

Voucher Issuance Briefing Book

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program (Section 8)

Housing Authority of the City of Natchitoches

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Keep This Book for Reference

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Welcome

This handbook is provided for you to read. It is your responsibility to understand how the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program works. Please keep this Briefing Book as a reference for future use and for your records.

About the Program

The Housing Choice Voucher Program helps eligible low-income families by paying a portion of their rent so they can reside in housing that is safe and affordable. The rules and regulations for this program are determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Housing Choice Voucher Program may also be referred to as “Rental Assistance” or “Section 8.”

To begin receiving rental assistance, you must first find an appropriate place to live. The place you choose must meet Housing Quality Standards and the owner of the property must agree to participate in the program.

Housing Authority City of Natchitoches (HACN) also offers the option of using your voucher to become a first-time homebuyer once you have satisfied the initial year of rental use requirement under the Section 8 program.

Housing Authority City of Natchitoches’s policies governing the Housing Choice Voucher Program are contained in the Administrative Plan and are available for review by appointment at HACN’s office.

Housing Choice Vouchers

NOTE: The HACN is not obligated to provide assistance to any family issued a voucher due to various reasons such as; The unit does not pass the Health & Safety inspection, the affordability/rent reasonableness tests, the landlord has violated Housing Program rules, and program funds are no longer available.

The HACN jurisdiction is only within the Natchitoches City Limits. If you want to be assisted outside of the Natchitoches City limits, you must apply to the Natchitoches Parish Housing Authority

The Housing Choice Voucher Program establishes a limit on the amount of rent that may be paid on a family’s behalf. A family may initially pay a landlord up to 40% of the family’s monthly-adjusted income. The rent limit requirement only applies to first-time participant families and families transferring from one housing unit to another. The 40% rent limit does not apply after the initial term of the contract.

Median Income Limits

HUD has established median income limits for HACN’s geographical area. HACN uses the median income at 50% (very low-income) to determine a family’s initial eligibility for the program. The family’s income cannot exceed the income limit.

Income Targeting

HACN must ensure that extremely low-income (ELI) families make up at least 75% of the families admitted to the program each year. ELI families are those with annual incomes not exceeding the federal poverty level or 30% of the median income, whichever number is higher.

These are the **2017 Upper Limits of Annual Income for Section 8** that a family can receive and still be eligible for housing assistance. The Annual amounts are gross income; the total of all countable income before any deductions or taxes are taken out.

This includes but is not limited to all household members’ income from; Wages, Child Support, Alimony, FITAP, Social Security and SSI, Contributions, Insurance payouts, Pensions, VA and Retirement pay, Military pay, etc.

Countable Income does **NOT** include money received from subsidized programs such as SNAP (food stamps), Kinship, or One-time lump-sum payments from insurance or lottery winnings.

1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 Persons	8 Persons
\$17,300	\$19,800	\$22,250	\$24,700	\$26,700	\$28,700	\$30,650	\$32,700

Example: Table shows 2021 Income Limits - for a 2 person household \$18,900 divided by 12 months = \$1,575.00 monthly income. If the total, pre-tax household monthly income is \$1,575.00 or more, the family is over-income.

Choosing a Place to Live

The family may choose to live in various types of rental properties, as long as it meets certain requirements for Rent Reasonableness and Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and the landlord accepts Section 8 vouchers. For all families including a person with disabilities, a partial list of potential rental owners is available at the office.

When locating a place to live, HUD recommends that families consider neighborhood factors such as: employment opportunities; safety; crime rates; health care access; public transportation; schools; access to social services; the quality of housing; and proximity to family and friends.

Furthermore, HUD references research that has shown that moving to areas of low-poverty concentration has advantages that includes strong positive physical and mental health effects for families. Some research shows that families who lived in low-poverty neighborhoods for a longer period had an increased likelihood of finding employment and having higher incomes, and their children had higher scores in school and were more likely to enroll in college.

Program Steps

- The family completes an application and is placed on HACN’s waiting list.
- The family is selected from the waiting list based on the date and time the Section 8 Rental Assistance application was received, and any applicable preferences.
- The family is scheduled for a Voucher Issuance Meeting with HACN Case workers who explain the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program to the family and obtain information pertaining to the family’s household composition and income. This meeting does not guarantee Section 8 Rental Assistance will be received. The information is reviewed and verified by HACN in order to determine final eligibility.
- HACN will determine the family’s bedroom size by using the family’s household composition as a guide. Family members are generally assigned to bedrooms on the basis of two of the same sex per bedroom, or of the opposite sex up to the age of six (6). The HACN will allow a child under two (2) years to share a bedroom with parent.
- HACN will reference the following chart in determining the appropriate voucher size for a family:

Voucher Size	Minimum Number of Persons in Household	Maximum Number of Persons in Household
1	1	2
2	2	4
3	4	6
4	6	8

- When the voucher is issued, the family has 60 days to locate a suitable unit.
- The family locates a suitable place to live. A housing unit, (such as, a house, apartment, duplex, or mobile home) is acceptable, as long as it meets certain requirements for Rent Reasonableness and Housing Quality Standards (HQS).
- At this point in the process, the family and landlord should complete a Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) form that is supplied with the voucher to determine if the unit meets affordability levels and to schedule an inspection.

- If 60 days is not sufficient to locate a suitable unit, you must provide a written request to HACN for a voucher extension before your voucher expires. However, HACN may not grant an extension.
- The owner or manager of the property screens the family for suitability as a renter.
- After the owner/landlord approves the family and agrees to participate, the Housing Quality Standards inspection of the unit will be scheduled. An incomplete form will delay scheduling of an appointment. The family may send the RTA Form by mail, fax, or bring it in person, (fax numbers and mailing address are on the cover of this guide).
- **NOTE:** The HACN does not pay any security deposits for housing or utilities.
- The family may move into the unit prior to the inspection with landlord approval. However, the family is responsible for all rent prior to the signing of the contract. A unit occupied by someone other than the family requesting Section 8 Rental Assistance will not be inspected until the unit has been vacated.
- If the unit meets HQS requirements and the rent for the unit is determined to be reasonable when compared to similar unassisted units, HACN will enter into a HAP Contract with the owner, and the family will enter into a lease with the owner.
- The owner is required to provide a copy of his lease for attachment to the HUD contract and Tenancy Addendum.
- HACN will not authorize a contract that would require a family to pay a landlord more than 40% of their monthly-adjusted income in rent.

The owner/landlord does not have to be present for the signing of the contract. However, the family must have a signed copy of the owner's lease, with all but the effective dates completed. If a lease is not available and the unit passes inspection, a contract will not be authorized. The owner's failure to be present will also delay the effective date of the lease and contract and receipt of the initial Housing Assistance Payment. If the unit does not meet HQS requirements, the family and owner will be given a list of repairs and a timeframe to make the corrections.

