



# Oakland Housing Authority



## Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)

### FACT SHEET

Information provided is current as of  
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#### OHA MISSION STATEMENT

To assure the availability of quality housing for low income persons and to promote the civic involvement and economic self-sufficiency of residents and to further the expansion of affordable housing within Oakland.



#### What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program?

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, also known as Section 8, is a housing assistance program that allows eligible, low-income families to rent housing units in the private market. The Housing Authority provides rental subsidies directly to the owner on behalf of the assisted family.

The program has been designed to achieve these major objectives:

- To Provide safe, decent, and sanitary housing for very low income families while maintaining the tenant's portion of the rent at an affordable level.
- To Promote freedom of housing choice and de-concentration of very low-income families.
- To Provide an incentive to property owners to rent to very low-income families by offering timely housing assistance payments on behalf of the household.
- To Encourage self-sufficiency of participant families.

#### Where does the Housing Authority get the money to pay rental subsidies?

The Oakland Housing Authority receives funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

#### How many families are assisted with Section 8 rental subsidy by the Housing Authority?

Approximately 14,000 families are currently assisted through various Section 8 programs administered by the Oakland Housing Authority.

#### Who is eligible for a Section 8 housing subsidy?

Families, seniors (62 years of age or older), disabled, or single persons who are "very low-income" may be eligible for participation in the Section 8 program. At initial eligibility, the family's income must not exceed 50% of the median income for the area, adjusted for family size. All adults must also pass a criminal history screening.

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## **How much of the rent does the tenant pay? How much does the Housing Authority pay?**

In general, the tenant pays 30% of their “adjusted family income” toward their rent. The Housing Authority pays directly to the property owner the difference between the unit’s contracted rent and the family’s portion of the rent. The difference is referenced as a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).

## **How does the tenant select a unit?**

Similar to anyone renting a home in the private market, the family has the responsibility to find their own rental unit. OHA does offer some rental listing resources.

## **When a unit is selected, what happens next?**

A housing inspector then inspects the unit to determine if the unit is in compliance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and whether the requested contract rent is “reasonable.”

## **What happens if the family is not abiding by the terms of the lease?**

The owner is responsible for enforcement of the lease. The Housing Authority is not a party to the lease. The owner has the right, under the terms of the lease to terminate the lease and/or evict the family. However, during the first year of the lease, the right to do this is somewhat restricted.

## **What is annual recertification?**

Annual “recertification” is the yearly re-verification of a family’s income and composition. This is required by HUD to ensure that each family is paying their appropriate share of the rent and is occupying the proper sized unit. Annual inspection of their unit also occurs during this process. As an MTW agency, OHA allows elderly and disabled families on fixed incomes to be recertified every 3 years.

## **What is Portability?**

The process by which a family obtains a voucher from one Public Housing Authority (PHA) and uses it to lease a unit in the jurisdiction of another PHA is known as portability. A participant family that has been issued a Section 8 voucher has the right to use tenant-based voucher assistance to lease a unit anywhere in the United States provided the unit is located within the jurisdiction of a PHA administering a tenant-based voucher program (which some do not). Certain other conditions may apply.

To request to port their voucher to a receiving jurisdiction, a family must: 1) confirm that the receiving jurisdiction is accepting incoming ports; 2) provide to their current landlord appropriate notice to vacate; and 3) complete a portability packet with OHA.

The receiving PHA has the option of administering the family’s voucher for the initial PHA or absorbing the family into its own program. OHA currently has 1,100 vouchers being administered by receiving PHA’s. The majority of OHA participants who port in or out of our jurisdiction, move to or come from the

**For more information about the HCV program please contact  
OHA’s Leased Housing Department at (510) 587-2100.**



**Oakland Housing  
Authority**