terms of the lease includes paying the family portion of the rent on time each month. If a family fails to pay their portion of the rent or to follow the terms of the lease they may have their lease terminated or be evicted, and may also lose their housing assistance.

Each Section 8 voucher is issued with a bedroom size that is based on the number of persons who will be in the household. The Housing Authority has a policy to determine when family members need separate bedrooms. A Payment Standard for each voucher size is used to determine the total assistance that can be provided to the family, and to help the family to search for a unit that will meet program guidelines.

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers are transferrable to other cities and states. Transferring a voucher to another area is called portability. Some restrictions apply to transferring a voucher, so it is important for the family to always talk to the Housing Authority before moving from a unit or to a new area.

The Manhattan Housing Authority would like for all our Section 8 HCV participants to be successful in finding and keeping decent, safe and affordable housing for them and their families. Families receiving Section 8 HCV program assistance have many rules and responsibilities that they must meet to continue receiving assistance. This handbook will explain these rules and responsibilities, and provide information about the Housing Authority's forms, policies and procedures. We hope that this handbook will help you to understand how the Section 8 HCV program works, how the amount of rental assistance that you are eligible for is calculated, and the steps you will need to take to find a suitable rental unit and to keep your assistance. Our staff is always here to help you, so please feel free to call us if you have any questions about your participation in the Section 8 HCV program.

Sincerely,

MHA Section 8 HCV Department



Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program: The Steps From Application to Voucher Issuance



There are many steps to receiving Section 8 HCV assistance, starting with the pre-application form to put your name on the waiting list and ending when you become an active participant (if you are just receiving this handbook, you are in Step 2 of the process). Here are all the steps along the way:

STEP 1: PRE-APPLICATION/WAITING LIST

The first step a family must take to receive Section 8 HCV assistance is to complete the Section 8 Pre-Application for Waiting List. The Manhattan Housing Authority's waiting time for Section 8 assistance is generally 12-18 months long. We use a pre-application to get basic information from the applicant and place them on the waiting list. Because an applicant's information may change during their time on the waiting list, each applicant completes a Formal Application with more detailed information later on. The applicant is placed on the waiting list according to the date and time they turn in the application. There may be local preferences that apply to certain applicants that will place them above other applicants on the waiting list. Applicants claiming a local preference must provide documentation that verifies their eligibility for the preference when they reach the top of the waiting list. If the local preference does not apply, the applicant will be placed back on the waiting list according to the original date and time of the application.

STEP 2: OFFER LETTERS, BRIEFINGS AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

As active participants leave the Section 8 program, the Housing Authority contacts families on the waiting list to start determining their eligibility for the program. Offer Letters are sent to let applicants know to begin getting the necessary documents together that we will need to determine their eligibility. Applicants are also invited to a Section 8 Briefing, where Housing Authority staff meets with the applicant to review their information and to go over all the Section 8 program guidelines and participant's responsibilities. Briefings may be in groups or held one-on-one. The requirements for eligibility are determined by HUD and by federal law. Income, citizenship status, criminal background and past participation in federally assisted housing programs, such as other Section 8 programs, Public Housing or Low-Income Tax Credit (LIHTC), are all part of the eligibility process.

STEP 3: VOUCHER ISSUANCE AND THE HOUSING SEARCH

After an applicant has been determined eligible, and if funding is available, the Housing Authority will issue the applicant their Housing Choice Voucher. Issuing the voucher means that the applicant is eligible and will be able to receive assistance if they are able to locate a unit that meets program guidelines before the voucher expires. Vouchers are issued for sixty (60) days; this is the time the family has to locate a rental unit and turn in required paperwork. Extensions may be requested, but will be given at the discretion of the Housing Authority.

STEP 4: LEASE-UP AND ACTIVE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

When a voucher holder finds the home they want to rent, the Owner/Agent and the participant complete paperwork called the Request for Tenancy Approval. If the rent amount for the unit does not exceed allowable limits, the Housing Authority will contact the Owner/Manager to schedule an inspection of the unit. Once the unit has passed inspection, the participant and the Owner/Manager will agree to a start date for the lease agreement and sign the lease. The participant must also provide the Housing Authority with a copy of the signed lease agreement. The Housing Authority prepares a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract to be signed by the Housing Authority and the Owner/Manager. The HAP contract shows the initial date of the lease, the amount of rent for the unit, and the part of rent that will be paid by the Housing Authority each month.

Manhattan Housing Authority

Section 8 Eligibility Requirements

There are many requirements that applicants must meet to be determined eligible for the Section 8 HCV program. These include household income, citizenship status, and criminal background screening and previous participation in other federally assisted housing programs. Explanations of each requirement are below.

STEP1: HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

Each applicant must meet an income eligibility guideline that is based on the number of persons in the household. When determining the household income the Housing Authority must count the GROSS income from all income sources that the household has. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: wages from employment, unemployment benefits, all forms of Social Security and disability payments, alimony, child support, pensions, regular contributions by family members or others, cash welfare assistance, and income from assets. It is important that you disclose ALL sources of household income. Failure to report income may result in serious consequences, including termination of your Section 8 assistance. If there has been an overpayment of rental assistance due to failure to report income, you will be required to repay the Housing Authority for the overpayment. Depending on the amount owed, your name may also be reported to HUD's Office of Inspector General (OIG) for fraud investigation and possible criminal charges. If you have any questions about reporting a source of income, please ask your Section 8 HCV contact person. Any failure to report income, even if it is unintentional, can have serious consequences!