After the contract and lease are signed, HACN makes payments to the owner as long as the family continues to meet eligibility requirements and the unit continues to meet HQS requirements. The family's portion of rent is paid directly to the owner.

The tenant cannot pay the landlord more for rent than HACN has authorized.

Determining Payment Amount

The family's portion of rent cannot exceed 40% of their monthly-adjusted income during the initial term of the lease.

Rent charged for the unit must be reasonable when compared to similar unassisted units

Maximum housing subsidy is the lower of HACN's Payment Standard or the Gross Rent for the unit (contract rent plus tenant paid utilities) minus the family's Total Tenant Payment (TTP).

If a family requires a higher payment standard as a reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities, HACN is allowed to establish a higher payment standard for the family within the basic range allowed by HUD. A family must submit a written request explaining the need for an exception payment standard to rent an accessible unit for a person with disabilities.

Lease Agreement

The lease agreement must comply with state and local law. The initial term of the lease must be for at least one year. It must have a starting and ending date and terms for renewal. The lease must specify the utilities and appliances supplied by the owner and the utilities and appliances supplied by the family.

The lease agreement must include the tenancy addendum. If there is any conflict between the tenancy

addendum and any other provisions of the lease, the language of the tenancy addendum shall prevail.

The lease agreement should list the name of the owner, the name of the tenant, names of all household members and the address of the unit. The lease agreement should include a deposit amount, rent amount, and signatures of the tenant and landlord.

The Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract between HACN and the owner/landlord begins on the first day of the term of the lease and ends on the last day of the term of the lease. The HAP contract beginning date and lease beginning date must be the same.

Rent Reasonableness

Rent Reasonableness is determined by comparing the rent charged for unassisted units of similar size, features, and amenities. Housing Quality Standards are the minimum acceptable standards a home must meet for a family to receive Section 8 Rental Assistance. This is determined by performing a thorough inspection of the housing unit the family has selected.

At the time of the HQS inspection, an HACN case worker will evaluate the reasonableness of the rent asked for the dwelling unit. The proposed rent will be compared to the rent for other units on the open market of similar size, features, year of construction and amenities. HACN makes the determination of rent reasonableness and comparability based on the condition of the dwelling unit and rental market information.

After the first year of the lease, the owner may request a rent increase with a 60-day notice to the family and HACN. The proposed increase must be reasonable, must be in writing, and must first be approved by HACN, before it becomes effective.

Reasons an Owner's Actions Could Cause a Housing Unit to Be Denied

HACN is not allowed to approve a dwelling unit if:

- HACN has been notified by HUD that the owner has been debarred, suspended, or subject to a limited denial of participation by HUD.
- The government has instituted an administrative or judicial action against the owner for violation of the Fair Housing Act or other equal opportunity requirements.
- HACN has the discretion to disapprove an owner for any of the following: The owner has committed fraud, bribery or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any HUD program.
- The owner has engaged in drug trafficking.
- The owner has a history or practice of non-compliance with the HQS for units leased under the Section 8 Rental Program.

Housing Assistance Payment Changes

HACN will provide written notice to the family and to the owner if the family's portion of the rent changes.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. I am currently receiving assistance and I want to move. What do I need to do?

Submit your request to move in writing to your housing manager. If your request is approved, you will be issued a voucher authorizing you to search for new housing and provided an RTA form that you must return to request an inspection. You will have 60 days to find new housing and request an inspection. You do not have to move from your current place while you are searching for a new place. HACN will continue making monthly payments to the landlord on your behalf. However, before you move, you must give your landlord written notice as per your lease. If you fail to give your landlord written notice before moving, you may lose your Section 8 voucher and be prohibited from reapplying for assistance for 3 years. Please be sure to provide ample time for processing.

NOTE: If you sign a lease before HACN approves a unit and the unit fails any of the tests, the lease could bind you to that unit and you would not be awarded Section 8 assistance. This is a matter between the prospective tenant and landlord. HACN will not begin making payments until the unit passes the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection and the housing assistance payments (HAP) contract is effective. If the family moves in before this time, any rent is the family's responsibility.

2. If I do not pay my portion of the rent to the landlord what happens?

The landlord would begin eviction proceedings. HACN is not a party to the lease; and therefore, has no authority to enforce it. However, serious lease violations, such as non-payment of rent, are cause for HACN to terminate a family's participation in the program.

3. How much is my voucher worth?

A voucher uses payment standards that represent the maximum subsidy HACN can pay on behalf of a family with rent. Please see the payment standards in the Briefing Book. This does not mean that we will pay the full amount for each family, since many things affect the family's assistance. Payment standards include rent plus a utility allowance (U/A) if the tenant pays any of the utilities (e.g., Rent + Utility Allowance = Payment Standard).

4. I want to add a member to my household, how do I do that?

You must have prior written approval from HACN and permission from your landlord before moving any adult member into a unit. You must provide a written request and if the person is a minor (under age 18) provide the person's Social Security card, birth certificate and, if applicable, any legal guardianship/adoption/foster documentation.

If the person is 18 or older, he or she must complete an Addendum application, providing their Social Security card, birth certificate and valid photo identification. HACN will conduct a background check to determine eligibility and will notify you of the results.

Live-In Aides

HUD does not count caregivers as members of the household composition if they do not live in the unit 24 hours a day/7 days a week. If a live-in aide is required, the family must provide certification/documentation from a knowledgeable health professional attesting to this fact, and that person must be approved by the HACN prior to inclusion in the household. The live-in aide's income is not counted.

5. My landlord will not fix items in the unit in need of repair. What can I do?

All requests to repair items should be made in writing to the landlord (date and keep a copy for yourself) so that there is a clear understanding of what is needed. If the owner/landlord does not repair the item(s) in a timely manner (10-14 days), you may request in writing an inspection of the unit by submitting a list of items to HACN. If any items are potentially life threatening or create health and safety issues, you may call HACN for assistance. Items considered life threatening or that impact health and safety may include such things as electrical hazards, sewage problems, no water, no heat, leaks in the ceiling where there is possible falling debris, blocked exits, a gas leak, etc.

6. I have an increase in income. What do I do to let you know?

Increases in income must be reported within ten (10) days of occurrence. All changes must be reported in writing to HACN by completing a new Personal Declaration form. A verification will be needed, either an employment form or contribution form. Your housing manager will provide the necessary form(s).

7. I have a decrease in income. What do I do to get my rent lowered?

You must report all changes in writing to HACN within 10 days of the decrease and before the 22nd day of the month. With your written notice, submit any paperwork you have showing that you have lost your job or showing your reduced income. For example, a letter from your previous employer on company letterhead indicating your

last date of employment, a family contribution statement with amount provided and how often, benefit letters (i.e., Social Security, unemployment, etc.). If you apply for unemployment you must include this paperwork, or if a family member is now assisting with bills, your housing manager will provide the necessary contribution form. Decreases will be effective after all income changes are verified. The change will not be retroactive to the date of the event or the reporting of the event.

