

LANDLORD UPDATE

A Publication of the St. Petersburg Housing Authority
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How to Ensure a Smooth Move-In

A Section 8 tenant has approached you about renting your home. Do you know what steps you should take to ensure a smooth move-in for both you and the tenant? By following the tips below, you are sure to experience an easy process for renting your home.

The tenant must have a current voucher. Participants must recertify their eligibility and be issued a voucher every time they move. Ask to see the voucher if a Section 8 participant approaches you to rent your unit.

Request For Tenancy Approval (RFTA) packet must be submitted to SPHA. Before SPHA can perform the inspection, an RFTA must be filled out completely and submitted to the Housing Authority. The RFTA triggers the rent review and the inspection.

New landlords to the program must submit required paperwork. If you are a new Section 8 landlord with SPHA, be sure you fill out the New Landlord Packet, which can be found on our website at www.stpeteha.org/landlord/

Units must be prepared for inspection. To ensure a speedy inspection, make sure all work has been done to the unit, and it is unoccupied.

Participants should not move in before the inspection. The subsidy will not start until the unit

passes the inspection. If a tenant occupies a unit prior to it passing the inspection, they will be responsible for the full contract rent until it does pass.

Rents must be reasonable. Once the RFTA is received, we check the rent to ensure it is affordable and within program limitations. The rent must be comparable to other similar units in the area, and the tenant is also limited to paying no more than 40% of their gross income for rent and utilities.

You must sign a lease and contract. The lease is between you and the tenant. The contract is between you and SPHA. Signed copies of both must be received by SPHA before payment can begin. Both must include a list of the family members who will occupy the unit, the unit address, and who pays for the utilities.

SPHA does not reimburse for deposits or unit damage. Tenants are responsible for paying a security deposit, which should be collected at time of move-in. SPHA does not reimburse for tenant-caused damage to the unit. Any amounts owed must be worked out between you and the tenant.

By following these tips, you should experience a hassle-free move-in and be on your way to assisting a low-income family in need.

SPHA to Host Landlord Workshop on March 28

The St. Petersburg Housing Authority (SPHA) will conduct a workshop for prospective and existing landlords on Tuesday, March 28, 2017, 2:00 P.M. at the housing authority office located at 2001 Gandy Blvd. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702.

The workshop agenda includes an overview of the Section 8 Voucher program, tenant and landlord obligations, the landlord registration process, how to list your properties

for optimum exposure, and how to prepare yourself for a successful Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection.

Space is limited so reservations are highly recommended. To register for this interactive workshop, please contact Ms. Dawn Lucier at (727) 323-3171, ext. 236 or by e-mail at dlucier@stpeteha.org. Don't miss this no-cost training opportunity!

Section 8 Fact: Rent Reasonableness

The housing authority compares your unit to at least two similar units with similar amenities in the same or similar location in the private, unassisted rental market to determine the unit's comparable rent.



Internet Resources Available for Landlords

SPHA's Web site has a page dedicated to assisting our Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher landlords at www.stpeteha.org/landlord. This Web page includes many resources for landlords, like the New Owner Packet, how to change your address, and information on direct deposit.

In addition, you can learn how to register your property with www.gosection8.com and www.floridahousingsearch.org, providing better marketing opportunities for available, affordable units.

Landlords also can check payment status online at www.pal.hmsforweb.com.

Tips for Inspection Success

In order to ensure that your Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) are not put on hold, you should prepare for your Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection PRIOR to SPHA coming out to inspect. This will ensure that your unit passes inspection the first time. Check out the tips below!

Windows: Those designed to open must open and must have a permanent lock attached. Sticks and thumbscrews are not accepted as locking devices. The window panes must not be broken or cracked.

Electrical Hazards: HUD requires that a unit must be free of any possible electrical hazards. All electrical outlets and switches must have cover plates without cracks, and they must be secured to the wall.

Heating and Plumbing: The heating system must be working properly and provide adequate heat. Check for any leaks in the plumbing fixtures (sinks, toilets, showers, etc.) and repair if necessary.

Hot Water Heaters: Check hot water heater to make sure that it has a discharge line and relief valve. The discharge line must be at least 3 inches from the floor leading to a drip pan or directly to the outside. Water is to be heated to a temperature of not less than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Unit must be in a place that can be visually checked. No combustible or other materials posing a fire hazard are to be stored next to the unit.

Smoke Detectors: Each dwelling unit must include at least 1 battery operated or hard wired smoke detector in proper working condition on each level of the unit. Smoke detector must be located in a hallway adjacent to a bedroom. They must be mounted on the ceiling at least 4 inches from a wall or on a wall with the top of the detector not less than 4 inches or more than 12 inches below the ceiling. Detectors may not be installed in kitchens or garages.

Decks, Railings, Steps: HUD requires that all stairways with four or more steps must have a handrail. The handrail must run the length of the stairway and be securely supported in order to provide adequate safety for the user. Railings are required for decks, porches or steps that are over 30 inches from the ground.

Peeling Paint: HUD requires that a home built prior to 1978 have no deteriorating or peeling paint on the inside or outside of the unit, if the unit is occupied by children under the age of 6.

Range and Refrigerator: All units must have a range and a refrigerator in good working condition. Appliances are to be very clean and the gaskets in good condition.

Following these tips will ensure that your inspection is fast, easy, and passes with flying colors!

*Have questions? Please contact SPHA's Section 8 Department:
727-323-3171 (phone) or section8@stpeteha.org (e-mail)*