STEP 2: CITIZENSHIP STATUS

All applicants must provide required documentation to verify that they are a legal U.S. citizen or have a legal immigration status that allows them to be eligible under the Section 8 HCV guidelines. At least one member of the household must be eligible for assistance. Households that have both eligible and non-eligible family members will be eligible for assistance as long as they meet other eligibility guidelines, but will be provided assistance on a pro-rated basis in accordance with federal law.

STEP 3: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

A criminal background check is conducted on ALL adult household members. Drug related and/or violent criminal activity will be grounds for denial of assistance. Other criminal activity may also be considered as grounds for denial of assistance (or termination of assistance for active participants). Applicants who are denied admission to the Section 8 HCV program due to criminal background will be given the opportunity to review the criminal background information received by the Housing Authority to dispute the accuracy of the information. Applicants will also be provided the opportunity to request an Informal Hearing if they are denied admission to the program. For more information, please review the "Manhattan Housing Authority 'One Strike' and Procedure" located in the documents section of this handbook.

STEP 4: PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION IN OTHER FEDERALLY ASSISTED HOUSING PROGRAMS

The Manhattan Housing Authority must verify that an applicant does not owe an outstanding balance to any other Public Housing Authority (PHA) and/or did not leave another PHA's Public Housing or Section 8 HCV program with a negative or unfavorable move-out status. HUD's Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system contains information from all PHA's regarding past participants. Your name will be matched with any records found in the EIV system. If you owe a debt to any other PHA, you may be required to pay the debt in full before receiving assistance. The Manhattan Housing Authority has also adopted the "Applicants in Poor Standing" policy, which states that any past participant of any of the Housing Authority's or other federally assisted housing programs who left the program in poor standing will not be eligible for assistance from any Housing Authority program for a minimum of three (3) years.

Manhattan Housing Authority Section 8 HCV Program Roles: Housing Authority, Owner/Agent and Participant

The Section 8 HCV program is a team effort between the Housing Authority, the owner or manager of the rental property, and the participant family. All three have a role they play to make sure the program works. The chart below shows what responsibilities each player has in the Section 8 HCV program.

Responsibilities of the Manhattan Housing Authority	Responsibilities of the Owner/Agent	Responsibilities of the Participant Family
Determine if any applicant is eligible for the Section 8 HCV program	Complete all tenant screening, tenant selection and leasing activities in the same manner as with non-participant tenants	Provide complete, accurate and thorough information to the Housing Authority
Explain the rules of the Section 8 HCV program to all families and answer any questions the family has about the program	Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract and lease agreement	Make a reasonable effort to find a suitable place to live that will meet program inspection & Payment Standard requirements
Issue a Housing Choice Voucher and, if necessary, provide assistance to the family in locating a suitable place to live	Collect from tenant any security deposit, share of the rent, and charges for tenant damages to the unit which are owed by the tenant	Attend all appointments with the Housing Authority as scheduled, including annual inspection & recertification appointments
Approve the unit by completing a rent calculation and scheduling the HQS inspection when a Request for Tenancy is turned in by the family	Enforce tenant obligations under the lease agreement, including issuing lease violations or Notice of Non-Payment	Take responsibility for the care of the assisted unit and cause no damages to the unit that are beyond normal wear & tear
Make Housing Assistance Payments (monthly rental assistance) to the Owner/Agent in a timely manner	Pay for and maintain all utilities and appliance that are the responsibility of the Owner/Agent under the lease agreement	Comply with all terms of the lease agreement, including Paying and maintaining utilities which are family responsibility
Ensure that the family and assisted unit continue to qualify for program participation	Maintain the unit in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HGS) guidelines and notify the Housing Authority of any tenant-caused damages to the unit	Comply with all of the Family Obligations of the Housing Choice Voucher, including reporting of income & family status changes
Ensure that Owner/Agent & family comply with program rules and terms of the HAP contract	Comply with all local, state and federal Fair Housing laws	Not engage in criminal activities or allow criminal activity by any household member OR guest in the assisted unit
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	Obtain permission from Owner & Housing Authority before moving & never withholding rent from the Owner while on program

Reporting Household Changes: When in Doubt, Report!

One of the most important responsibilities you have as a section 8 HCV participant is to keep the Housing Authority informed about changes in your family status. Family status changes include **ANY** change in your household income & assets and family composition. The Manhattan Housing Authority requires that changes be reported **IN WRITING** within ten (10) days of the change by completing a "Change of Status" form, which can be done in our office or by calling to have a form mailed to you. **Failure to report a change within ten (10) days of when it occurs may result in termination of your assistance and/or you being required to repay any overpayment of housing assistance!** If you are not sure if something should be reported as a status change, you should always report it just to be safe. Failure to report a change of status, whether intentional or not, can have serious consequences.

