

OVERVIEW OF THE Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

The Greensboro Housing Authority (GHA) administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program locally. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide safe, decent and affordable housing for low-income families. By providing a rent subsidy, the voucher program gives a family the opportunity to live in better housing or to remain in his/her existing decent, good quality housing with assistance on monthly rental payments by the family.

- Families pay up to 40 percent of their total adjusted income for rent and utilities.
- GHA sends housing assistance payments directly to the landlord on behalf of the family.
- GHA annually re-certifies families for rental assistance, which involves reviewing their eligibility status.
- GHA annually inspects housing to ensure that it meets Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

PARTICIPATING FAMILIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Complying with the terms of their lease.
- Reporting changes in income or number of members in the household.
- Keeping the unit clean.
- Avoiding damage to the unit.
- Allowing GHA to make annual inspections.
- Allowing landlord access to the unit to make repairs.
- Making their share of rental and utility payments.
- Paying any deposits for rent or utilities when moving into the housing.
- Notifying the landlord and GHA of any intent to move.

PARTICIPATING LANDLORDS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Maintaining the unit in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS).
- Providing the family with information on the status of lead-based paint in the unit.
- Complying with equal opportunity requirements.
- Complying with the lease and Housing Assistance Payment contract.
- Allowing GHA to make annual inspections and making any repairs determined necessary.

GHA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Maintaining a waiting list of applicants.
- Issuing vouchers.
- Providing housing information to families who receive vouchers.
- Inspecting units at least annually to ensure compliance with Housing Quality Standards.
- Determining if the requested rent is reasonable and affordable by the family.
- Determining the amount of the housing assistance payment and the family share of the rent.
- Maintaining a profile of the family and updating it annually.

ELIGIBILITY

A Housing Choice Voucher applicant must:

- Be a U.S. citizen, national or non-citizen with eligible immigration status.
- Meet HUD's income guidelines.
- Pass a criminal background check.

Preference is given to:

- People who work full time (30 hours per week) for at least 9 months
- Full-time students
- Elderly people
- Disabled people
- Families who have been displaced because their rental housing was condemned, through no fault of the family.

APPLICATIONS/WAITING LIST

All applicants for the Housing Choice Voucher Program will go on a waiting list. When the waiting list is open, applications may be made in person at GHA's Central Office, 450 North Church Street, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 pm. Applications will be mailed to interested people upon request. Persons with disabilities who require reasonable accommodation in completing the application may call GHA to request assistance.

GHA notifies the public whenever the list opens or closes by publishing notices in local newspapers.

UPDATING THE WAITING LIST

GHA cannot predict how long it might take for an applicant to receive a Housing Choice voucher. The length of the wait is based upon availability of vouchers and status of the applicant on the waiting list. Applicants should notify GHA when there is a change in the family's status such as:

- Change in income.
- Change in number of family members in the household.
- Change in address or telephone number.

It is very important for the applicant to update his/her address, telephone number or other information so GHA can locate the applicant. *GHA removes applicants from the waiting list if they cannot be located.*

RECEIVING A VOUCHER

When GHA determines that there will soon be a voucher for a family, they will be invited to attend an eligibility interview to verify the information they have provided GHA. GHA must verify all information before a voucher can be issued.

When a voucher is issued, GHA provides the family with the following information:

- Bedroom size, based on family size and composition.
- Amount of time the family has to locate a home.
- A list of landlords who say they will accept a voucher.
- Information on Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS)

HUD requires that housing subsidized by a Housing Choice voucher be in good condition. When the family has located a potential rental unit, a GHA Housing Inspector will inspect the unit to ensure that it meets HQS. GHA will also determine that the rent requested by the landlord is reasonable as well as affordable for the family.

HUD's HQS outlines specific requirements, some of which include the following:

- All surfaces (interior/exterior) must be free of chipping or peeling paint. The unit must be free of paint chips from scraping.
- Operable windows must have locks and proper and secure fitting screens.
- Stairways (interior/exterior) with three or more risers must have handrails.
- The unit must be free of any plumbing problems, including leaks.
- All appliances (if supplied) must be operable.
- Furnace and water heater flues must have a continuous upward slope and all openings must seal properly.

Greensboro Housing Authority provides families with additional information on Housing Quality Standards when a voucher is issued.

FAIR HOUSING POLICY

It is the policy of the Greensboro Housing Authority to fully comply with all the Federal, State and local nondiscrimination laws; the Americans with Disabilities Act; and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations governing Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. The Greensboro Housing Authority shall affirmatively further fair housing in the administration of its public housing program.

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, familial status, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under the Greensboro Housing Authority's programs.