**SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) –**

**LANDORDS’ FREQUENLTY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What is Section 8 (Housing Choice Voucher) Program?**

The Section 8 program assists low-income families in the private rental market through the Housing Assistance Payments program. RENTAL VOUCHER HOLDERS select a unit from the private rental market. Rental assistance makes market-rate housing affordable. Program participants normally pay no more than 30% of their monthly adjusted income towards rent and utilities. The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) subsidizes the balance of the rent to the property owner.

**What are the requirements for renting my unit to an assisted family?**

The unit must meet HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS), and the contract rent must be approvable within HUD Fair Market Rents and comparable market rates (copy of HQS available).

**How do I make a unit available to voucher holders?**

You may call the Housing Authority admissions office to have the unit listed on our list of available units. You may also advertise in the website gosection8.com or other publishing material such as newspapers. Our families look for those listings.

**What do I do when a voucher holder is interested in my unit?**

1. **Landlord screens tenants:** We certify the voucher holder eligibility for the program. When one of our families contacts you, any or all of the following screening procedures may be used:
	* Credit check
	* Criminal check
	* Landlord references
	* Home visits

We encourage all of the above screening methods as long as you do not discriminate. Discrimination includes any tenant selection based on race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, country of birth, handicap or family status. In most circumstances, the prohibition against discrimination based on familial status makes it illegal to refuse to allow children to live in a residential unit.

1. **Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA):**

When you have selected a tenant, he/she will have an RTA form for you to complete. When a tenant submits the form to our office, a housing representative will contact you to schedule an inspection.

1. **Rent and Inspection:**

The rent you request for the unit will be compared to other similar units to ensure rent reasonableness. The unit will be inspected to ensure it meets HUD HQS. If applicable, you will also be mailed a copy of the inspection repair list.

1. **Lease and Contract:**

After the rent is approved and the unit passes inspection, the landlord and tenant enter into a lease for an initial term of at least one year. The Housing Authority and the landlord sign an HAP contract through which the rent is paid on behalf of the tenant.

**What are the terms of the lease and contract?**

After one year, the landlord may renew the lease for a specific period. The tenant may vacate with a notice after the term of the lease expiration. If the tenant remains in the unit, the Housing Authority recertifies the tenant for continued eligibility, and the unit is inspected for HQS annually. Around the time of lease expiration, the landlord may request an annual adjustment increase in the contract rent that can only be approved by the Housing Authority. This request must be submitted in writing to the Housing Authority and tenant sixty days before lease renewal.

**Can I collect the security deposit?**

Yes. The Housing Authority prohibits security deposits over private practice or above amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

**What are my rights and responsibilities as a landlord?**

* Maintain your property in good condition. Complete repairs within a reasonable amount of time upon request by the Housing Authority or tenant (within 24 hours for emergencies). The amount of time considered reasonable depends on the nature of the problem.
* Set reasonable rules about unit use and common areas.
* Do not enter a unit without the tenant’s permission and proper notice except for emergencies or tenant-requested repairs.
* Collect appropriate security deposit as directed under the program and use it only as directed by law.
* Comply with equal opportunity requirements.
* Enforce tenant obligations under the lease.
* Expect your tenant to:
	+ Pay rent on time
	+ Keep the unit clean
	+ Avoid illegal activity
	+ Permit access for repairs
	+ Avoid damage to property
	+ Refrain from disturbing others
	+ Allow only those occupants on the lease to reside in the unit
* Comply with the terms and conditions of the lease and HAP contract
* Take action through Magistrate’s Court to evict when a tenant violates the lease

For more information reach us by email at **landlordrelations@mhacy.org****.**