8. My landlord gave me a notice to move. What do I do?

Provide a copy of the notice to HACN so that we may review and determine if we can issue you a voucher to search for a new unit.

9. Will I receive a check for my utilities?

No. Every family that pays any utility in the unit will receive a utility allowance. The utility allowance is included in the calculations determining the family's portion and HACN's rental payment.

10. Do I have to rent the size unit listed on my Voucher?

Not necessarily. Several variables come into play when calculating the assistance levels. If, based on the family's income, the requested rent and utility allowance, a larger unit is found affordable, the HACN will provide rental assistance in a unit with a larger bedroom size than what is on the voucher. HOWEVER – this upgrade is for 1 bedroom size larger. Rarely will the calculations allow a jump of 2 bedrooms above what is listed on the voucher. In many cases even one jump higher will be out of the affordability range of applicant families.

WHEN & HOW TO REPORT INCOME AND FAMILY COMPOSITION CHANGES

The Head of Household must report **any and all changes** that occur regarding family income and/or composition by coming into the office and completing the appropriate paperwork including a new Personal Declaration form. Any other method of reporting (*verbal & any paperwork not approved or sent by housing manager*) will not be recognized.

Failure to come into the Housing Authority office and fill out the appropriate paperwork immediately (**within ten (10) days**) following any and all changes in family income and/or composition will be considered fraud and Section 8 rental assistance may be terminated.

Any person living in the unit that has not been approved by the HACN prior to moving in is considered an Unauthorized Person and will result in termination of assistance.

Any rent amount that was overpaid by the Housing Authority to the landlord on the family's behalf due to unreported income and/or family composition changes will be the responsibility of the family to pay back to the Housing Authority. If the amount is not paid back to the Housing Authority as per a Re-Payment Agreement by the specified date, the family's Section 8 rental assistance **will be terminated** and the amount owed to the Housing Authority will be sent to the Credit Bureau for collection. The adults in the household not be eligible to re-apply for housing assistance of any type if my Section 8 housing assistance is terminated due to fraud.

In order for any changes in rent amounts to be applied, all **verifications of changes** must be **received** by the 22nd day of the month. Tenants MUST have sufficient income to pay utilities and living expenses. If the rent will be

reduced, the new amount will be effective the first month following receipt of verifications. If the rent will increase, the new amount will be effective the second month following the start of new income.

Unreported Income Is Fraud and can result in immediate termination of assistance. It will also cause ineligibility for other housing assistance programs.

Responsibilities of the Family, the Owner, and HACN

Family Responsibilities

The rules of the Housing Choice Voucher Program must be followed so that you may continue participation.

If any family obligations are violated or if fraud against any Federal housing programs is committed, your assistance is subject to termination.

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these guidelines and to fulfill all program requirements.

- Provide HACN with complete and accurate information.
- Comply with the Family Obligations of your Voucher.
- Cooperate by attending all appointments scheduled by HACN.
- Locate a unit that is suitable for your family, meets HQS requirements, and is rent reasonable (as determined by HACN when compared to similar unassisted units).
- Keep the unit safe and sanitary.
- Comply with the terms of your lease with the owner/landlord.
- Cooperate with the Owner by informing him/her of any necessary repairs.
- Notify HACN of any known program violations.

Family Obligations

When the family's unit is approved and the HAP Contract is executed, the family must follow all rules, policies and regulations of HUD, the HACN and provisions of the lease in order to continue participating in the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program.

Violation of Family Obligations is the greatest cause of program participants losing their Section 8 Rental Assistance.

The family must:

- Supply any information that HACN or HUD determines to be necessary including evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status, and information for use in a regularly scheduled reexamination or interim reexamination of family income and composition.
- Disclose and verify social security numbers and sign and submit consent forms for obtaining information.
- Supply any information requested by HACN to verify that the family is living in the unit or information related to family absence from the unit.
- Allow HACN to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice.
- Notify HACN and the Owner in writing before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease. Use the assisted unit for residence by the family.
- The unit must be the family's only residence.

- Notify HACN in writing of additions to the household resulting from birth, adoption, or court awarded custody of a child.
- Obtain approval from HACN before allowing any new household member to occupy the unit.
- Notify HACN in writing within 10 days if any household member moves from the unit.
- Give HACN a copy of any owner eviction notice.
- Maintain all utilities on in the Head of Household's name (Pay utility bills and supply appliances that the owner is not required to supply under the lease). If the utilities are cut off for any reason other active repair work being performed by the utility company, the assisted family has 24 hours to have the utilities turned back on or Section 8 assistance must be terminated.
- Any information the family supplies must be true and complete. Omission of relevant information may be considered fraud.
- Tenants must meet with housing manager at scheduled appointments and at any time requested for interim reviews.

The family must not:

- Rent from an owner (or person having an interest in the unit) who is related as a child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, or sibling.
- Own or have any interest in the unit.
- Commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.
- Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program.
- Participate in illegal drug, or violent criminal activity.
- Sublease or let the unit or assign the lease or transfer the unit.
- Receive Section 8 tenant-based 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.

Owner Responsibilities

- Comply with fair housing laws
- Do not discriminate against any family
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contract
- Ensure the unit continues to meet HQS requirements
- Checks on the unit monthly or quarterly to perform any required maintenance
- Cooperate with the tenant by responding promptly to requests for needed repairs
- Notify HACN of any known program violations
- Enforce the lease and collect the rent due by the family
- Screen families for suitability as renters
- Comply with HUD Regulations by not renting to a relative where the owner or person having an interest in the property is related as a child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, or sibling.

HACN Responsibilities

- Verify and review family composition and income to determine qualification.
- Explain the rules of the program to the family and owner.

- Issue a Voucher to the family.
- Provide prospective owner with the family's current address as shown in HACN's records and, if known to HACN, the name and address of the landlord at the family's current and prior address.
- Perform HQS inspections to ensure unit meets minimum standards (initially and as required by HUD)
- Sign contract with Owner when unit meets HQS requirements and rent reasonableness
- Make housing assistance payments to the Owner in a timely manner
- Ensure Owner and family continue to comply with program rules
- Provide family and owner with prompt, courteous, accurate, and professional service.

Termination of Assistance

Termination of Lease and Contract by the Family

The family may terminate tenancy after the first year of the lease. The family must give the owner and HACN written notice of termination in accordance with the lease prior to moving from the unit.