Changes of Income include, but are <u>not limited to</u>:	Changes in household composition include, but are <u>not limited to</u>:	Changes in assets include, but are <u>not limited to</u>:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New job, including second jobs• End of a job• Pay raises, increases in work hours, or overtime pay• Child support for any child in the household; includes new support orders or the beginning payments for an existing support order• Any lump-sum payments, such as lottery, inheritance, or lump-sum Social Security or Disability back payments• Pensions, Social Security SSI, Disability• Regular payments from anyone not living in the household, such as a family member/friend, including any help with paying bills or other expenses, even if the payment is not made directly to you• Regular monetary or non-monetary gifts from any non-household member• Income from self-employment or any other business interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birth, adoption or foster placement of a child in your household• Death of a family member• Any person living with you (sleeps, eats, or bathes in your unit) MUST be added to lease agreement AND approved by the Housing Authority. Guests must have another residence and must limit the number of days staying in the unit• Any person who moves out of your unit• Marriage or divorce of any household member• Additional adult family members must be screened and approved by Owner and the Housing Authority; all new adult household members must pass the same criminal background, income verification and other screening as other household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New bank accounts for any household member• Changes in banks or credit unions• Property or vehicles• Stocks, bonds and any other similar assets• Inheritance• Insurance settlements• Life insurance with a cash value• Gifts• Collections for investment, such as a stamps or coins• Annuities• Lottery or gambling winnings



Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Obligations

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher will receive lists of the obligations you must meet to receive rental assistance, which is listed below. Your assistance can be terminated for failure to follow any of the voucher obligations. Please read these obligations carefully and ask your Section 8 HCV representative if you have any questions.

When the family's unit is approved and the HAP contract executed, the family must follow the rules listed below in order to continue participating in the Housing Choice Voucher program.

The Family MUST do the following:	The Family MUST NOT:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Supply any information that the PHA or HUD determines to be necessary including evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status, and information for use in a regularity scheduled examination or interim re-examination of family income and composition.2. Disclose and verify Social Security numbers and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.3. Supply any information requested by the PHA to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.4. Promptly notify the PHA in writing when the family is away from the unit for an extended period of time in accordance with PHA policies.5. Allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.6. Notify the PHA and the owner in writing before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease.7. Use the assisted unit for residence by the family. The unit must be the family's only residence8. Promptly notify the PHA in writing of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child9. Request PHA written approval to add any other family member as an occupant of the unit10. Promptly notify the PHA in writing in any family member no longer lives in the unit11. Give the PHA a copy of any owner eviction notice.12. Pay utility bills and provide and maintain any appliances that the owner is not required to provide under the lease	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Own or have any interest in the unit.2. Commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.3. Commit fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program4. Engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and person residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.5. Sublease or let the unit or assign the lease or transfer the unit.6. Receive housing choice voucher program housing assistance while receiving another housing subsidy, for the same unit or a different unit under any other federal, state or local housing assistance program.7. Damage the unit premises or permit any guest to damage the unit or premises.8. Receive housing choice voucher program housing assistance while residing in a unit owned by any member of the family, unless the PHA has determined (and has notified the owner of such determination) that approving the rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with a disability.9. Engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and person residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises

Section 8 HCV Program Responsibilities Addendum

Section 8 HCV participants must meet all program obligations to continue receiving assistance. It is very important that all adult family members carefully read and understand all of the forms, policies and other documents that are provided by the Housing Authority. Failure by any household member to comply with program guidelines and requirements can result in the termination of your assistance. Family obligations included in the Responsibilities Addendum that you will sign including the following:

Section 8 HCV Families MUST:

1. **Pay your portion of the rent to the Owner/Agent on the first day of the month, or no later than the fifth day of the month in accordance with the lease.**
2. Follow all terms and conditions of the lease between the participant and the Owner/Agent.
3. Notify MHA if there is any change in family composition. Failure to comply with this responsibility could result in the family losing all future eligibility under the Section 8 HCV program, prosecution in the courts, and repayment to the Manhattan Housing Authority of overpayments on your behalf and fines.
4. Notify MHA in writing within ten (10) calendar days of all household income changes and of any income you expect to receive during the coming year, and/or any change in family composition.
5. Allow no other person to live in the unit that has not been listed on the original application form and/or listed on the lease, including “overnight” guests one, two and three or more nights a week.
6. Permit periodic inspections of the unit. An inspection Notice shall be sent giving a reasonable notice of the inspection time and date.
7. Keep the rental unit in decent, safe and sanitary conditions at all times and do not damage the unit beyond normal wear and tear. Poor housekeeping may be a reason for termination of assistance. Damages to the unit, appliances and equipment furnished by the Owner/Agent due to neglect or misuse shall be the sole responsibility of each tenant, and shall include damages caused by tenant's children, other adult household members and guests. This does not include damages resulting from the Owner/Agent's negligence or from reasonable wear and tear.
8. Pay all utility bills you are responsible for. If utilities which are the responsibility of the tenant are found to be disconnected due to non-payment or other reasons under the tenant's control, the unit will be found to have failed HQS inspection. Tenant will have 24 hours to restore utility service. Failure to restore the utility service will result in termination of assistance.
9. Inform the Housing Authority of any request by the Owner/Agent for additional money or any other agreement(s) that the Owner/Agents want you to sign.
10. Notify the Housing Authority before moving from the unit. The Owner/Agent must be given at least a 30 day written notice to vacate the unit; a copy of the notice must be given to the Housing Authority at the same time. This written notice shall be given to the Owner/Agent on or before the first day of the month the tenant wishes to vacate.
11. Use the dwelling unit solely for the residence of only those persons listed on your application and/or lease agreement. Your assisted unit must be your ONLY place of residence.

