



Housing Choice Voucher Program

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Chester Housing Authority
35 East 5th Street
Chester, PA 19013
610-876-5561
610-499-5494 Fax

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Steps to a Successful Lease-Up	5
Determining Your Housing Voucher Subsidy	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Income• Deductions• CHA Payment Standards• Utility Allowances• Minimum Tenant Rent	
Looking for A Place to Live	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CHA jurisdiction• Portability	
Available Property Listings	10
Tenant Selection	11
Affordability/Rent Reasonableness	11
Certificate of Occupancy	12
Required Lease-Up Documents	12
Housing Quality Standards	13
Lead-Based Paint	13
Most Common HQS Fail Items	14
Lease and HAP Contract	15

Housing Assistance Payments (HAP)	15
Loss of Housing Assistance Payments	15
Change in Housing Assistance	15
Oversize or Undersize Units	16
Lease Enforcement	17
Annual Inspections	17
Quality Control Inspections	18
Complaint Inspections	18
Annual Rent Increases	18
Annual Reexaminations	19
Special Programs	19
Fraud and Program Abuse	20
Termination of Housing Assistance	20
One Strike Policy	21
Informal Hearings	22
Contact Information	22

Appendix: Program Forms

Title	Who Uses It	Form
Utility Allowance	Family and CHA use these schedules to project anticipated utility costs	A
Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA)-	Owner completes RTA and submits with other required documents after completing tenant selection	B
Housing Authority Contact List-	For families who choose to exercise portability. If an area where you want to live is not listed, please contact your Occupancy Specialist.	C
Annual Rent Adjustment-	Sent to Owner for completion and approval prior to anniversary of HAP Contract	D
Inspection Form-	Used by Inspector in conducting HQS inspections, a helpful tool for families and owners in preparing for inspections	E
HAP Contract-	Prepared by CHA after the unit passes inspection. Identifies owner responsibilities and states amount of payment from CHA and identifies owner and tenant-paid utilities and appliances	F
Tenancy Addendum-	Attachment to owner's lease, required by HUD to ensure all required lease provisions are present in owner's lease. If there are conflicting lease provisions with Tenancy Addendum, Tenancy Addendum prevails	G

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL HCVP LEASE-UP

1. Complete Income Certification and Meet HCVP Admission Requirements

All applicants and participants must complete income and household certification and confirm eligibility under the Housing Choice Voucher Programs' admission requirements.

2. Be Certified as a Tenant in Good Standing

In order to receive a voucher, you must be certified as a tenant in good standing by your current landlord to move with continued assistance in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. To be a tenant in good standing you must:

- Be current on your share of the rent
- Be current on all tenant-paid utilities.
- Correct or reimburse CHA for tenant-caused damages to the unit above normal wear and tear
- Not have serious or repeated lease or program violations
- Not engage in drug related or violent criminal activity

3. Attend Family Briefing

The purpose of the briefing is to explain Housing Choice Voucher Program policies and procedures and to provide tips on your housing search.

4. Conduct Housing Search

You will have an initial 60 days to conduct your search for a new place to live. If you need more time, you can request an extension from the CHA. You can find a unit on your own or rent from one of the owners who has listed their available unit with the Chester Housing Authority.

5. Submit Request for Tenancy Approval Form (RTA)

Before the new unit is approved, the CHA must make sure that the owner's proposed rent is reasonable for the condition and location of the unit and that your share of the rent will not exceed 40% of your monthly-adjusted income. The owner proposes a rent to the CHA on the Request for Tenancy Approval Form.

6. Have Unit Inspected

Upon approval of the asking rent, the CHA will arrange for the unit to be inspected. The owner must present a Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Chester prior to scheduling the CHA inspection. All units must pass inspection prior to issuing housing assistance payments to the landlord. Please plan for a 3-4 week timeline from inspection scheduling to final lease-up. The length of time to complete the lease-up is dictated by the number of inspections requested and the amount of time it takes the owner to complete any required repairs.

7. Sign HAP Contract and Lease Documents

Once the unit passes inspection, the CHA will prepare the HAP Contract and Tenancy Addendum. Your owner will need to sign the HAP Contract with the CHA and you and the owner will need to sign the Tenancy Addendum and the owner's lease agreement. Housing assistance payments will be issued following the receipt of these documents.

