

## Landlord Incentive Program

### Frequently Asked Questions

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#### **HOW DOES THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM WORK?**

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is a federal assistance program to help low-income families afford safe, decent, and sanitary housing. Families and individuals with vouchers find their own housing and pay a percentage of their income for rent to the landlord. A housing subsidy pays the landlord the rest of the rent. The assistance comes from HUD and is paid out through the housing authority.

#### **WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM OFFER TO LANDLORDS?**

Landlords are guaranteed either all or a portion of the rent each month. The intent of the program is to lessen the burden on the family's budget for housing costs, helping them to better afford their rental portion, resulting in a more consistent, timely and full payment to owners. Additionally, an annual inspection of the unit helps alert landlords of required and/or recommended repairs; ideally, timely maintenance will reduce costly investments. Although tenant screening is the landlord's responsibility, BC/ACHA will also release information to prospective landlords with current and previous information for a Section 8 participant, if available.

If a family's income decreases (i.e. loss of employment, reduced hours, etc.) the amount of rent the family pays would decrease, and the amount of rent the housing authority pays would increase. This means the landlord would continue to receive the full contract rent.

#### **WHAT ARE THE STEPS INVOLVED IN RENTING TO A HCV TENANT:**

- ♦ A family with a HCV voucher views your apartment and wants to rent it.
- ♦ You screen the tenant(s) to make sure they are suitable.
- ♦ You agree to lease to the tenants and fill out a Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) form and submit it to BCACHA office for approval.
- ♦ BCACHA checks to make sure the family can afford the rent and the rent is reasonable compared to other rents in the community.
- ♦ BCACHA send an inspector to check the unit and make sure it meets program standards.
- ♦ After the unit passes inspection, you sign a 12 month lease with the tenant and the tenant moves in. Send a copy of the lease to BCACHA.
- ♦ BCACHA will send you a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract.
- ♦ You sign the contract with BCACHA and return it.
- ♦ The family pays its portion of the rent and BCACHA pays the rest.

## **WHAT KIND OF UNIT CAN BE RENTED?**

Virtually any kind of decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling unit can be rented. Units can include apartments, duplexes, single family homes and manufactured homes. The unit must also be "rent reasonable", and be located within Ada County.

## **CAN LANDLORDS RENT TO FAMILY MEMBERS?**

The owner (including a principal or other interested party) cannot be a relative of any member of the family, unless the PHA has determined (and has notified the owner and the family of such determination) that approving rental of the unit, notwithstanding such relationship, would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities. The incentive payment does not apply to these circumstances.

## **DO I GET A BONUS FOR EVERY UNIT?**

Yes. The bonus is paid for each new unit submitted by the landlord.

## **I HAVE A UNIT LOCATED IN CANYON COUNTY, WILL THE UNIT BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE INCENTIVE PROGRAM?**

No. Only units within the Ada County jurisdiction will be eligible for the incentive.

## **HOW MUCH RENT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY PROPERTY?**

You determine the asking price for the unit. However, the rent must be reasonable compared to other units of similar location, quality, size, type, and age. If the rent is not reasonable to similar units, you may be asked to lower it to accommodate the tenant interested in moving into the property. Should you rent your property through Section 8, rent increases must also be reasonable in relation to comparable units, the payment standard in the jurisdiction, and what portion of the rent the tenant can afford to pay.

## **HOW MUCH DOES THE PARTICIPANT CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS RENT?**

Housing Choice Voucher participants generally contribute between 30% and 40% of their monthly adjusted gross income towards rent and utilities. The Housing Authority pays the balance directly to the owner. At initial lease up, the family's portion of rent and utility expenses cannot exceed 40% of the families' adjusted monthly income.

## **ARE THE INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TAXABLE?**

Yes. Landlord incentive payments are taxable and will be reported as "other income" in box 3 of the 1099-MISC form.

## **DOES THE BC/ACHA SCREEN FAMILIES FOR TENANCY?**

BC/ACHA does **NOT** screen participants for rental/credit history. Tenant screening and selection is the responsibility of the landlord. BC/ACHA recommends that the owner check references of all applicants (assisted and non-assisted) for past rental history. Information known to BC/ACHA of the tenant's current and previous landlord will be provided to a prospective landlord upon request.