Section 8 HCV Program Responsibilities Addendum

As a Section 8 HCV participant, you **MUST NOT**:

1. Commit any fraud in connection with the program.
2. Own or have any interest in the rental unit you are receiving assistance for.
3. Sublease or assign the lease or transfer the lease to another person.
4. Make any payment to the Owner/Agent other than the security deposit, pet deposit (if applicable) and the rent amount determined by the Housing Authority. Sign any additional agreements with the Owner/Agent without the prior approval of the Manhattan Housing Authority.
5. Not allow any pets or animals of any kind in the unit without the written consent of the Owner/Agent, a copy of which must be provided to the Housing Authority.
6. Create disturbances by loud talking or unnecessary noises. Radios, stereos, televisions or other sounds should be turned down after 10:00 p.m. Loud noises from unsupervised children, parties, and guests or any other person or thing is prohibited. Other tenants and neighbors must not be disturbed.
7. Commit any serious or repeated lease violations.
8. Receive assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any family member, unless the Housing Authority has determined that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with a disability.
9. Participate in illegal drug or violent criminal activity or engage in illegal use of a controlled substance or abuse of alcohol that threatens the health and safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents.
10. Receive housing assistance under the Section 8 HCV program while occupying and/or receiving housing assistance for occupancy of any other unit assisted under any federal housing assistance program.

Your Section 8 HCV rental assistance can be terminated for violations or program requirements! If you do not take care of the rental unit, do not pay your portion of the rent, do not maintain the utilities you are responsible for, do not report income or family composition changes within ten (10) days of the date of the change, you will be in violation of program rules. Allowing another person to live in your unit that is not on the lease agreement and has not been approved by the Housing Authority will also result in termination of your assistance.

If your participation in the Section 8 HCV program is terminated due to program violations, or if you leave the Section 8 HCV program for any unfavorable reasons, you will not be allowed to receive assistance from ANY of the Housing Authority's programs for a minimum of three (3) years from the date of the termination of assistance. You may also be banned from receiving assistance from other federal housing programs.

To report changes in family status you must complete a "Change of Status" form with all information about the change. This form can be picked up and turned in at the Manhattan Housing Authority Administrative office.

If you have any questions about reporting a change in income, family composition or any other family change, please do not hesitate to contact us at (785) 776-8588

Grounds for Termination of Section 8 HCV Assistance

Your Section 8 HCV program participation may be terminated at any time if you have committed a violation of any program requirement or policy, including those set by the Housing Authority, HUD or by an act of Congress (federal law), or you are in violation of the lease agreement for the assisted unit. This includes the actions of ALL family members. You are also responsible for the actions of your **GUESTS** and may have your assistance terminated for their actions. Grounds for termination of assistance or denial of admission to the Section 8 HCV program include, but are not limited to; the following:

- If any family member violates any family obligation
- If any member of the family knowingly provides false or misleading information, or fails to provide any information requested by the Housing Authority
- If any member of the family has ever been evicted or terminated from a Public Housing or Section 8 HCV program, or from any other federally assisted housing program.
- If any family member participates in illegal drug or violent criminal activity, including sexual offenses
- If any member of the family commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal acts in connection with the Section 8 HCV or other federally assisted housing program
- If the family has an outstanding debt to another housing authority from prior participation in a Section 8 HCV or Public Housing Program
- If the family breaches a repayment agreement from an overpayment of housing assistance
- If any family member engages in threatened or actual violent or abusive behavior toward any member of the Housing Authority Staff
- If there are serious and /or repeated violations of the lease agreement
- If the family fails to pay or withholds its portion of the rent for any reason
- If the family damages the rental unit beyond normal wear and tear, fails to maintain the unit in a safe and sanitary condition, or fails to maintain the utility service for which they are responsible
- If a guest of the family engages in illegal or violent activity, actual or threatened violent behavior against any Housing Authority staff, causes damages to the unit or threatens the peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or other persons in immediate vicinity; participants will be held responsible for the adverse actions of their guests

All Termination of Assistance and/or Denial of Assistance notices will be provided in writing and sent via U.S. mail to the participant's address where assistance is being received, or, in the case of applicants to the most recent address provided in writing by the applicant. The notice will include the reason for the termination and/or denial of assistance and the steps necessary to appeal the decision under the informal Hearing and Review Procedure guidelines. Appeals must be made in a timely manner as specified in the notice; requests for an Informal Review which are not received by the deadline date **will not** be granted. It is your responsibility as a participant/applicant of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program to monitor your mail for any correspondence from the Housing Authority. You must provide any change of address **IN WRITING**. Failure to provide the Housing Authority with a written change of address will not be grounds for an exception to any timelines required for your response. A courtesy copy of any Termination of Assistance notice will be sent to the owner or manager of the rental unit as notice of the termination of the Housing Assistance Payment9 HAP contract.