8. Complete Physical Move

You must complete your move in a timely manner. If you are a current participant and moving to a new unit, you must be prepared to vacate the unit in accordance with the lease termination date.

DETERMINING YOUR HOUSING VOUCHER SUBSIDY

In the Housing Choice Voucher Program, how much subsidy you receive and how much rent you pay depends on:

- Your household income
- Your allowable deductions
- Your approved payment standard
- The total cost of rent and utilities for the unit you choose

Income

Income includes actual or projected earned and unearned income from all sources received by you and all members of your household (except live-in aides required to care for an elderly or disabled person.) Participants must declare in writing all sources of income for all household members and any changes in income as they occur.

Allowable Deductions

Depending on who lives in your household the following deductions may be applied in projecting your annual adjusted income:

- Dependent Deduction- for dependent children (17 or under) or full-time students (18 or over) or disabled household members (except head or spouse)-\$480 per dependent
- Child Care Expenses/Attendant Care- Deductions to household income are applied when providing childcare for children under 13 or attendant care for disabled persons when the care enables a household member to work, attend school, or seek employment. Childcare/attendant care deductions are cannot exceed the income that is produced for the person that is enabled to work
- Elderly/Disabled Household Allowance-A \$400 deduction to households whose head or spouse is 62 years of age or older, or head or spouse is a person with a disability.

Medical Allowance- Medical expenses in excess of 3% of gross annual income are subtract from annual gross income for elderly or disabled households

The CHA verifies income and expense information to determine your annual adjusted income.

Payment Standards

Payment standards determine the maximum allowable subsidy for a family in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Payment standards are set between 90% and 110% of the HUD-determined Fair Market Rent for the Philadelphia area. The payment standards for the Chester Housing Choice Voucher Program are listed in Table 1 on the following page.

Thirty percent (30%) of the monthly-adjusted income is subtracted from the applicable payment standard to determine your estimate housing voucher subsidy.

minus	Payment Standard <u>30% of monthly adjusted income</u> Estimated Housing Voucher Subsidy
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Utility Allowance

The anticipated average monthly cost of tenant-paid utilities impacts your total housing costs. Utility Schedules are provided in this booklet for you to project your average monthly utility bills. The utility allowance schedules are for a variety of housing types and bedroom sizes.

Gross Rent Used as Payment Standard

When the gross rent (the rent plus anticipated average cost of tenant-paid utilities) is lower than the payment standard, 30% of monthly-adjusted income will be subtracted from the gross rent to determine the maximum amount of housing voucher subsidy.

Minimum Tenant Rent-\$50

All HCVP participants must make a family contribution of \$50 or more towards their rent and/or utility costs. In the case of hardship, participants can request an exception to the minimum tenant rent policy.

TABLE 1

Chester Housing Authority
HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

PAYMENT STANDARDS

Effective 12/1/2009

Efficiency	803
1 Bedroom	915
2 Bedroom	1095
3 Bedroom	1339
4 Bedroom	1615
5 Bedroom	1857
6 Bedroom	2099

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE

The Chester Housing Authority's primary jurisdiction is in the City of Chester. However, under an interagency agreement with the Delaware County Housing Authority, the CHA will execute Housing Assistance Payments Contracts in the communities that border the City of Chester. For example, Eddystone, Linwood, Marcus Hook, Trainer, Boothwyn, Aston, Upland, Brookhaven, Wallingford, and Woodlyn. The CHA executed the interagency agreement with Delaware County to support the CHA's deconcentration initiatives, to limit duplicative processing of family information, thereby reducing total lease-up time for families.

Portability

Housing Choice Voucher participants may use their voucher to lease a unit anywhere in the United States where a housing agency administers a tenant-based assistance program. This feature of the voucher program is known as **portability**.

Applicants who live in the City of Chester when they receive their voucher may use it to move anywhere in the City of Chester, Delaware County, or anywhere else in the United States as soon as they receive the voucher.

If you choose to live in another jurisdiction, the CHA will identify the contact person in the housing agency for that jurisdiction. A list of other housing authorities in our region is included in this packet. If you want to live in a jurisdiction that is not listed, please notify your Occupancy Specialist and they will assist you in contacting the Housing Authority for the desired location.

