

Oak Leaflet

The section 8 Landlord newsletter



Oakland Housing
Authority

ISSUE 3

January / February / March 2009

Letter from the Director

This is the first issue of our owners' newsletter of 2009. We take this opportunity to thank you for housing many of Oakland's neediest citizens. Without your participation as an owner or manager, it would not be possible for us to assist the 11,000+ families on the Section 8 Program. We hope you enjoyed the holidays and on behalf of the Leased Housing Department, we wish you health and well-being in the coming year.

The good news this month is that our payment issues for owners are nearly resolved. For November, fewer than 8/10ths of 1% of Housing Assistance Payment contracts were affected. Unfortunately, there are still about 80 owners who were not paid timely for the month. The number is going down every month, but we won't be satisfied until it is down to zero. We apologize to those of you who have been inconvenienced because of this problem.

This month's issue features the Initial Inspections Team. When a participant submits a Request for Tenancy Approval, OHA's Initial Inspection staff schedules an appointment and inspects the unit to ensure that it meets Housing

(Letter from the Director
continues on back cover)



Initial Inspections Team: back row, left to right: Ken Sakurai, Loida Horton, Dorinda Shelton, Clarence Patterson; front row, left to right: Frances Watson, Berie Grey, Christabell Malloy and Donna Whitmore. Not pictured: Roxane Congi, Amber Willis

Meet the Initial Inspection Team

Introducing the talented Initial Inspection Team of the Leased Housing Department. Feel free to contact them with any questions or concerns.

Your introduction as an owner to the Oakland Housing Authority is usually through leasing up on the Section 8 program. Let our friendly and capable team members guide you from beginning to end through the process.

We perform the following services for you:

- Receive and review Requests for Tenancy Approval (RTA Desk)
- Schedule and conduct initial inspection appointments
- Perform rent reasonableness and negotiate rents for new contracts
- Obtain signatures and all the necessary documents to complete the transaction
- Process files for payment
- Offer one-on-one service for owners and landlords
- Serve as a resource for owners and landlords

RTA Desk: (510) 874-1569 Email: rtadesk@oakha.org

Customer Service: (510) 587-2100

show Me The Money

We know that your investment in your property is crucial to your financial well being. That is why we take seriously our commitment to you to always diligently perform a rent reasonableness on your property so that we can always give you the highest and best rent offer.

HUD regulations state that no Housing Assistance Payment contract (HAP) can be approved until the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) has determined the rent for the unit is reasonable. The purpose of the rent reasonableness test is to ensure that a fair rent is paid for each unit rented under the Section 8 program. HUD regulations define a reasonable rent as one that does not exceed the rent charged for comparable, unassisted units in the same market area.

We are dedicated to always offering you a fair rent, this year we contracted with a national company, GoSection8, to provide our staff with professional tools to perform rent reasonableness evaluations. GoSection8 fine tunes the rent reasonableness process, allowing adjustments based on the market factors that impact rent in your area ensuring an “apples-to-apples” rent comparison of your property.

GoSection8 considers and adjusts for factors such as:

Number of bedrooms

Number of baths

Location: Usually within a one mile radius

Size: Approximate square footage

Age and condition: New, remodeled, well maintained etc.

Property type: House, duplex, 3plex/4plex, condo/townhouse, apartment

Amenities: Parking, laundry facilities, appliances provided etc

Utilities: Utilities paid by tenant or provided by owner

Maintenance services: Owner provided pest control, landscaping etc

Another factor that can affect the rent negotiation, the tenant's ability to pay. HUD regulations state that a participant cannot pay more than 40% of their income towards rent at move in. This usually occur when the participant is trying to rent a property larger than their voucher size (has 2 bedroom voucher and the property is a 3 bedroom.) When going through your normal screening process you should ask the participant what bedroom size is on their voucher.

one Meter, multiple units who Pays?

The Oakland Housing Authority Administrative Plan states that in units where the tenant must pay for utilities, each unit must have separate metering device(s) for measuring utility consumption and direct billing by the utility service provider. If a separate meter is not installed, it will be the owner's responsibility under the Section 8 HAP contract to pay for all utilities whether or not the other units are occupied. This requirement is applicable even if there are agreements with open-market tenants to pay for utilities; the Section 8 participant is not allowed to be a party such agreements. During rent negotiations, owner-paid utilities will be taken into consideration.

Leased Housing Making History

The Leased Housing Department expanded outreach to the Section 8 program owners and property managers by holding its first-ever Landlord Advisory Council (LAC) meetings on November 6 and November 13. The first meetings included Director of Leased Housing Mark Stephenson, Assistant Director Michelle Hasan, and Leased Housing staffers Ron Scarborough, Valerie Winston-Moore, and MeLani Daos who spent several months planning and preparing for the significant event.

These meetings were much anticipated by both Leased Housing and the owners/property managers. The landlords are valuable Section 8 clientele—without them, there would be no Section 8 program. Attendees consisted of a mix of owners and property managers of single-unit rental houses up to a 97 multi-unit complex. As a result of the large number of volunteers willing to serve on the LAC, the group had to be broken into smaller meeting groups to facilitate the exchange of ideas between all parties.