Section 8 HCV Program Forms & Policies

The Section 8 HCV program has many guidelines and regulations that must be followed by the Housing Authority and by program participants. This section will explain what each form is and why it is important to the program. A sample of each of these forms is also in this booklet. Always remember to read all forms completely so that you understand your obligations as a Section 8 HCV participant. Please ask your Section 8 HCV case manager if you have questions about these forms or your program responsibilities.

The Housing Choice Voucher

The Housing Choice Voucher, or just voucher, is issued to you after the Housing Authority has determined that you are eligible based on your income, criminal background screening, citizenship status and other factors. The voucher is signed by you and the Executive Director of the Housing Authority, and includes the obligations you must meet in order to remain eligible for Section 8 HCV assistance. You will receive a copy of the signed voucher for your records. This copy can be helpful in case an Owner/Agent needs proof that you will be receiving assistance and that you are not just on a waiting list.

Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) Packet

The RFTA is completed by you and the Owner/Agent on the home you choose. The RFTA includes all of the information about the unit, like the year it was built, the rent & security deposit amounts, the number of bedrooms in the unit and the personal responsible for paying utilities for the unit (Owner or Tenant). The Housing Authority will use all of this information to determine if the rent amount will fit the guidelines for the program. If the rent amount is O.K., the Housing Authority will contact the Owner/Agent to set up the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection for the unit. The HUD booklet "A Good Place to Live" will give you an idea of what our Housing Inspector is looking for during the inspection of the unit.

Utility Allowance Schedule

You will receive an "allowance" for all utilities that you are responsible for paying while you are receiving assistance. The Utility Allowance schedule will let you estimate what the utility allowance will be for a unit that you are thinking of renting. The utility allowance you receive will be deducted from the portion of rent that you pay to the Owner/Agent. If the unit you select is all bills paid, the utility allowance is \$0.

One Strike Policy & Procedure

Federal law requires that all housing authorities have a "One Strike Policy & Procedure" which provides guidelines for when an applicant or participant of the Section 8 HCV

program can be denied assistance or have their assistance terminated due to criminal history or criminal activity. It is very important that you read and understand this policy. Applicants and participants must disclose any criminal history for all household members on their application and other paperwork. Failure to provide information about past criminal activity is grounds for the Housing Authority to deny your assistance, even if the criminal activity would not have otherwise resulted in denial of assistance. You may be denied assistance or have your on-going assistance terminated due to criminal history or criminal acts. You will have the right to appeal any denial of assistance or termination of assistance.

HUD'S Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) System

The EIV system holds employment and other income information of participants in HUD assisted programs so that housing authorities can match income from the system with income reported by participants. Please read the "RHIIP: What You Should Know About EIV" brochure carefully. Failure to report all household income can result in termination of your assistance, retro-active rent owed to the Housing Authority, investigation by HUD's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and possible criminal charges. Participants whose assistance is terminated due to program violations will also be reported to the EIV system, which can be grounds for denial of assistance from all other federally assisted housing programs

Informal Hearing and Review Policy & Procedure

The Housing Authority is required to have a written policy and procedure so that applicants and program participants may appeal certain actions that the Housing Authority may take, such as denial or termination of assistance to the applicant or participant. The Informal Hearing and Review Policy & Procedure is your guide on the proper way to request an Informal Hearing to appeal a decision of the Housing Authority, and also explain what decisions can and cannot be appealed. Be sure to ask your Section 8 HCV case manager if you have any questions about this policy & procedure

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Policy

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is a federal law that protects applicants and participants of the Section 8 HCV program from being denied assistance or having their assistance terminated because of an incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence or stalking. Incident(S) of actual or threatened domestic violence cannot be construed as repeated lease violations by the victim, and shall not be good cause for denial or termination of assistance, tenancy rights or occupancy rights of the victim. Please read the VAWA notice for further information.

The Section 8 HCV Housing Search

MHA Service Area

You may utilize your voucher by finding a suitable unit anywhere within the Housing Authority's service area, which includes the cities of Manhattan and Ogden in Riley County, and extends fifteen (15) miles into Pottawatomie County along Highway 24 to the city of Wamego. Rental units located outside of the service area cannot be assisted by the Manhattan Housing Authority. Areas that are NOT a part of the Housing Authority's service area include Junction City (or any part of Geary County), Louisville and Westmoreland. **Note: HUD-VASH Vouchers may be used in Junction City.**



Voucher Expiration and Extensions

Your voucher will expire sixty (60) days after it is issued. This means that you will have sixty (60) days to find a unit and turn in the Request for Tenancy Approval paperwork to the Housing Authority. If you are not able to find a unit within sixty days, you may request a thirty (30) day extension to continue searching. You may request up to two (2) extensions. Requests for voucher extensions must be in writing and must be turned in to the Housing Authority before the voucher expiration date.

