

## **Housing Choice Voucher Program**

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, formerly known as "Section 8", is a federally funded program administered by the Portland Housing Authority. This program provides housing assistance to eligible low and moderate income families enabling them to obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing by subsidizing a portion of each tenant's monthly rent. This subsidy is paid directly and promptly to the property owner on a monthly basis. Any type of private rental housing is eligible: single-family dwellings, high-rise buildings, townhouses, and congregate housing units are eligible. Paperwork is minimal and the owner retains normal management rights and responsibilities including tenant selection, rent collection, property maintenance, and lease termination.

### **Participation in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program**

Portland Housing Authority selects families who meet income and eligibility requirements set by the Federal government. A participating family may choose to remain in their current apartment or move to another apartment.

### **How Rental Assistance is Provided**

Portland Housing Authority calculates the amount of assistance each family receives. The level of assistance is based on family size and income. A family is expected to pay approximately thirty (30%) percent of its income towards rent. When a family finds a unit and signs a lease, Portland Housing Authority, signs a Housing Assistance Payments Contact with the owner. Each month the Portland Housing Authority makes housing assistance payments directly to the owner.

### **Roles: The Tenant, The Landlord, and The Housing Agency**

**Tenant's Role:** When a family selects a housing unit and the Housing Authority approves the unit and rental agreement, the family signs a rental agreement with the landlord for at least one year. The tenant may be required to pay a security deposit to the landlord – the HCV does not pay security deposits. After the first year the landlord may initiate a new rental agreement or allow the family to remain in the unit on a month-to-month lease. After the family is in a new home they are expected to comply with the rental agreement and the HCV program requirements, pay their share of the rent on time, pay their utilities, maintain the unit in good condition and notify the Housing Authority of any changes in income or family composition.

**Landlord's Role:** The role of the landlord in the Housing Choice Voucher Program is to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to a tenant at a reasonable rent. The dwelling unit must pass the program's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and be maintained up to those standards as long as the owner receives housing assistance payments. In addition, the landlord is expected to provide the services agreed to as part of the lease signed with the tenant and the contract signed with the housing authority.

**Housing Authority's Role:** The Housing Authority administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Housing Authority provides the family with the rental assistance that enables the family to seek out suitable housing. The Housing Authority also enters into a contract with the landlord to provide rental assistance on behalf of the family. If the landlord fails to meet his/her obligations under the rental agreement, the Housing Authority has the right to terminate assistance payments.

**How does a family apply?**

The CT Department of Housing (DOH) will re-open the waiting list to accept applications when most people on the waiting list have been served. When the list is about to be opened, a notice and pre-application form will be placed in local newspapers and media outlets as well as on the DOH website. The waiting list currently is closed.