Applicants who are not residents of the City of Chester when they receive their voucher must lease a unit in the City of Chester or Delaware County for at least 12 months before they can “port” to another jurisdiction

AVAILABLE PROPERTY LISTING

The CHA has a listing of available units owned by landlords who participate or want to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. You may choose to rent from an owner who has listed the unit, or from any landlord with an eligible unit who is willing to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Owners are expected to adhere to fair housing laws in the offer, screening, and selection of tenants. The CHA will not accept listings from owners who fail to comply with fair housing laws. If you encounter discriminatory practices from an owner who has listed his/her property with the CHA, please contact your assigned Occupancy Specialist to complete a Fair Housing Complaint form.

VOUCHER TERM AND EXTENSION POLICY

You have sixty days from the date your voucher is issued to search for a suitable unit. If the landlord agrees to rent to you, he/she must complete a Request for Tenancy Approval form and submit it to our office so that the proposed rent and unit can be approved. A Request for Tenancy Approval packet and other important landlord information was provided at the briefing.

If you need more than 60 days to complete your housing search, please contact your assigned Occupancy Specialist for an extension prior to the expiration date of your voucher.

Examples of when the CHA will grant an extension include:

- Illness or hospitalization during the initial sixty days
- Difficulty in finding larger size units suitable for a large family
- Difficulty in finding accessible/suitable units based on special needs
- Disabled or elderly households experiencing difficulty in the housing search process
- Unit disapprovals

TENANT SELECTION

In accordance with HUD program rules, the CHA determines income eligibility and screens participants for criminal histories for drug-related and violent crimes, and sex offenders, evictions from public housing, and debts owed to the CHA or other housing agencies.

However, owners have the responsibility to conduct reference checks to determine tenant suitability based on rental payment history, housekeeping, damages above normal wear and tear, disturbances to neighbors, etc. Owners may ask the CHA for prior landlord contact information, unit inspection information, and documented problems with prior tenancies.

AFFORDABILITY

At the briefing, you received a worksheet that has an estimated voucher subsidy for your family and the maximum rental cost your family is permitted to lease.

Families are not permitted to lease units where their share of the rent to the owner and the average cost of utilities for the unit exceeds 40% of their monthly adjusted income. To meet the affordability requirement, you are strongly advised to lease a unit with the actual number of bedrooms you need based on their family size, as larger units generally rent at a higher rate and have higher utility costs.

When you select your unit, a final determination will be made based on the proposed rent and utility costs for the new unit.

RENT REASONABLENESS

In addition to meeting the affordability test for the family, proposed rents must be reasonable for the location, size, number of bedrooms, age, condition, services and amenities of comparable, unassisted units. The CHA has a database of recently leased units in various neighborhoods throughout Chester and Delaware County to make this determination. If comparable unit information does not support the proposed rent, the owner may submit comparable unit information for leased, unassisted units to support their proposed rent. If no comparable unit information is available to support the proposed rent, the owner will have to lower the rent for the tenancy to be approved.

CITY OF CHESTER CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

A Certificate of Occupancy is required prior to submitting the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) to the Chester Housing Authority. The local City of Chester Building Inspector establishes the number of bedrooms and approves the maximum number of occupants per dwelling unit. It is the owner's responsibility to make sure that this inspection takes place prior to submitting the RTA to the Chester Housing Authority

REQUIRED LEASE-UP DOCUMENTATION

At the end of the Family Briefing, you received a **Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA)** packet to give to a prospective landlord. If you forget to bring the packet with you at the time you meet with the owner, you can request that a RTA packet be sent directly to the owner. Please contact the receptionist at 610-876-5561, Ext.100 and provide the owner's name and address information. Landlords are also welcome to pick up and/or complete the packet in the CHA Administrative Offices at 35 East 5th Street, Chester, PA 19013.

The RTA must be filled out completely with a proposed rent and an indication of owner/tenant responsibility for the utilities and appliances. Both the tenant and the owner must sign the RTA. The RTA and other required documents in the RTA packet, establish owner identify and proof of ownership.