Note: Voucher extensions are granted at the Housing Authority's discretion and are not guaranteed to be issued.

Approval of Section 8 HCV Owners/Agents

The Housing Authority's Section 8 HCV program is a "tenant-based rental assistance" program. This means that the Housing Authority does not own any Section 8 properties. The family is responsible for locating a suitable unit to rent from a private landlord. A Section 8 Landlord Referral List and a general list of Manhattan landlords is provided in the "Expanding Housing Opportunities" packet in this handbook and will give you a good place to start your search. We recommend that families also search local newspapers and the internet for potential landlords, as well as calling landlords listed on signs, buildings, etc. Owners/Agents are not required by law to participate in the Section 8 HCV program. If you find an Owner/Agent who is not familiar with the program or who would like more information before agreeing to participate, you may refer them to your Section 8 HCV representative to explain the program.

Note: The Housing Authority will, upon request by a prospective Owner/Agent, release your current address and the name of your current and previous landlords to the prospective Owner/Agent.

Voucher Size, Rent Ranges & Unit Approval

The Housing Authority considers several factors when setting the bedroom size for a voucher, including the number of adults in the household, the age and sex of children in the household, and the relationship between any adult household members. Your Section 8 HCV representative will provide you with a "rent range" to guide your search based on the Payment Standard for your voucher and the amount of income in your household. The range will not be the exact amount of rent that a unit can have, but is a valuable guide when you are searching. When you have found a unit that you are interested in renting, you and the owner or manager will complete paperwork called the Request for Tenancy Approval. This paperwork is turned in to the Housing Authority by the family. The Housing Authority will determine if the rent amount is approvable under program guidelines. See the following page for more information. **Note: It is strongly recommended that you DO NOT sign a lease agreement or pay any security deposit before the unit has been approved for the Section 8 program and passed the required HQS inspection. You may be held responsible for any lease agreement you sign, even if the unit does not get approved for Section 8 HCV assistance.**

Security Deposit & Other Fees

The Section 8 HCV program does not pay for security deposits, pet deposits or application fees. These are the responsibility of the family. Security deposit assistance may be available through the TBRA program.

Calculating Tenant Rent and the Housing Assistance Payment

"How much will my rent be?" is the most common question we hear from Section 8 participants. Before we can answer that question, we must have all the information needed to do a rent calculation. In order to help explain the process better, we will start with the information we need and how we get it.

Total Tenant Payment, or TTP, based on 30% of the household's monthly adjusted income. The Housing Authority subtracts any allowable deductions from the household's gross annual income to get the adjusted annual household income. The adjusted annual income is divided by 12 to get the monthly adjusted income, and 30% of this is the TTP based on 30% of monthly adjusted income. If the household's TTP when based on 30% of the monthly adjusted income is below \$50, we must use \$50 as the TTP. This is a requirement called the Minimum Rent.

The Utility Allowance. Section 8 HCV guidelines provide each family a Utility Allowance based on the type of utilities paid by the participant. The Utility Allowance is basically a deduction from the participant's part of the rent amount. The Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) form that is filled out by the Owner/Agent has information about what utilities are paid by the participant. We use this information to add up the Utility Allowance for the unit. If the Owner/Manager pays all utility bills, the Utility Allowance is \$0.

The Payment Standard is the dollar amount assigned to each voucher bedroom size. Payment Standards are based on information provided by HUD and are revised each year. The Payment Standard IS NOT the maximum of amount of rent that can be charged for the unit you find!

The Gross Rent for a unit is the actual rent for the unit (what the Owner charges) + the Utility Allowance that is calculated for the unit. For example, if the rent for the unit is \$700 and the Utility Allowance is \$100, then the Gross Rent for the unit is \$800 (\$700 + \$100).

Calculating the Tenant Rent and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) to the Owner/Manager

Using the information above we will calculate what a participant will pay in rent. We will use these sample numbers: Contract Rent (what the owner charges) = \$700; Utility Allowance = \$100; Payment Standard = \$900; 30% of monthly adjusted income = \$300; 40% of monthly adjusted income = \$400

Step 1. Find Gross Rent by adding the Contract Rent (\$700) and the Utility Allowance (\$100) = \$800

Step 2. Find the LOWER of the Gross Rent (\$800) and the Payment Standard (\$900) = \$800 (Gross Rent)

Step 3. Find the difference between Gross Rent (\$800) and 30% of monthly adjusted income (\$300) = \$500.

This is the HAP that will be paid to the Owner by the Housing Authority

Step 4. Find the difference between the Contract Rent (\$700) and the HAP (\$500) = \$200

This is the Tenant's portion of rent to be paid to the Owner

We have completed the Rent Calculation for this family! However, there are a few more steps to make sure the rent for the unit does not exceed what the family can pay.

Step 5. Add the Tenant's share of rent (\$200) and the Utility Allowance (\$100) = \$300

This is the TTP for the household.

Step 6. Is the TTP (\$300) more than 40% of the household's monthly adjusted income (\$400)?

In this example, the TTP does not exceed the 40%, so the rent for the unit is O.K.