## **WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM?**

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program assists very low-income households. The Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority selects families/individuals who meet income and eligibility guidelines. A participating applicant may choose to remain in the unit they are currently living in or move to a unit anywhere in Ada County.

## **HOW IS RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED?**

BC/ACHA calculates the amount of assistance each family receives. The level of assistance is based upon family size, income, and current reasonable market rents. A household is expected to pay 30% to 40% of its income toward the monthly rent and utilities. Each month, BC/ACHA makes housing assistance payments directly to the landlord to make up the difference.

## **WHAT ARE THE TENANT'S RENT RESPONSIBILITIES?**

The renter must pay all rent and utilities that are not covered by the lease. Because the family is receiving assistance, the rent burden should be reduced, enabling the family to pay rent more easily and on time. Renters must pay their rent on time according to the terms of their lease.

## **WHAT ARE THE TERMS OF THE LEASE?**

A written lease is required. The initial term must be 1 year. Thereafter, the term may be month to month, 6 months, 1 year, etc., and must be agreed upon by the landlord and tenant. BC/ACHA must review and approve the lease. BC/ACHA must also attach the HUD Tenancy Addendum.

## **CAN A TENANT PAY ME EXTRA RENT ABOVE THE APPROVED AMOUNT?**

No! That is considered a side payment and it is a violation of the program and HAP contract.

## **CAN THE TENANT MOVE IN PRIOR TO THE INSPECTION?**

We highly recommend that the inspection is conducted before the tenant moves into the unit. The Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority cannot make a payment on a unit that hasn't passed inspection. The tenant is responsible for the amount of rent due; for however many

days pass before the HQS inspection has taken place. If the tenant does not qualify for the unit we also are unable to schedule an inspection.

## **WHAT IF I HAVE A TENANT ALREADY LIVING IN A UNIT I OWN?**

If your tenant has been issued a Section 8 voucher by our agency, and you are willing to accept the voucher and sign a lease/HAP Contract, you are eligible to receive an incentive payment. Due to COVID-19, we are not conducting inspections on occupied units. In place of the inspection, you would be given a form to sign certifying there are no Life-Threatening deficiencies in the unit. See <https://bcacha.org/landlords/> for a list of Life-Threatening deficiencies.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF A UNIT "FAILS" THE MOVE-IN INSPECTION?**

Under Federal regulations, a unit either "passes" or "fails". Any item that does not meet the standards will cause a unit to fail. The owner will be notified, in writing, if the unit "fails". The landlord determines whether he/she is willing to make the repairs and informs the applicant/participant and BC/ACHA of this decision. If the landlord decides to make repairs, he/she will have thirty (30) days to complete them.

If the landlord elects not to make repairs, the applicant **must** choose another unit to receive assistance. This is why the applicant should not move into a unit and sign a lease without first having the unit **pass** the HQS Inspection.

## **WHEN DOES BC/ACHA MAIL RENT PAYMENTS?**

It is the policy of the BC/ACHA to mail rent payments on the first business day of the month.

## **WHAT SHOULD A LANDLORD DO IF HE/SHE HAS A QUESTION ABOUT THE AMOUNT OR RECEIPT OF A PAYMENT?**

Contact a BC/ACHA Housing Representative assigned to the participant at (208) 345-4907.

## **WHAT IS THE PROCESS IF A LANDLORD HAS A RENTAL UNIT HE/SHE WISHES TO RENT TO SECTION 8 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS?**

The landlord may contact our office at (208) 345-4907 and/or list their units at [www.housingidaho.com](http://www.housingidaho.com). Housingidaho.com is a free listing service that can be used by anyone looking for housing in Idaho. You can manage and update your account 24-hours a day seven days a week via the internet or you may call housingidaho.com for assistance during office hours M-F 9-6 EST at 1-877-428-8844.

## **WHAT IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THAT AREN'T ANSWERED HERE?**

For additional questions, please call (208) 345-4907 or email [housing@bcacha.org](mailto:housing@bcacha.org).