

# Landlords

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the requirements for a property to qualify for the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program?

The unit must be decent, safe, sanitary, and meet our rent reasonableness requirement.

### What types of units are accepted on the Housing Choice Voucher program?

Vouchers can be used to rent single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, apartments, mobile homes, condominiums, townhouses and cottages. Other housing types, such as group homes, shared rentals, a room in a boarding house or someone's home are not acceptable.

### Where can participants lease property?

The City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program serves all of Kenton County. Participants wanting to lease outside our jurisdiction will have to find out whether or not they qualify to be transferred or "ported" to the housing authority in the jurisdiction in which they want to lease.

### How do I notify the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program that I have property to rent?

You may call our office at (859) 292-2188. Unit listings are updated on the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of each month.

### What to do when I find someone who is interested in renting my unit?

We recommend that you screen the prospective tenant carefully to insure that you are making a good selection. We do not screen families for suitability or behavior; families are screened only for income eligibility and criminal background. *You may use any or all of the following screening procedures to approve or deny an applicant:*

- Credit Check
- Criminal Check
- Home Visits
- Landlord References
- Employment

We strongly encourage landlords to screen prospective tenants and to use all or any of the above screening methods as long as they do not discriminate. Discrimination includes any tenant selection based solely on race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin or handicap (disability).

Your satisfaction as a landlord will be directly proportionate to how well you screen potential renters. *Screening and selection are completely landlord responsibilities.*

### What rent amount can I ask for?

When you complete the "Request for Tenancy Approval" form you will fill in your proposed rent. Our office will do a "rent reasonableness" comparison. If your rent is considered unreasonable for

the area the office will notify you to negotiate a more favorable rent amount. **The rent must be comparable to rents charged for similar private market units in the area.**

### **If my rent is more than the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program can approve, can the tenant pay the difference?**

**No.** Per HUD regulations, the landlord may not charge or accept any rental payment that is not authorized by the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program.

### **Does the Family Pay For Utilities?**

Yes, unless the landlord includes utilities in the rent. The landlord decides which utilities they will provide as a part of the rent and which utilities the family will be responsible for. Utility service, including water, must be on at the time of the move-in inspection. Utilities that the voucher participant pays for cannot be master metered or shared with another unit or common area and must be billed directly by the utility service provider.

### **When will my unit be inspected?**

An initial Housing Quality Standards inspection will be scheduled with the property owner within 14 days from when the "Request for Tenancy Approval" form is completed and returned to our office, provided the unit is empty, clean and in inspection-ready condition.

### **What are the terms of the lease?**

The City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program requires the tenant and landlord to enter into a written lease agreement. The initial term of the lease must be for 1 year. After the first year, the lease will automatically convert to a month-to-month basis. The landlord must agree to include the HUD Lease Addendum as an attachment to the lease. If the landlord's lease contradicts anything in the HUD Tenancy Addendum or program regulations, the addendum and program regulations shall prevail.

### **When can I expect my first check from the Housing Choice Voucher program?**

After the lease and Housing Assistance Payment contract have been signed and returned, the contract is processed for payment. Generally, the first payment takes approximately 15 to 30 days. We process checks on the 1st and 15th of the month. Payments will be made via direct deposit into your savings or checking account each month. You may set up a landlord access account to view an electronic record of your payments.

### **What should I do once my property has been rented?**

If you listed your property on our available units list please call us at (859) 292-2188 as soon as possible, so we can remove it from our list.

### **Who pays the security deposit?**

The tenant is responsible for paying the security deposit. Under no circumstances does the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program pay a tenant's security deposit.

### **How much may I charge for security deposit?**

Landlords are allowed to charge a security deposit similar to what is being charged to renters in the private rental market. Landlord's security deposit amounts charged to a Housing Choice Voucher

family must be consistent with the unassisted tenants on the private open market. The amount of deposit charged must be in accordance with state and local laws.

### **If a tenant damages my property, is the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program responsible?**

As with any tenancy, repairs for tenant-caused damages are the responsibility of the tenant. The City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program does not reimburse the landlord for tenant caused damages. You should collect a security deposit and enforce your lease provision in the same way you would with any other tenant(s) you rent to on the open market. You should seek reimbursement from the tenant for any damage repair costs paid on the tenant's behalf, which may include taking them to court. If the unit does not pass the annual inspection because of something your tenant is responsible for, then your tenant will need to have repairs made within a reasonable amount of time (generally 30 days unless an emergency 24 hours item) or the family's assistance will be terminated.

You can evict a tenant if they are damaging your unit. In addition, if a tenant damages a unit beyond normal wear and tear, they can lose their rental assistance.

### **What are some of the benefits of being a Housing Choice Voucher Landlord?**

Free advertisement and marketing of available units: Landlords are welcome to list their units with us.

Landlords select their own tenants: Landlords are encouraged to screen tenants. Landlords are not required to rent to a family who does not meet their non-discriminatory screening requirements.

Quality Housing: The City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program conducts an initial property inspection, annual inspections and special inspections upon the request of the landlord or tenant. Along with the landlord's periodic checks, these inspections help insure that the property is maintained properly.

Guaranteed Monthly Housing Assistance Payments: The portion of rent paid by the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program is paid to the landlord timely each month via direct deposit.

Reduced Amount of paperwork: the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program prepares all Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contracts. Landlords complete the Request for Tenancy Approval forms and provide an assisted lease. Most of the required paperwork is prepared by the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program.

### **What are my rights and responsibilities as a landlord?**

Landlords have the same rights and responsibilities in the Housing Choice Voucher program as they have with any open market renter, including:

- Maintain your property in good condition.
- Complete all necessary repairs within a reasonable amount of time upon request by the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program or tenant. The amount of time that is

considered reasonable depends upon the nature of the problem. Usually 30 days with the exception of emergency items.

- Set reasonable rules about the use of unit and common areas.
- Except for emergencies or tenant's requested repairs, do not enter a unit without tenant's permission and/or proper notice.
- Collect appropriate security deposit as directed under the program and use it only in accordance with local and state law.
- Comply with fair housing and equal housing opportunity requirements.
- Enforce tenant obligations under your dwelling lease (be fair, firm and consistent)
- Take action through the court system in order to evict a tenant when they violate the lease (no self-help evictions tactics).

### **What should I expect from Housing Choice Voucher tenants?**

- Pay their rent on time.
- Keep the unit clean.
- Maintain exterior of residence and yard in single-family homes.
- Avoid illegal activities by household members and guest.
- Allow Housing Choice Voucher Inspectors access to the unit to conduct inspections.
- Permit landlord and designated repairmen access to the unit for repairs.
- Avoid damage to property by household members and guests.
- Refrain from disturbing others (respecting the right to peaceful enjoyment by their neighbors).
- Allow only those occupants on the lease to reside in the unit.
- Comply with terms and conditions of the dwelling lease and tenancy addendum.

### **How can I receive additional information regarding the Housing Choice Voucher Program?**

You may call the City of Covington Housing Choice Voucher program at (859) 292-2188 for additional information or to request a landlord information packet.