In addition to the RTA, the following documents must also be submitted by the owner:

- **Certificate of Occupancy**
- **Copy of Deed**
- **Paid tax receipt**
- **Copy of paid owner utilities-** (i.e. sewer, water, etc.)
- **W-9**
- **Direct Deposit Authorization**
- **Owner's lease agreement** (completed, but unsigned)
- **Contact information** (For local person authorized to act on behalf of the owner, if owner is not easy to reach during business hours or if the owner does not reside in the immediate Tri-State Area)

The Request for Tenancy Approval signals the Housing Authority that the owner is ready to complete the rent negotiation and inspection process.

To determine, rent reasonableness, the CHA may request a visit to the unit. The visit is not mandatory, but provides an opportunity for the CHA to get a more

thorough understanding of the unit as it compares to both assisted all well as unassisted units in our area. When the rent negotiation is completed, the CHA proceeds with the Housing Quality Standards inspection.

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

Housing Quality Standards are minimum unit standards established by the federal government to ensure that assisted families lease decent, safe, and sanitary housing. HUD regulations require that housing authorities enforce the stricter of the local code or HQS in determining unit compliance. In the City of Chester, the local code is stricter in the following areas:

- **Determining maximum number of occupants**
- **Determining what qualifies as a bedroom or sleeping area**
- **Basements can not be used as sleeping spaces**
- **Smoke detectors must be in every bedroom and at every level of the unit**

The CHA has adopted the following unit inspection criteria in addition to HQS:

- **Window Screens**
- **Enclosures for open stairwells**

In determining rent reasonableness, units will also be evaluated for the extent to which the age and condition of the doors, windows, and systems maximize the efficient use of utilities. Consistent with HQS, observed deficiencies such as gaps in doorframes, windows, sills, etc. will be noted as fail items and repairs to make the unit weather-tight are required to pass the unit.

McCright and Associates is the CHA's contract inspection firm and is responsible for the scheduling and conducting inspections, and sending notifications of inspections results. A list of the most common HQS fail items is on the following page and the HQS Inspection checklist is included in the appendix. Families and owners are encouraged to review the checklist in preparation for the inspection.

LEAD-BASED PAINT

Due to the health hazards associated with lead-based paint, unit built before 1978 with children under the age of 6, with deficient paint conditions exceeding the de minimus level must be determined to be lead-safe.

It is important to keep in mind that for a unit to be lead-safe it does not necessarily have to be lead-free. Many older homes have lead in them and many of them are lead safe. Health hazards occur if painted surfaces, especially heavy contact surfaces like doors, floors, windowsills, are peeling, scaling, or chipping as lead dust and lead-based paint chips are more likely to be exposed through deficient paint surfaces.

If there are observed deficient paint conditions exceeding the de minimus level in a pre-1978 unit, with a child under the age of six, the unit will require a Lead-Clearance or "Wipe" Test. If there is a child in the unit with an elevated blood level for lead, a full Lead Risk Assessment will be required to determine the source of the lead poisoning.

If the unit you choose requires a Lead Clearance or Lead Risk Assessment, the owner must schedule an appointment with a lead clearance technician to conduct a test. To avoid a possible delay in moving to your new unit, choose units that do not have peeling, scaling, and chipping paint.

MOST COMMON HQS FAIL ITEMS

Both the family and the landlord are responsible for ensuring the unit meets Housing Quality Standards. HQS Unit requirements are outlined on the enclosed HUD 52580 Inspection checklist on the following page.

The following deficiencies are most commonly cited at an HQS inspection:

- No smoke detector, damaged smoke detector or **missing batteries in smoke detector (tenant responsibility)**
- No open able window or working exhaust fan in the bathroom
- Cracked, loose or missing switch plate or outlet covers
- Peeling paint
- Buckling or loose tile, carpeting, or other floor covering
- Missing or loose handrails
- Evidence of water leaks on ceilings
- Missing discharge line on pressure relief valve on hot water tank
- Blocked egress
- Ponding or standing water in the basement

COMMON ITEMS DUE TO TENANT MISUSE OR NEGLECT

- **Poor Housekeeping**
- **Excessive debris/items stored in basement or yard**
- **Broken or missing light globes**
- **Damage to screens/windows/doors/hinges**
- **Water damage in bathroom- Tenant failure to use shower curtain**

Families are encouraged to read the HUD 52580 Inspection Checklist to become familiar with the federal standards. The CHA is required to enforce the stricter of the local standard or the federal standard.