Termination by the Owner

During the term of the lease, the owner may terminate tenancy only for:

- Serious or repeated violations of the terms and conditions of the lease
- Violations of Federal, State, or Local Law, which directly relate to the use or occupancy of the unit or premises
- Other good cause. Other good cause may include the following:
 - Failure by the family to accept the offer of a new lease or revision
 - Family history of disturbance of neighbors, destruction of property, or living or housekeeping habits resulting in damage to the unit or premises.
 - The owner's desire to use the unit for personal or family use, or a purpose other than residential
 - Business or economic reasons, such as sale of property, renovation of unit, or desire to lease the unit at a higher rental
- The owner may not terminate for "good cause" during the first year of the lease, unless the family has violated the contract. At the end of the initial term or at the end of any successive definite term, the owner may terminate the lease without cause.
- The owner must give the family written notice of grounds for termination of tenancy at or before the commencement of the action.

Termination by HACN

If HACN terminates the Section 8 Rental Assistance for the family, the HAP Contract terminates automatically.

A family's housing assistance may be denied or terminated if:

- A member of the family commits fraud, bribery or any other corrupt act in connection with any federal housing program.
- Any member of the family commits drug-related criminal activity or violent criminal activity.
- The family violates a Family Obligation of the Voucher Program.
- The family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior toward HACN personnel.
- The family currently owes rent or other amounts to HACN or to another housing agency in connection with Section 8 or Public Housing assistance under the 1937 Housing Act.

- The family breaches an agreement with HACN or another housing agency.
- Any member of the family has ever been evicted from Public Housing.
- HACN has ever terminated assistance under the Voucher Program for any member of the family.
- A family participating in the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program fails to comply, without good cause, with the family's Contract of Participation.

What is Portability? What Happens Next?

Portability / Transferring Your Assistance

Proof of residency for at least one year in HACN's jurisdiction is required when requesting to transfer your voucher to another jurisdiction.

HACN may deny a family's request for portability, if portability could create a financial hardship for HACN.

"Portability" in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program refers to the process through which your family can transfer or "port" your rental subsidy when you move to a location outside the jurisdiction of the public housing agency (PHA) that first gave you the voucher when you were selected for the program (**the initial PHA**).

The agency that will administer your assistance in the area to which you are moving is called the receiving PHA.

New families have to live in the jurisdiction of the initial PHA for a year before they can port. But, the initial PHA may allow new families to port during this one-year period.

1. You must notify the initial PHA that you would like to port and to which area you are moving.
2. The initial PHA will determine if you are eligible to move. For example, the PHA will determine whether you have moved out of your unit in accordance with your lease.
3. If eligible to move, the initial PHA will issue you a voucher (if it has not done so already) and send all relevant paperwork to the receiving PHA.
4. If you are currently assisted, you must give your landlord notice of your intent to vacate in accordance with your lease.

Contacting the Receiving PHA

1. Once your case manager has sent the Portability paperwork to the receiving PHA you should contact the receiving PHA to find out what they require for their intake procedures.
2. If there is more than one PHA that administers the HCV program where you wish to move, you may choose the receiving PHA.

Generally, the initial PHA is not required to give you any other information about the receiving PHAs, but you may wish to find out more details when contacting them (such as whether the receiving PHA operates a Family Self-Sufficiency or Homeownership program).

Before Porting, Things You Should Know

Subsidy Standards: The receiving PHA may have different subsidy standards. In other words, the initial PHA may have issued you a three-bedroom voucher, but the receiving PHA may, if appropriate for your family, issue you a two-bedroom voucher. Note, however, that the PHA's subsidy standards must comply with fair housing and civil rights laws. This includes processing reasonable accommodation requests that are necessary for qualified individuals with disabilities.

Payment Standards: The payment standards of the receiving PHA may be different for each PHA. Payment standards are what determine the amount of the rent that the PHA will pay on your behalf. If a receiving PHA's payment standards are lower than the initial PHA, then the portion of the rent you pay may be more than what you were paying at the initial PHA.

Re-screening: The receiving PHA may re-screen you using their own policies, which may be different from the initial PHA's policies and could result in them denying your request to move. When contacting the receiving PHA, you may want to ask whether they re-screen families moving into their area under portability and what are their policies for termination or denial of HCV assistance. This will assist you in determining if the receiving PHA's policies might prevent you from moving to their jurisdiction.

Time Management: You should manage the move so that you have enough time to arrive at the receiving PHA before the initial PHA voucher expires; otherwise, you may lose your assistance.

Once at the Receiving PHA

When your Portability information has been received by the receiving PHA, you need to contact that agency to find out what they require for intake procedures into their jurisdiction. The receiving PHA will issue you a voucher to search for a unit in its jurisdiction. Your voucher must be extended by 30 days from the expiration date on the voucher issued by the initial PHA.

If you decide that you do not want to lease a unit in the area, the receiving PHA will return your voucher to the initial PHA. The initial PHA is not required to, but may, extend the term of your voucher so that you may search for a unit in the initial PHA's jurisdiction or port to another jurisdiction.

Any additional instructions will be provided by the receiving PHA. PHAs must comply with all nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements in the portability process, including, but not limited to, the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Informal Review / Hearing

HACN will provide applicants with the opportunity to request an informal review of a decision denying assistance.

An informal review is **not required** to be provided for any of the following reasons:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by HACN.
- General policy issues or class grievances.
- A determination of the family unit size under HACN's subsidy standards.
- HACN determination not to approve an extension of the voucher term.
- HACN determination not to grant approval of the tenancy.
- HACN determination that a unit selected by the applicant is not in compliance with HQS.
- HACN determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of the family size or composition.

HACN will provide participants with the opportunity to request an informal hearing. An informal hearing may be requested for any of the following reasons:

- A determination of the family's annual or adjusted income, and the use of such income to compute the housing assistance payment.
- A determination of the appropriate utility allowance (if any) for tenant-paid utilities from HACN's utility allowance schedule.

- A determination of the family unit size under HACN's voucher subsidy standards.
- A determination to terminate assistance for a participant family because of the family's action or failure to act (see §982.552).
- A determination to terminate assistance because the participant family has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than the maximum period permitted under HACN policy and HUD rules.

An informal hearing is **not required** to be provided for any of the following reasons:

- Discretionary administrative determinations by HACN.
- General policy issues or class grievances.
- Establishment of the PHA schedule of utility allowances for families in the program.
- HACN determination not to approve an extension of the voucher term.
- HACN determination not to approve a unit or tenancy.
- HACN determination that an assisted unit is not in compliance with HQS. (However, the PHA must provide the opportunity for an informal hearing for a decision to terminate assistance for a breach of the HQS caused by the family as described in §982.551(c).)
- HACN determination that the unit is not in accordance with HQS because of the family size.
- A determination by HACN to exercise or not to exercise any right or remedy against the owner under a HAP contract.

Both the informal reviews and informal hearings may be conducted either in person or by phone.

