



WELCOME TO THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE
CITY OF BASTROP'S
SECTION 8
HOUSING CHOICE
VOUCHER PROGRAM

Housing Authority of the City of Bastrop

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Bastrop Housing Authority does not discriminate against persons on the basis of disability status in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its federally assisted programs and activities.

Housing vouchers- how do they function? The housing choice voucher program places the choice of housing in the hands of the individual family. Voucher holders are encouraged to consider several housing choices to secure the best housing for the family needs.

The PHA determines the payment standard (based on the unit size for which the family is eligible) that is the amount generally needed to rent a moderately-priced dwelling unit in the local housing market and that is used to calculate the amount of housing assistance a family will receive. However the payment standard does not limit and does not affect the amount of rent a landlord may charge or the family may pay. A family which receives a housing voucher can select a unit with a rent that is below or above the payment standard. The housing voucher family must pay 30% of its monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities, and if the unit rent is greater than the payment standard, the family is required to pay the additional amount. By law, whenever a family moves to a new unit where the rent exceeds the payment standard, the family may not pay more than 40 percent of its adjusted monthly income for rent. **(If the family's portion of rent would exceed 40% of its adjusted monthly income, the family may not lease the unit).**

The rent subsidy: The PHA calculates the maximum amount of housing assistance allowable. The maximum housing assistance is generally the lesser of the payment standard minus 30% of the family's monthly A family's housing needs change over time with changes in family size, job locations, and for other reasons. The housing choice voucher program is designed to allow families to move without the loss of housing assistance. Moves are permissible as long as the family notifies the PHA ahead of time, terminates its existing lease within the lease provisions, and finds acceptable alternate housing.

How do I find a unit to rent? Participants are encouraged to check rental listings in the local newspaper, contact real estate agencies and drive around town. Additionally, the Housing Authority maintains a book of rental listings that accept Section 8 in the Bastrop area. Please contact our office to look through this book or request a list of owners who accept Section 8. If you find a unit but the landlord is not familiar with Section 8, please refer them to our office so that we may explain the program and answer any questions that they may have.

I found a unit I want to rent—what next? When the voucher holder finds a unit that it wishes to occupy and reaches an agreement with the landlord over the lease terms, the voucher holder and landlord will complete a "Request for Lease Approval Form" and return it to the Housing Authority office. The Housing Authority will use this information to determine whether the rent requested is within the family's payment standard and is reasonable based on the local market. If the rent is acceptable, the Housing Authority will schedule the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection to ensure that the unit meets an acceptable level of health and safety requirements. Once the unit passes the HQS inspection, the voucher holder and landlord will then sign the necessary paperwork so that the family may move in.

Can I move and continue to receive housing choice voucher assistance? A family's housing needs change over time with changes in family size, job locations and for other reasons. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is designed to allow families to move without the loss of housing assistance. Moves are permissible as long as the family notifies the PHA ahead of time, terminates its existing lease within the lease provisions, and finds acceptable alternate housing.

Portability: Under the voucher program, voucher-holders may choose to find a unit anywhere in the United States where there is a housing agency administering a Voucher Program. If the voucher-holder lived in the jurisdiction of the PHA issuing the voucher at the time they applied for housing assistance, the portability feature may be used as soon as they receive a voucher. For voucher-holders that did not live in the jurisdiction of the PHA at the time they applied for housing assistance, the family is required to lease a unit within that jurisdiction for the first twelve months of assistance. A family that wishes to move to another jurisdiction must consult with the PHA that currently administers its housing assistance to make arrangements to use the portability feature.

The current (or initial) PHA will verify that the family has terminated the lease within the lease provisions and will assist the family in locating the next (or receiving) PHA. The initial PHA will forward the HUD Form 50058 *Family Report*, HUD Form-52665 *Family Portability Information* and other documents required to the receiving PHA.

The family must then contact the receiving PHA to schedule an orientation or briefing and request assistance in locating housing in the local area. The receiving PHA will notify the initial PHA that either (a) the receiving PHA will not absorb the family and will bill the initial PHA monthly on behalf of the family or (b) the receiving PHA will absorb the family into their program.

The participant must locate approved housing and complete the necessary paperwork with the receiving PHA and landlord before the voucher expires. If the participant does not locate approved housing before the voucher expires, the receiving PHA will notify the initial PHA that the voucher expired. The voucher will then be reissued to another family in the issuing PHA's jurisdiction.

Neighboring Public Housing Authorities that administer the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program:

Elgin Housing Authority 512-281-2772

Smithville Housing Authority 512-360-3286

Austin Housing Authority 512-477-1314

Travis County Housing Authority 512-480-8245

Roles of tenant, landlord, Housing Authority and HUD: Once a PHA approves an eligible family's housing unit, the family and the landlord sign a lease and, at the same time, the landlord and the PHA sign a housing assistance payments contract that runs for the same term as the lease. This means that everyone -- tenant, landlord and PHA -- has obligations and responsibilities under the voucher program.

Tenant's Obligations: When a family selects a housing unit, and the PHA approves the unit and lease, the family signs a lease with the landlord for at least one year. The tenant will be required to pay the a security deposit charged by the landlord. After the first year, the landlord may initiate a new lease or allow the family to remain in the unit on a month-to-month lease unless the family decides to move to another unit. The family is expected to comply with the lease and the program requirements, pay its share of rent on time, maintain the unit in good condition and immediately notify the PHA of any changes in income or family composition.

Landlord's Obligations: The role of the landlord in the 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 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 PHA.

Housing Authority's Obligations: The PHA administers the voucher program locally. The PHA provides a family with the housing assistance that enables the family to seek out suitable housing and the PHA enters into a contract with the landlord to provide housing assistance payments on behalf of the family. If the landlord fails to meet the owner's obligations under the lease, the PHA has the right to terminate assistance payments. The PHA must reexamine the family's income and composition at least annually and must inspect each unit at least annually to ensure that it meets minimum housing quality standards.

HUD's Role: To cover the cost of the program, HUD provides funds to allow PHAs to make housing assistance payments on behalf of the families. HUD also pays the PHA a fee for the costs of administering the program. HUD monitors PHA administration of the program to ensure program rules are properly followed.

If you have any questions regarding the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (512) 321-3398 OR TTY:800-735-2989 (800-RELAY TX) .