The City of Chester building code requires working smoke detectors in every bedroom and on every level of the unit. **In addition, basements are not permitted as rooms used for sleeping in the City of Chester.**

OWNER'S LEASE AND HAP CONTRACT

At the time the Request for Tenancy Approval is submitted, owners must submit a copy of a completed, but unsigned lease agreement. When the unit passes inspection, the owner will call you to sign the lease agreement and give you the keys. The Housing Authority will contact the owner directly to sign the Housing Assistance Payments Contract. No assistance payments will be issued until a signed lease agreement and HAP Contract is returned to the CHA office.

PAYMENTS

The amount of the assistance payment is based on the family's income and household composition. The owner is responsible for collecting your share of the rent. If you are very low income, you may receive a utility reimbursement check to assist you in paying your utility bills.

Payments for initial lease-up are generally issued within 2 weeks from the date the HAP Contract is executed and monthly thereafter on or about the first of the month.

Please note that the CHA does not receive its funds from HUD until the first business day of the month, therefore housing assistance and utility reimbursement payments cannot be issued from the CHA until the funds are received. If the first of the month falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the CHA will not issue payments until Monday at the earliest and only upon confirmation of receipt of funds. Please do not tie up the CHA switchboard asking if the checks went out. If you are eligible to receive a utility reimbursement payment and do not receive your check by the 10th of the month contact your Occupancy Specialist. Likewise, if the landlord does not receive his payment by the 10th of the month, contact the CHA to verify that the payment was issued.

LOSS OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

Under the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract, owners will receive assistance payments on behalf of the family as long as the family resides in the unit, is eligible for the assistance, and the unit meets housing quality standards. If the owner fails to make the necessary repairs during the corrective action period or approved extension, housing assistance payments will be stopped.

Housing assistance payments are abated or “stopped” for the period the unit was out of compliance. If corrective action is taken, housing assistance payments will resume from the date the unit is determined to be in compliance. HAP Contracts will be terminated for units in abatement for more than 60 days.

Families who fail to fulfill their tenant responsibilities under the lease may have their utility reimbursement payments stopped and/or be terminated from the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

CHANGE IN HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

Family income and household composition are reviewed at least once a year to determine continued eligibility for housing assistance. If the family income or household composition changes and there is a change in the housing assistance payments, the owner will receive a **Notice of Change Form** indicating the family’s new share of rent and housing assistance payment. If an increase in household income reduces the housing assistance payment to zero, the HAP Contract automatically terminates in 6 months. When the HAP Contract terminates the lease agreement automatically terminates.

OVERSIZE OR UNDERSIZED UNIT

All changes in household composition must be reported to the CHA. New household members must be approved by both the CHA and the owner, with exception of adoptions and births. If an increase or decrease in household composition requires the family to relocate to another unit, the CHA will issue a voucher to the family to locate a suitably sized unit for the household. If the family is in the first twelve-month term of the lease, the family will be required to move at the end of the initial twelve-month term.

At the time the voucher is issued the CHA will send the owner a notice that the HAP Contract will terminate in not more than 60 days or when the family leases a new unit whichever happens first. The owner will have at least 30-day notice

prior to the HAP Contract termination. In accordance with the terms of the HAP Contract, when the HAP Contract is terminated, the lease is terminated and vice versa.

LEASE ENFORCEMENT

The lease agreement is a contract between the family and the owner. The Housing Authority is not a party to the lease. As the property manager, the owner is responsible for ensuring that the family fulfills their responsibilities under the lease.

If you get behind in your share of the rent or tenant-paid utilities, or fail to fulfill your responsibilities under the lease, the landlord may begin an eviction action. If you receive a lease violation notice from your owner, you should take the appropriate action to comply immediately. HUD regulations require the CHA to terminate assistance for families evicted for serious or repeated lease violations.

An eviction action begins with notice to the family and CHA and proceeds through the judge's decision to terminate the tenancy and remove the family from the property. Constables or Sheriff's Marshall are the persons authorized by a court to remove persons from a property.

A family is not considered "evicted" just because an owner asked them to leave and they leave the unit. In order for the CHA initiate a termination action for lease violations, there must be a judicial decision. However, the CHA will not issue a voucher for another unit until any monies due under the current lease are either paid or satisfied under a repayment agreement.