The main focus of the LAC meetings is to improve communication between the owners and OHA. The meetings met all expectations as both parties enjoyed a free flow of ideas. Leased Housing staff heard owners' concerns with program procedures. Owners made a number of suggestions including simplifying the rent increase process and expanding communications options. The meetings afforded Director Mark Stephenson an opportunity to present Section 8 initiatives and get direct input from the owners on new program proposals.

A number of owners called and e-mailed immediately after the meetings to express their appreciation for the opportunity to be heard. They felt their comments were heeded and hoped their suggestions could be implemented for the betterment of the Section 8 programs, OHA, owners, residents, and the broader Oakland community. Future meetings are already scheduled to meet with members in 2009.

Branching out

OHA Owner Briefing schedule

for Property Owners & Managers
Section 8 Housing Choice
Voucher Program

January

Wednesday, Jan 21, 2009

11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Fair Housing, presented by SEEDS

It's Your Own Lease, presented by
Donna Whitmore, OHA

Wednesday, Jan 28, 2009

6 – 8 p.m.

Nuisance Ordinance

Presented by Clifford Freid

February

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

6 – 8 p.m.

How to Request a Rent Increase

Presented by OHA Staff

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

GOsection8.com

March

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

PG&E

Energy Conservation

Presented by Frances Thompson

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

6 – 8 p.m.

Housing Quality Standards

OHA Staff

RSVP Today! Call 510-874-1560 or
email: s8rentalowner@oakha.org



Leafy Tips

Be Energy Aware

- We can all take part in creating a cleaner environment and reducing dependence on foreign sources of power. There are many things that can be done and you can start right now.**
- Unplug energy vampires (also known as standby power) like your cell phone charger.
 - Purchase *energy star* appliances whenever available. www.energystar.gov
 - Install *low-flow showerheads* and faucet aerators. (Don't confuse standard screen aerators with low-flow)
 - Keep refrigerator gaskets and coils clean.
 - Clean lint filters in dryers after each use.
 - Try using clotheslines and small drying racks.
 - Wash full loads of clothes. Try experimenting with cold water detergents.
 - Opt for *day lighting* instead of electric lighting.
 - Replace standard bulbs with *compact fluorescent bulbs*.
- For more information visit: www.1.eere.energy.gov/femp/services/http/campaign_materials.html

Community Resources

Alameda County Lead Poisoning
Prevention Program
(510) 567-8280
www.ACLPPP.org

Eden Information & Referral, Inc.
(510) 537-2710
www.edenir.org







Rental Housing Association of
Northern Alameda County
(510) 893-9873
www.rhanac.org

EBMUD
866-403-2683
www.ebmud.com

SEEDS (Services that
Encourage Effective
Dialogue and Solutions):
(510) 548-2377
www.seedssrc.org

PGE: Customer Support
800 743-2500
www.PGE.com

Did you know....

-  ...New York City has the largest Housing Authority. They have 97,743 contracts under the Section 8 program.
-  ...7% of the electricity used in the State of California goes to pumping and distributing water. (Repair all water leaks.)
-  ...microwaves use 66% less energy than conventional ovens.
-  ...recycling aluminum cans save 95% of the energy required to make cans from scratch. (Recycle)
-  ...Section 8 participants cannot pay more than 40% of their income toward the rent and utilities during the initial lease term.
-  ...Section 8 Tenants are not subject to Rental Control

(Letter from the Director *continued from front cover*)

Quality Standards. They will negotiate the rent and set up the new contract in our system. These staff members are usually the first contact a new landlord has with the Section 8 program. Team members are OHA's ambassadors to the community and we depend on them to represent the agency with the utmost professionalism.

There is also information on "rent reasonableness"; which is the procedure we use to determine contract rent amounts. Think market rate! The article is entitled "Show Me the Money." Our goal is to make sure you are paid fairly in comparison with other private rental units in the area with similar amenities and like conditions.

In the first quarter of 2009 we will discontinue the use of the "model lease" that we have provided you for the past several years. This new practice will likely enable you to use the same lease that you use for your non Section 8 tenants in your properties. You will need to include HUD's Tenancy Addendum as part of every lease that you execute with Section 8 participants.

Finally, we want you all to know that we convened two meetings of the Landlord Advisory Council. The feedback that the owners and managers provided to us will be fully utilized in developing future plans. We are looking forward to working with the group in 2009!

Mark Stephenson, Director of Leased Housing



Oakland Housing Authority

MAIN OFFICES

1619 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94612
510-874-1500

LEASED HOUSING

1805 Harrison Street
Oakland, 94612-3403
510-587-2100

WWW.OAKHA.ORG
s8rentalowner@oakha.org

Language translation services are available in 151 languages at all offices at no cost.

Los servicios de traducción en 151 idiomas están disponibles en todas las oficinas sin ningún costo.

Trương chính thông dịch đầy đủ cho tới 151 tiếng nói miễn phí cho quý vị đang có tại nhiều văn phòng gần đây.

所有辦公地點都會免費提供 151 種的外語翻譯服務。