These are all of the steps in the Rent Calculation process. The family's share of rent should be 30% of their monthly adjusted income, or less when the utility allowance is provided. Families can pay up to 40% of their monthly adjusted income for their share of rent, but this is the maximum allowed under program guidelines. If the TTP is more than the 40% of monthly adjusted income the rent is too high for the Section 8 program. The family must negotiate a lower rent with the Owner or search for a different unit.

Annual & Interim Re-Examinations

Annual Re-Examinations

The Housing Authority must complete at least one (1) review of your household status each year to ensure that you remain eligible for housing assistance and that the unit you are receiving assistance for continues to meet the HQS inspection standards. This review is called the Annual Recertification. Any changes to your portion of the rent amount will take effect on the date of your anniversary. For example, if you first received assistance on June 1, 2012, your Annual Recertification would be effective on June 1, 2013. You will receive a letter approximately 60-90 days before your anniversary date that will include all of the forms that you will need to complete for recertification, along with a scheduled Office Appointment and Annual Inspection appointment. You must attend the office appointment and allow the inspector to complete the Annual Inspection to maintain your assistance. Failure to cooperate with the recertification process will cause your Section 8 HCV assistance to be terminated! After the Housing Authority has gathered all of the necessary income and other verifications, you and the owner or manager will receive a Rent Adjustment Notice informing you of your new rent amount.

Annual HQS Inspection

The Housing Authority must complete an Annual Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection of the unit. Both the family and the owner must work to keep the unit in good repair. The Housing Authority may fail the unit on HQS inspection if any deficiencies are found. This includes tenant-caused deficiencies such as housekeeping issues, poor sanitation, damages to the unit, etc. The owner may charge the family for any tenant-caused damages beyond normal wear and tear. Tenant-caused damages that are excessive and/or repeated may be grounds for termination of the lease AND of the family's housing assistance! Please DO NOT remove batteries from smoke detectors! Missing batteries or non-working smoke detectors will cause the unit to fail inspection and must be re-inspected within 24 hours. The owner or manager provides batteries for smoke detectors when a family moves into a unit, but the family is responsible for replacing batteries when needed. The family must report any work orders needed to the owner or manager so that repairs can be done. Repairs not done in a timely manner should be reported to the Housing Authority. The family MUST allow access to the unit for the Annual Inspection. If you are not home at the time of the inspection a letter will be sent to you re-scheduling the inspection. Failure to allow the inspector into the unit, repeated missed inspection appointments OR regularly missing your inspection appointment each year can be grounds for termination of assistance.

Interim Re-Examinations

Interim Re-examinations are done when a change of status is reported between Annual Re-examinations, and are usually done without an office appointment. The Housing Authority will verify only the information that has changed. The family and the owner will receive a notice if there is a change in the amounts paid by the Housing Authority and the family. Interim Re-examinations do not require an inspection of the unit. Changes in income or household composition that result in a decrease of the family's part of the rent will be made effective for the month immediately following the month in which the change occurred; changes that result in an increase in the part of rent paid by the family will not be effective until after the following month. For example, a decrease in income that is reported on May 15 will cause a decrease in the family's portion of the rent effective June 1. An increase in income that is reported on May 15 will cause an increase in the family's portion of rent, but will not be effective until July 1. Note: The Housing Authority must verify all changes in income; changes reported late in the month may not be verified in time to take effect the following month. You must report changes within ten (10) days of when they occur, however, the sooner this information is reported, the faster it can be verified! Increases in income that are not reported in a timely manner may result in the family owing money to the Housing Authority if overpayments were made to the owner. Decreases that are not reported in a timely manner WILL NOT be made retroactively.

Unit Transfers and Portability

Many families stay in the same rental unit for a long time, but sometimes a family may need to transfer to another rental unit in the Housing Authority's service area, or to another city or state. There are two kinds of moves under the Section 8 HCV program: unit transfers and portability.

