



# The Way Home

## Housing Choice Vouchers Fact Sheet

### Overview:

- The housing choice voucher program is one of the federal government's programs for assisting very low-income households, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe and sanitary housing in the private market. Participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments. Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing authorities (PHAs).
- A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating household. The household then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. The PHA determines the household portion of the rent.
- The housing unit selected by the household must meet an acceptable level of health and safety before the PHA will approve the unit.

### How vouchers work:

- The PHA determines a payment standard that is the amount generally needed to rent a moderately-priced dwelling unit in the local housing market. The payment standard does not limit and does not affect the amount of rent a landlord may charge or that the household may pay.
- The housing voucher household must pay 30% of its monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities; by law, the household may not pay more than 40% of its adjusted monthly income for rent.

**EXAMPLE: If the rent for a unit is \$1,000 and the monthly household income is \$1,000, then:**

**PHA Payment, \$700 + Household Payment, \$300 = \$1,000 Monthly Rent**

### Roles - the tenant, the landlord, and the PHA:

- Once a PHA approves an eligible family's housing unit, the family and the landlord sign a lease. At the same time, the landlord and the PHA sign a housing assistance payments contract that runs for the same term as the lease.

**Tenant's Obligations:** When a family selects a housing unit and the PHA approves the unit and lease, the family signs a lease with the landlord for at least one year. The tenant may be required to pay a security deposit to the landlord. After the first year, the landlord may initiate a new lease or allow the family to remain in the unit on a month-to-month lease. Tenants are responsible for complying with the lease and program requirements, paying their share of rent on time, maintaining the unit in good condition, and notifying the PHA of any changes in income or household composition.

**Landlord's Obligations:** The role of the landlord in the voucher program is to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to a tenant at a reasonable rent. The unit must pass the program's inspection and be maintained to those standards as long as they receive housing assistance payments. The landlord is also expected to provide the services agreed to as part of the lease signed with the tenant, and the contract signed with the PHA.

**PHA Obligations:** The PHA provides a household with the housing assistance that enables them to have suitable housing and the PHA enters into a contract with the landlord to provide housing assistance payments on behalf of the family. If the landlord fails to meet their obligations under the lease, the PHA has the right to terminate payments. The PHA must reexamine the family's income and composition at least annually and must inspect each unit at least annually to ensure that it meets minimum housing quality standards.

Source: <https://portal.hud.gov>