Scheduling Reviews / Hearings

When HACN receives a request for an informal hearing, a hearing shall be scheduled in a reasonably expeditious manner. The notification of the hearing will contain:

- The date and time of the hearing
- Determination to terminate a Family Self-Sufficiency Contract, withhold supportive services, or propose forfeiture of the family's escrow account.
- The location where the hearing will be held
- The family's right to bring evidence, witnesses, legal, or other representation at the family's expense.
- The right to view any documents or evidence in the possession of HACN upon which HACN based the proposed action and, at the family's expense, to obtain a copy of such documents prior to the hearing
- A notice to the family that HACN may request a copy of any documents or evidence the family will use at the hearing

Hearing Procedures

After a hearing date is set, the family may request to reschedule only upon showing good cause, which is defined as an unavoidable conflict, which seriously affects the health, safety, or welfare of the family.

If a family does not appear at a scheduled hearing and has not rescheduled the hearing in advance, the family must contact HACN within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. HACN will reschedule the hearing only if the family can show good cause for the failure to appear.

Families have the right to:

- Present written or oral objections to HACN's determination

- Examine the documents in the file, which are the basis for HACN's action, and all documents submitted to the Hearing Officer
- Copy any relevant documents at their own expense
- Present any information or witnesses pertinent to the issue of the hearing
- Request that HACN staff be available or present at the hearing to answer questions pertinent to the case
- Be represented by legal counsel, advocate, or other designated representative at his or her own expense.
- If the family requests copies of documents relevant to the hearing, HACN will make the copies for the families and assess a charge of 25 cents per copy. In no case will the family be allowed to remove the file from HACN's office.

HACN has the right to:

- Present evidence and any information pertinent to the issue of the hearing
- Be notified if the family intends to be represented by legal counsel, advocate, or another party
- Examine and copy any documents to be used by the family prior to the hearing
- Have its attorney present
- Have staff and other witnesses present

The Informal Hearing shall be conducted by the Hearing Officer appointed by HACN who is neither the person who made or approved the decision, nor a subordinate of that person.

The hearing shall concern only the issues for which the family has received the opportunity for hearing. Evidence presented at the hearing may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

No documents may be presented which have not been provided to the other party before the hearing, if requested.

Documents include records and regulations. The Hearing Officer may ask the family for additional information and/or might adjourn the hearing in order to reconvene, at a later date, before reaching a decision.

If the family misses an appointment or deadline ordered by the Hearing Officer, the action of HACN shall take effect and another hearing will not be granted.

The Hearing Officer will determine whether the action, inaction, or decision of HACN is legal in accordance with HUD regulations and HACN's Administrative Plan based upon the evidence and testimony provided at the hearing.

Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the family will be based on a preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing.

A notice of the hearing findings shall be provided in writing to HACN and the family within 14 calendar days and shall include a clear summary of the decision and reasons for the decision. If the decision involves money owed, the amount owed, and the date the decision goes into effect.

HACN is not bound by hearing decisions:

- Which concern matters in which HACN is not required to provide an opportunity for a hearing
- Which conflict with or contradict HUD regulations or requirements
- Which conflict with or contradict Federal, State or local law
- Which exceed the authority of the person conducting the hearing

HACN shall send a letter to the participant, if it determines that HACN is not bound by the Hearing Officer's

determination within 14 calendar days from the date of the original determination. The letter shall include HACN's reasons for its decision.

All requests for a hearing, supporting documentation, and a copy of the final decision will be retained on file.

Requirements to pass the Health & Safety Inspection

Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

Housing units approved under the Section 8 Rental Assistance Programs must meet all Housing Quality Standards (HQS). The following HQS information is not a complete inspection listing but covers many broad areas to assist landlords and families to prepare for inspections. Please note: each unit inspected may present a different set of unique conditions not covered in this general list.

- All utilities must be turned on and operational.
- Light bulbs must be installed in all open sockets.
- Closets will be inspected.
- Roaches and rats will cause the unit to fail.
- All appliances must be installed and working properly.
- A general rule-of-thumb is that the building and all equipment are safe, in good repair, and operate as designed.

Kitchen:

The stove or range with oven must be present, installed, and working properly. Every knob must be present, working properly, and not broken. The oven must work.

Make sure both parts of the lock meet. Locks must be secure. Windows with storm windows must still have locks that work properly. Storm windows cannot be substituted for regular windows.

Windows must be weather-tight. Make sure panes are caulked/puttied into the frames.

Windows that allow serious drafts to enter the unit will fail.

A properly working refrigerator must be in the unit. It must have a grill or kick plate securely attached to the bottom, if designed for one.

Dishwashers and garbage disposals must work properly or be repaired, replaced or removed.

Windows:

All windows that may be reached from the outside must have a lock that works.

There cannot be any broken windows. Minor cracks may be sealed. Broken windows or windows with large cracks must be replaced.

All windows that were designed to open must be able to open, close, stay open without the use of a prop, and lock properly. If paint prevents the windows from opening, they must be pried open.

All living rooms and bedrooms must have at least one window. At least one window in each of these rooms must open.

If burglar bars are installed on bedroom windows, at least one set of burglar bars in each bedroom must be able to be opened without the assistance of tools or keys. Otherwise, they must be removed.

If screens are present on windows, they must be in good condition. Torn screens may be repaired, replaced, or removed.

Doors:

All doors leading to the outside must be airtight. Check the weather stripping. Make sure air and/or daylight do not come in around the doors (i.e., top, bottom, and sides).

All doors leading to the outside must lock securely. A chain lock is not acceptable as the only lock on the door.

Double-keyed locks, requiring a key to open from the inside are not acceptable.

Screens on doors must be in good condition. Torn screens may be repaired, replaced, or removed.

Ceiling and Walls:

Ceilings and walls must be in good condition. There can be no loose surface material like falling paper, crumbling sheetrock or plaster.

There can be no bulges or cracks that cause ceilings or walls to be unstable.

Floors:

The entire floor must be sturdy with no weak or rotting boards.

There cannot be any tripping hazards. A wrinkled carpet, loose or torn carpet or linoleum, bulges in the floor, and obstructions (i.e., cords running across thresholds/doorways) are examples of tripping hazards.

Electricity:

Electrical hazards will cause the unit to fail inspection. Electrical hazards include missing, broken, or cracked cover plates, light switch plates and receptacles, a protruding electrical box, an extension cord located where it can be stepped on, and inadequate electrical wiring. Extension cords cannot be extended from room to room.

Electrical wires located on the outside of a unit must be of the type manufactured for exterior use, marked as such, and be securely attached. If the exterior wiring is not marked for exterior use, it must be enclosed in conduit and be securely attached to the unit.

Interior electrical wiring installed on the outside of a wall must be enclosed in metal sheathing, unless is it Romex and is located high enough so that it cannot be touched by objects.

Light fixtures must be securely attached to the ceiling or wall.

The living room and bedrooms must have at least one permanent light fixture and one electrical outlet or two electrical outlets that work.

