

# HCHA Assistance- Landlords & Owners

## Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA)

promotes innovative housing communities and encourages clients to achieve self-sufficiency.

## Steps for Landlord Program Participation



### Steps to Landlord Program Participation:

- Finding a Tenant
- Determining Rent Amount
- Approving a Tenant
- Agreement to Enter Lease
- Affordability
- Initial Inspection
- Signing the HAP and lease
  - Lease Requirements
- Receiving the Housing Assistance Payment
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- Annual Housing Quality Standards Inspections and Complaint Inspections
- If the Family Vacates the Unit Before the End of the Lease Term
- Procedures to Complete an Owner/Management Change

# Landlords & Owners

## 1 Finding a Tenant:

Eligible families are issued assistance and will approach you via ads you have put in the paper or rent signs placed in yards. You can also list your available property with the Housing Authority by completing a standard rental listing form. Listing your property does not obligate you to rent to families with vouchers; it simply provides you the opportunity to advertise to them.

## 2 Determining Rent Amount:

The rent requested must be comparable to similar, unassisted units in the area of the rental property. A rent reasonableness study will be conducted to determine if the requested rent is reasonable as compared to an unassisted unit when considering the location, quality, size, type, age, amenities, maintenance and utilities to be provided.

## 3 Approving a Tenant:

Upon receiving calls from assisted families, you are encouraged to screen them on the basis of the family's tenancy history. The families are responsible for paying application fees and deposits. HCHA's admission of a family to participate in the program is not a representation by HCHA about the families expected behavior or the family's suitability for tenancy.

## 4 Agreement to Enter Lease:

Once you have selected a person or family and collected the appropriate fees and deposits, you will need to complete the owner packet that will be provided by the prospective tenant. The packet includes an RTA (Request for Tenancy Approval), W9 Form, Tax ID form, Lease Requirement form and Lead based paint form. Complete the packet and return it to the Housing Authority. Once the owner packet is returned to the Housing office, the counselor of the family will determine if the unit is affordable for the family.

## 5 Affordability:

family may not pay more than 40 percent of their adjusted monthly income towards rent and utilities.

## 6 Initial Inspection of the Unit:

If the unit meets the affordability of the family, a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection will be requested. The inspection should be completed within five to seven business days after receipt of the completed RTA. The HQS Inspections coordinator will contact the owner by phone to schedule the inspection. All utilities must be connected and the unit must be vacant before an initial inspection can be conducted. The requested rent amount must be reasonable as compared to other similar unassisted units in the area. The Housing Authority must approve all rents requested. See HQS Checklist for more details about the inspection.

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## 7 Signing the HAP and lease:

After the unit passes an HQS inspection and the rent amount is approved, the rent portions will be calculated and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract will be prepared. It will take an average of 5-10 days after the unit passes inspection to prepare this paperwork. A notice will be sent to tenant. The notice will indicate the approved rent amount, effective date, the family's rent portion and the housing assistance payment amount. A copy of HAP contract is sent to the owner. Housing Assistance Payments will not begin until both the Housing Assistance Payment Contract and the lease are signed and returned to the Housing Authority office. See Lease Requirements for more information on approved leases.

## Lease Requirements:

The following defines the lease requirements under the HCV Program:

- The lease between tenant and owner must be in a standard form used by the owner and that is generally used for other unassisted tenants in the premises or locality.
  - The terms and conditions of the lease must be consistent with State and local law.
  - The lease must specify utilities and appliances supplied by the owner and utilities and appliances supplied by the family.
  - The lease must include the HUD required tenancy addendum. (The Housing Authority will provide.) The terms of the tenancy addendum prevail over any other provisions of the lease.
  - The rent requested must be reasonable as compared to similar unassisted units and approved by the Housing Authority.
- The following defines the lease requirements under the HCV Program:
- The lease effective date and approved rent amount must match the Housing Assistance Payment Contract.
  - The tenant must return both the signed lease and the signed Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contract and Tenancy Addendum to the Housing Authority Office.

## 8 Receiving the Housing Assistance Payment:

The effective date of the first housing assistance payment will be the first (1st) of the month, after the unit passes inspection. The tenant is responsible for any rents due prior to the contract effective date. The owner can expect to receive the first Housing Assistance Payment 30 to 45 days after the unit passes inspection. Payments thereafter will be mailed the first day of the month.

## 9 Other Information Required from Owner/Manager:

In order to ensure we are paying the legal owner of any property, we must verify proof of ownership by means of a Recorded Deed. If a professional management firm represents the owner, we require a fully executed management agreement verifying this arrangement. We also need a Tax I. D. number or Social Security number for tax purposes. No housing assistance payment will be made prior to our receiving these important documents.

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## 10 Adjustments to Family's Rent Portion:

During the term of the Lease, if the family has a change in income or family composition they are required to report it within 10 days of occurrence. Rent portions will be adjusted according to the families' adjusted income. A Rent Change Notice will be mailed to the family and owner to reflect any changes in rent portions.

## 11 Annual Review of Family Income and Composition:

Federal regulations require housing authorities to review a family's income and composition annually. The rent portions will be re-calculated and a Rent Change Notice will be mailed to the owner and family.

## 12 Annual Housing Quality Standards Inspections and Complaint Inspections:

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## 13 If the Family Vacates the Unit Before the End of the Lease Term:

Once you have selected a person or family and collected the appropriate fees and deposits, you will need to complete the owner packet that will be provided by the prospective tenant. The packet includes an RTA (Request for Tenancy Approval), W9 Form, Tax ID form, Lease Requirement form and Lead based paint form. Complete the packet and return it to the Housing Authority. Once the owner packet is returned to the Housing office, the counselor of the family will determine if the unit is affordable for the family.

## 14 Procedures to Complete an Owner/Management Change:

The current owner/manager needs to provide a letter requesting the Housing Authority's consent to re-assign the HAP contract to the new owner/management company. The new owner must provide a letter agreeing to comply with the HAP contract and complete a W-9 and Tax ID form in order for payments to be transferred.

## How to contact our Office :

Each family is assigned a housing counselor. See the staff listing to determine which counselor serves the family residing in your unit. If any repeated issues or problems occur with the tenant, contact the appropriate housing counselor first.

For more information, please visit the Go Section 8 web site: [www.gosection8.com](http://www.gosection8.com)

[View a the Case Manager Chart.](#)

To reach a Case Manager or Relocation Specialist call:  
Phone: 713-578-2100