Unit Transfers

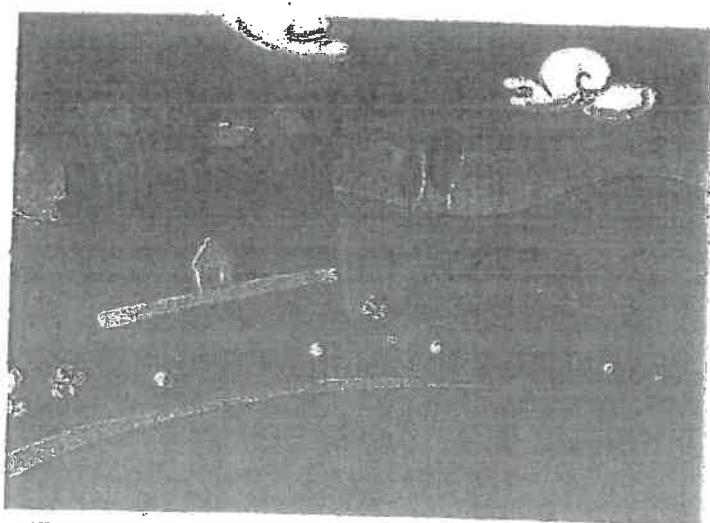
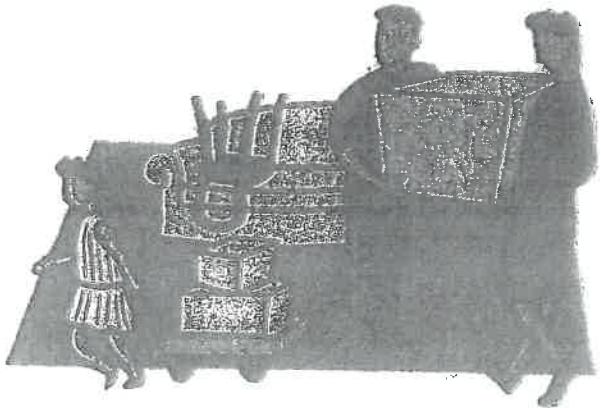
Unit transfers are usually done at the time of the Annual Re-Examination, when the lease for the current unit is going to expire. Under certain circumstances a family may move in between annual reviews. It is very important to contact the Housing Authority if you are thinking of moving. You must schedule an office appointment with your Section 8 HCV representative to discuss your move and to receive paperwork to search for a new rental unit. A proper 30-day notice to the Owner/Agent must be provided and the Owner must agree to release you from the lease agreement. The unit must be left in good condition when you move and you cannot owe money to the Owner/Agent for any unpaid rent or damages. Failure to provide a proper notice or moving from a unit without prior approval from the Housing Authority may cause you to lose your housing assistance.

Portability

Your Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher is also transferrable outside of the Housing Authority's service area. This moving process is called "portability". In order to "port" to another city or state, you must follow the requirements of a unit transfer by scheduling an office appointment and providing a proper 30-day notice to the Owner/Agent. You must also decide where you want to move to and contact the housing agency that handles the Section 8 HCV program in that area. Vouchers are usually portable to anywhere in the United States that is covered by another Section 8 HCV program. However, there are other guidelines that must be followed, so it is important to meet with your Section 8 HCV representative to discuss what all you must do to port your voucher.

Restrictions on Moves

Certain restrictions can be applied to both unit transfers and portability requests. The Housing Authority generally restricts unit transfers to one time every 12 months. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances (for example, if a unit no longer meets HQS inspection standards due to something beyond the family's control). Moves can also be denied if a family is not in good standing with the Housing Authority, such as being in default on a repayment agreement or not complying with any other program requirements. Portability requests may also be denied if the Housing Authority does not have funds available for a move to a higher cost area. The Housing Authority must approve all unit transfer and portability requests before the family can move with continued assistance.



ATTACHMENT C

**Allowances for Tenant
Furnished Utilities and other
Services**

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development
Office of Public and Indian Housing

OMB Approval No. 2577-0169
(exp. 08/30/2017)

Locality: Manhattan Housing Authority, KS		Unit Type: Apartment/Row House/Townhouse/Semi- Detached/Duplex			Date (mm/dd/yyyy) 07-01-2017	
Utility or Service	Standard	Monthly Dollar Allowances				
		0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
Heating	a. Natural Gas	\$19.00	\$22.00	\$25.00	\$28.00	\$32.00
	b. Bottle Gas/Propane					
	c. Electric	\$19.00	\$23.00	\$31.00	\$39.00	\$46.00
	d. Electric Heat Pump	\$17.00	\$20.00	\$24.00	\$27.00	\$30.00
	e. Oil / Other					
Cooking	a. Natural Gas	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$5.00	\$6.00
	b. Bottle Gas/Propane					
	c. Electric	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$9.00	\$11.00	\$14.00
Other Electric (Lights & Appliances)		\$19.00	\$22.00	\$31.00	\$40.00	\$49.00
Air Conditioning		\$7.00	\$9.00	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$19.00
Water Heating	a. Natural Gas	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$9.00	\$12.00	\$15.00
	b. Bottle Gas/Propane					
	c. Electric	\$13.00	\$15.00	\$19.00	\$24.00	\$28.00
	d. Oil / Other					
Water (avg)		\$16.00	\$16.00	\$20.00	\$23.00	\$27.00
Sewer (avg)		\$29.00	\$30.00	\$33.00	\$36.00	\$39.00
Trash Collection (avg)		\$23.00	\$23.00	\$23.00	\$23.00	\$23.00
Range / Microwave Tenant-supplied		\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Refrigerator	Tenant-supplied	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$13.00
Other— specify:	Monthly Electric Fee \$15.77	\$16.00	\$16.00	\$16.00	\$16.00	\$16.00
	Monthly Gas Fee \$17.54	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
Actual Family Allowances		Utility or Service		per month cost		
To be used by the family to compute allowance. Complete below for the actual unit rented.		Heating	\$			
Name of Family		Cooking	\$			
Address of Unit		Other Electric	\$			
Number of Bedrooms		Air Conditioning	\$			
		Water Heating	\$			
		Water	\$			
		Sewer	\$			
		Trash Collection	\$			
		Range / Microwave	\$			
		Refrigerator	\$			
		Other	\$			
		Other	\$			
		Total	\$			