The kitchen must have one permanent light fixture and at least one electrical outlet.

The bathroom must have a permanent light fixture.

Every room must have some form of lighting (natural or artificial).

Any evidence of a short in the electrical wiring will cause the unit to fail inspection.

Three pronged outlets must be grounded or protected by a GFCI.

Exterior Light Fixtures:

Exterior outlets must have covers designed for exterior use. These outlets must be grounded.

All exterior light fixtures must have bulbs and globes, if designed for globes. Exterior/outdoor use only light bulbs must be installed in all open sockets for fixtures designed without globes.

Paint:

If the house was built prior to 1978 and there is a child under the age of six living in the unit, the unit must be free of cracking, scaling, chipping, flaking, and peeling paint. This applies to both the interior and exterior of the unit.

The defective paint must be properly stabilized in accordance with HUD Regulations on Lead Based Paint Hazards in housing receiving Federal Assistance.

Foundation and Roof:

The foundation must be sturdy, keep air and water out, and be free of severe cracks, missing bricks and signs of recent settling.

The roof must be sturdy and keep air and water out of the unit. A leak will cause the unit to fail.

Plumbing:

There must be hot and cold running water at the kitchen sink, the bathroom sink, and the bathtub/shower.

All faucets must be present and working properly. Sink sprayers must work or be repaired, replaced or removed and the hole covered.

A leak in the pipes will cause the unit to fail.

Water or sewage leaking under the house or in the yard will cause the unit to fail.

Bathroom:

Bathrooms must have a window that opens to the exterior of the unit, or an exhaust vent system that works properly.

The toilet must flush properly and be secured to the floor.

The toilet seat must be free of cracks and be secured to the toilet.

Bathrooms must have a sink with a gas trap (P-trap) under the sink.

Bathrooms must have a shower or tub that works properly.

Heating System:

Gas heaters must be vented properly or disconnected and the gas line capped.

There must be a permanently installed heat source, gas, or electric, sufficient to heat every room in the unit.

The heating system must be present and working even if the unit is inspected in the summer months.

The flue vent on a gas heater must extend through the roof to the outside and have a rain cap attached properly and securely.

The unit must have a safe system for heating the dwelling unit. Air conditioning must be in proper operating condition. The dwelling unit must not contain unvented room heaters that burn gas, oil, or kerosene. Portable electric room heaters or kitchen stoves with built-in heating units are not acceptable as a primary source of heat for units. Owners must provide a vented or electric permanent heat source.

Water Heater:

Water heater must be visible for inspection.

The water heater must be enclosed unless it is in a garage, basement, or an enclosed utility room (meaning there is not a door leading from the utility room to the exterior of the unit). An acceptable material is sheetrock or any non-flammable material.

The flue vent on the gas water heater must extend through the roof to the outside with a rain cap properly and securely attached.

A gas water heater must have oxygen. The enclosure cannot be completely airtight. There must be some form of ventilation for the enclosure. The flame has to have enough oxygen to burn blue in color. A duct pipe from the attic to the flame level can be used to provide this ventilation.

There must be a temperature/pressure relief (TPR) valve and a discharge line on all water heaters. If the water heater has a manufactured opening for the TPR valve, the valve must be installed in that opening.

If there is not a manufactured opening, the TPR valve can be located on the hot water line. However, the stem on the TPR valve must extend into the water heater and the tag must be accessible on the TPR valve.

At no point can the discharge line extend upward.

Discharge lines must meet the following guidelines and conform to at least one of the listed standards for the material used. An acceptable standard must be listed on the discharge line.

From the International Plumbing Code (IPC) 2009 (Fourth Printing):

Section 504.6 Requirements for discharge piping. The discharge piping serving a pressure relief valve, temperature relief valve, or combination thereof shall:

- Not be directly connected to the drainage system.
- Discharge through an air gap located in the same room as the water heater.
- Not be smaller than the diameter of the outlet of the valve served and shall discharge full size to the air gap.
- Serve a single relief device and shall not connect to piping serving any other relief device or equipment.
- Discharge to the floor, to the pan serving the water heater or storage tank, to a waste receptor or to the outdoors.
- Discharge in a manner that does not cause personal injury or structural damage.
- Discharge to a termination point that is readily observable by the building occupants.
- Not be trapped.
- Be installed so as to flow by gravity.
- Not terminate more than 6 inches (152 mm) above the floor or waste receptor.
- Not have a threaded connection at the end of such piping.
- Not have valves or tee fittings.
- Be constructed of those materials listed in Section 605.4 or materials tested, rated and approved for such use in accordance with ASME A112.4.1.
- 605.4 Water distribution pipe. Water distribution pipe shall conform to NSF 61 and shall conform to one of the standards listed in Table 605.4 (please see the table on the following page). All hot water distribution pipe and

Mobile Homes:

A mobile home must be tied down securely at each corner. The inspector must be able to view the tie downs.

There must be two exits from the mobile home. There must be steps by both doors. If there are three or more steps, there must be at least one handrail.

Cranks for roll out windows must be present.

Porches:

The steps to the unit must be secure. Cement blocks or loose rocks are not acceptable.

If there are three or more steps, there must be at least one handrail.

If the porch is over 30" high (at any given point), there must be a guardrail around the porch where the height exceeds 30".

Smoke Detectors:

All units must be equipped with at least one smoke detector installed on the ceiling or wall in the hall between the bedrooms.

If the bedrooms are separated by another room, there must be a working smoke detector installed on the ceiling just outside each bedroom that is separated from the other bedrooms.

A working smoke detector must be installed on each floor/level of the unit (includes basements, but excludes attics).

Units occupied by hearing-impaired persons must be equipped with a smoke detector system specifically designed for the hearing-impaired and be located in each bedroom occupied by a hearing-impaired person.

Landlords may assess penalties to any tenant who tampers with or disconnects a smoke alarm.

Unattached Buildings:

The interior of unattached garages or outbuildings will be inspected unless the garage or outbuilding has been padlocked by the owner/landlord and the family denied access. The exterior of unattached garages and outbuildings will always be inspected. Unattached buildings must be free from electrical hazards.

If the house was built prior to 1978 and there is a child under the age of six living in the unit, the unattached building must be free of deteriorated paint. If deteriorated paint is present, it must be stabilized in accordance with HUD Regulations on Lead Based Paint Hazards in housing receiving Federal Assistance.

Unattached buildings must not have any broken windows.

Unattached buildings must be free from all potentially hazardous conditions.

Basements and Storm Cellars:

Basements and storm cellars must be free from electrical hazards.

If the house was built before 1978 and there is a child under the age of 6 living in the unit the basement or storm cellar must be free from cracking, scaling, flaking, chipping and peeling paint. If deteriorated paint is present, it must be stabilized in accordance with HUD Regulations on Lead Based Paint Hazards in housing receiving Federal Assistance.

Three or more steps leading to basements or storm cellars must have at least one securely installed handrail.

Basements and storm cellars must be free from all potentially hazardous conditions.

Vermin:

A roach, bedbug, or rat infestation will fail a unit.

Exterior:

Rotted, broken, or missing boards on soffit, fascia, or eaves must be replaced or repaired.

Defective or missing siding must be repaired.

Broken and falling gutters must be replaced, repaired, or removed.

Debris, such as, trash, old appliances, and broken tree limbs should be removed from the yard.

Fences with rotted boards, protruding nails or loose panels present a hazard. These must be repaired, replaced, or removed.

General Health and Safety:

Elevators and boiler/chiller systems inspection reports will be requested.

Fraud in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is seriously concerned about Fraud in the Section 8 programs. Not following the rules including those outlined below can result in referral of any matters for investigation and the possibility of being accused of a Federal crime.

In order to provide Section 8 Housing Assistance to as many needy families as possible, all participants in the HUD sponsored programs must properly utilize Government funds and follow Departmental Policy Requirements.

Some examples of Fraud identified by the HUD Inspector General's Office include;

1. Fraud involving the Tenant

- a. Not reporting all income received by the members of the household, including jobs, second jobs, overtime, part-time jobs, child support and contributions.
- b. Not reporting additional people living in the household, including birth of children, other family members, boyfriend/girlfriend and any other individuals on the lease.
- c. Paying "extra" or side rent. Tenant rent payments for the unit cannot be more than the amount calculated by the Section 8 staff shown on the lease or amended lease. Extra payments would include rental or purchase charges for stoves and/or refrigerators by owners of the property. If any money in addition to the portion of the rent in the lease is being paid (or the landlord asks for it) please report this to the Section 8 Office at once. It will be determined if these payments are legal or not. Most of these payments are illegal and legal action can be taken against the landlord and/or against the tenant (if the side payment was mutually arranged).

2. Fraud involving the Owners/Managers

- a. Requiring extra (side) payments in excess of the family's share of the rent as stated in the lease or amended lease. Included in extra payment are:
 - i. Rental of stove and refrigerator
 - ii. Excess utilities
 - iii. Charges of possible future damages
 - iv. Splitting utility bills when two or more units are on one meter. Any payment in excess of the rent must receive prior approval by the PHA. Any furniture rental other than the stove and refrigerator must have a separate lease/contract with a copy provided to the PHA.
- b. Collecting assistance payments for units not occupied by Section 8 tenants.
- c. Bribing PHA employees to certify substandard units as standard.
- d. Not advising the PHA and accepting more rent for unit received prior to placing unit under Section 8.

3. Fraud involving PHA employees

- a. Accepting payments from owners/managers to certify substandard units as standard.
- b. Certifying as eligible otherwise ineligible applicants, or coaching applicant to falsify documents.
- c. Changing an applicant's position on the waiting list.
- d. Accepting kickbacks for owners/managers/tenants to allow rents in excess of the reasonable rent limitation.

Please report any violation of the Section 8 Programs. These violations should be reported immediately rather than to continue in non-compliance with Program requirements.

THINK ABOUT THIS.....IS FRAUD WORTH IT?

Do you realize if you commit fraud to obtain assisted housing you could be:

- Evicted from your apartment or house.
- Required to repay all overpaid rental assistance you received.
- Fined up to \$10,000.
- Imprisoned for up to five years.
- Prohibited from receiving future assistance.
- Subject to State and local government penalties.

Do You Know... You are committing fraud if you sign a form knowing that you provided false or misleading information. The information you provide on housing assistance application and recertification forms will be checked. The local housing agency, HUD, or the Office of Inspector General will check the income and asset information you provide with other Federal, State, or local governments and with private agencies.

Certifying false information is fraud. So Be Careful!

When you fill out your application and yearly recertification for assisted housing from HUD make sure your answers to the questions are accurate and honest. You must include:

- ▶ All sources of income and changes in income you or any members of your household receive, such as wages, welfare payments, social security and veterans' benefits, pensions, retirement, etc.
- ▶ Any money you receive on behalf of your children, such as child support, AFDC payments, social security for children, etc. Any increase in income, such as wages from a new job or an expected pay raise or bonus.
- ▶ All assets, such as bank accounts, savings bonds, certificates of deposit, stocks, real estate, etc., that are owned by you or any member of your household.
- ▶ All income from assets, such as interest from savings and checking accounts, stock dividends, etc.
- ▶ Any business or asset (your home) that you sold in the last two years at less than full value.
- ▶ The names of everyone, adults or children, relatives and non-relatives, who are living with you and make up your household.

(Important Notice for Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita Evacuees: HUD's reporting requirements may be temporarily waived or suspended because of your circumstances. Contact the local housing agency before you complete the housing assistance application.)

If you don't understand something on the application or recertification forms, always ask questions. It's better to be safe than sorry.

Watch Out for Housing Assistance Scams!

- Don't pay money to have someone fill out housing assistance application and recertification forms for you.
- Don't pay money to move up on a waiting list.
- Don't pay for anything that is not covered by your lease.
- Get a receipt for any money you pay.
- Get a written explanation if you are required to pay for anything other than rent (*maintenance or utility charges*).

Report Fraud - If you know of anyone who provided false information on a HUD housing assistance application or recertification or if anyone tells you to provide false information, report that person to the HUD Office of Inspector General Hotline. You can call the Hotline toll-free Monday through Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Eastern Time, at 1-800-347-3735. You can fax information to (202) 708-4829 or e-mail it to Hotline@hudoig.gov. You can write the Hotline at:

**HUD OIG Hotline, GFI
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410**

Responsibilities of the Public Housing Authority:

- Ensure that all units in the Section 8 Certificate Program and the Housing Voucher Program meet the housing quality standards.
- Inspect unit in response to Request for Lease Approval. Inform potential tenant and owner of results and necessary actions.
- Encourage tenants and owners to maintain units up to standards.
- Make inspection in response to tenant or owner complaint or request. Inform the tenant and owner of the results, necessary actions, and time period for compliance.
- Make annual inspection of the unit to ensure that it still meets the housing quality standards. Inform the tenant and owner of the results, necessary actions, and time period for compliance.

Responsibilities of the tenant:

- Live up to the terms of your lease.
- Do your part to keep the unit safe and sanitary.
- Cooperate with the owner by informing him or her of any necessary repairs.
- Cooperate with the PHA for initial, annual, and complaint inspections.

Responsibilities of the owner:

- Comply with the terms of the lease.
- Generally maintain the unit and keep it up to the housing quality standards outlined in this booklet.
- Cooperate with the tenant by responding promptly to requests for needed repairs.
- Cooperate with the PHA on initial, annual, and complaint inspections, including making necessary repairs.

Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Homeownership Program

*These Programs Provide information and
Supportive Services to enable participating families
to achieve goals;*

*Save for the future with an interest-bearing account,
economic independence and self-sufficiency,
job training and education, ★ childcare and medical,
Financial counseling, purchasing a home.*



*Reach for the stars and create YOUR future!
For more information on these programs, contact;*

Willie Roberson, Program Coordinator

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH)



What You Should Know About EIV

A Guide for Applicants & Tenants of Public Housing & Section 8 Programs

What is EIV?

The Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system is a web-based computer system that contains employment and income information of individuals who participate in HUD rental assistance programs. All Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) are required to use HUD's EIV system.

What information is in EIV and where does it come from?

HUD obtains information about you from your local PHA, the Social Security Administration (SSA), and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

HHS provides HUD with wage and employment information as reported by employers; and unemployment compensation information as reported by the State Workforce Agency (SWA).

SSA provides HUD with death, Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) information.

What is the EIV information used for?

Primarily, the information is used by PHAs (and management agents hired by PHAs) for the following purposes to:

1. Confirm your name, date of birth (DOB), and Social Security Number (SSN) with SSA.
2. Verify your reported income sources and amounts.
3. Confirm your participation in only one HUD rental assistance program.
4. Confirm if you owe an outstanding debt to any PHA.
5. Confirm any negative status if you moved out of a subsidized unit (in the past) under the Public Housing or Section 8 program.
6. Follow up with you, other adult household members, or your listed emergency contact regarding deceased household members.

EIV will alert your PHA if you or anyone in your household has used a false SSN, failed to report complete and accurate income information, or is receiving rental assistance at another address. **Remember, you may receive rental assistance at only one home!**

EIV will also alert PHAs if you owe an outstanding debt to any PHA (in any state or U.S. territory) and any negative status when you voluntarily or involuntarily moved out of a subsidized unit under the Public Housing or Section 8 program. This information is used to determine your eligibility for rental assistance at the time of application.

The information in EIV is also used by HUD, HUD's Office of Inspector General (OIG), and auditors to ensure that your family and PHAs comply with HUD rules.

Overall, the purpose of EIV is to identify and prevent fraud within HUD rental assistance programs, so that limited taxpayer's dollars can assist as many eligible families as possible. EIV will help to improve the integrity of HUD rental assistance programs.

Is my consent required in order for information to be obtained about me?

Yes, your consent is required in order for HUD or the PHA to obtain information about you. By law, you are required to sign one or more consent forms. When you sign a form HUD-9886 (*Federal Privacy Act Notice and Authorization for Release of Information*) or a PHA consent form (which meets HUD standards), you are giving HUD and the PHA your consent for them to obtain information about you for the purpose of determining your eligibility and amount of rental assistance. The information collected about you will be used only to determine your eligibility for the program, unless you consent in writing to authorize additional uses of the information by the PHA.

Note: *If you or any of your adult household members refuse to sign a consent form, your request for initial or continued rental assistance may be denied. You may also be terminated from the HUD rental assistance program.*

What are my responsibilities?

As a tenant (participant) of a HUD rental assistance program, you and each adult household member must disclose complete and accurate information to the PHA, including full name, SSN, and DOB; income information; and certify that your reported household composition (household members), income, and expense information is true to the best of your knowledge.

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Remember, you must notify your PHA if a household member dies or moves out. You must also obtain the PHA's approval to allow additional family members or friends to move in your home prior to them moving in.

What are the penalties for providing false information?

Knowingly providing false, inaccurate, or incomplete information is **FRAUD** and a **CRIME**.

If you commit fraud, you and your family may be subject to any of the following penalties:

1. Eviction
2. Termination of assistance
3. Repayment of rent that you should have paid had you reported your income correctly
4. Prohibited from receiving future rental assistance for a period of up to 10 years
5. Prosecution by the local, state, or Federal prosecutor, which may result in you being fined up to \$10,000 and/or serving time in jail.

Protect yourself by following HUD reporting requirements. When completing applications and reexaminations, you must include all sources of income you or any member of your household receives.

If you have any questions on whether money received should be counted as income or how your rent is determined, ask your PHA. When changes occur in your household income, contact your PHA immediately to determine if this will affect your rental assistance.

What do I do if the EIV information is incorrect?

Sometimes the source of EIV information may make an error when submitting or reporting information about you. If you do not agree with the EIV information, let your PHA know.

If necessary, your PHA will contact the source of the information directly to verify disputed income information. Below are the procedures you and the PHA should follow regarding incorrect EIV information.

Debts owed to PHAs and termination information reported in EIV originates from the PHA who provided you assistance in the past. If you dispute this information, contact your former PHA directly in writing to dispute this information and provide any documentation that supports your dispute. If the PHA determines that the disputed information is incorrect, the PHA will update or delete the record from EIV.

Employment and wage information reported in EIV originates from the employer. If you dispute this information, contact the employer in writing to dispute and request correction of the disputed employment and/or wage information. Provide your PHA with a copy of the letter that you sent to the employer. If you are unable to get the employer to correct the information, you should contact the SWA for assistance.

Unemployment benefit information reported in EIV originates from the SWA. If you dispute this information, contact the SWA in writing to dispute and request correction of the disputed unemployment benefit information. Provide your PHA with a copy of the letter that you sent to the SWA.

Death, SS and SSI benefit information reported in EIV originates from the SSA. If you dispute this information, contact the SSA at (800) 772-1213, or visit their website at: www.socialsecurity.gov. You may need to visit your local SSA office to have disputed death information corrected.

Additional Verification. The PHA, with your consent, may submit a third party verification form to the provider (or reporter) of your income for completion and submission to the PHA.

You may also provide the PHA with third party documents (i.e. pay stubs, benefit award letters, bank statements, etc.) which you may have in your possession.

Identity Theft. Unknown EIV information to you can be a sign of identity theft. Sometimes someone else may use your SSN, either on purpose or by accident. So, if you suspect someone is using your SSN, you should check your Social Security records to ensure your income is calculated correctly (call SSA at (800) 772-1213); file an identity theft complaint with your local police department or the Federal Trade Commission (call FTC at (877) 438-4338, or you may visit their website at: <http://www.ftc.gov>). Provide your PHA with a copy of your identity theft complaint.

Where can I obtain more information on EIV and the income verification process?

Your PHA can provide you with additional information on EIV and the income verification process. You may also read more about EIV and the income verification process on HUD's Public and Indian Housing EIV web pages at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/pih/thiip/iv.cfm>.

The information in this Guide pertains to applicants and participants (tenants) of the following HUD-PIH rental assistance programs:

1. Public Housing (24 CFR 960); and
2. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), (24 CFR 982); and
3. Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation (24 CFR 882); and
4. Project-Based Voucher (24 CFR 983)

My signature below is confirmation that I have received this Guide.

Signature

Date