For continued participation, families must fulfill their obligations under the lease and program rules.

ANNUAL INSPECTIONS

To comply with program rules, unit inspections must be conducted at least once a year. An annual inspection notice should be sent to you approximately 90 days prior to the anniversary of the HAP Contract. Annual inspections must be conducted within 365 days of the last annual inspection. For example, if the annual inspection was on February 15th last year, it must be conducted by February 14th the following year.

You are responsible for having an adult present to meet the inspector. If you do not make arrangements to have someone present at the inspection, you will be charged for the "No Show". After two "No Show" inspections, the CHA will initiate

a termination action. Owners may choose to be present the annual inspection, and you should coordinate with the owner if he/she is taking responsibility for meeting the inspector. Otherwise it is expected that the family make arrangements for an adult to be present at the inspection.

Owners have 30 days to make required repairs for non-emergency items unless an extension is approved. Emergency items that pose an immediate threat to the life, health, and safety of the family must be corrected in 24 hours.

QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS

To meet program requirements at least 5% of inspected units are selected for quality control inspections. The purpose of the quality control inspection is to ensure that housing quality standards are consistently applied when inspecting all units and that quality workmanship and materials are used to complete required repairs. Both tenants and owners are notified if the unit is selected for a quality control inspection. Supervisors from the CHA and McCright and Associates conduct Quality Control inspections.

COMPLAINT INSPECTIONS

Upon receipt of a HQS complaint, the CHA will first notify the owner of the complaint, document the contact and the owner's intended action, and follow-up within the agreed upon timeframe with the family to determine if the problem was resolved. In the event the CHA or the family cannot reach the owner or the owner fails to make the repairs, the CHA will request a Complaint Inspection be conducted from McCright and Associates.

ANNUAL RENT INCREASES

Approximately 90 days before the anniversary of the HAP Contract, the CHA will send an **Annual Rent Increase Request** form to the owner. The form should be completed by the owner and returned to the CHA as soon as possible for approval. To be approved, rents must reflect the rents for units of comparable location, condition size, age, amenities and services. The CHA will send the owner a notice if the rent increase is approved or rejected. Owners may present additional information to justify the rent increase. The approved rent increase will be communicated through a **Notice of Change** sent to the family and the owner.

ANNUAL REEXAMINATIONS

Families are required to verify their household income and composition at least once a year. Approximately 90 days before the anniversary of the HAP Contract, the CHA sends out a **Certification of Household Income and Composition Form**. If you fail to complete the required annual reexamination paperwork, you will be sent a **Notice of Pending Termination**. A copy of the Notice of Pending Termination will also be sent to the owner. If you receive paperwork from the CHA and you would like help in completing it, please contact your Occupancy Specialist for assistance to ensure that your annual review is completed on time.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS)

HUD has required Housing Authorities to operate Family Self-Sufficiency programs since 1993. The CHA collaborates with existing private and public service providers in the community to link families to financial, educational, economic, and self-improvement initiatives. Some of the opportunities include job training programs, budgeting, credit counseling, business development, child care resources, parenting classes, family program, personal development, and self-care, and homebuyer education. The program is voluntary for families, and the CHA appreciates owner

Participants sign a five-year contract and agree to complete the goals established in the Individual Training and Services Plan. In order to complete the goals of the program, the participant must be employed full time and completely independent of all public assistance programs. As a family's earned income increases, the housing authority deposits the difference in housing assistance payment into an escrow account for the family. At the end of the contract, the family may use the escrow funds for down payment and/or closing costs on a house.

If you are interested in participating in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, please contact your Occupancy Specialist.

Homeownership Option

Families enrolled in the FSS program and who have been employed for at least 2 years and are tenants in good standing in the Housing Choice Voucher Program are eligible to use their housing subsidies towards the payment of a mortgage. The average rental subsidy in the Housing Choice Voucher Program is approximately \$650. Based on the current interest rates and the Chester

housing market, homeownership is well within reach for many of the HCVP families. Families interested in pursuing this option can attend Homebuyer Education classes offered from the Chester Community Improvement Project.

If you are interested in pursuing the Homeownership Option, please contact your Occupancy Specialist.

FRAUD AND PROGRAM ABUSE

The goal of the HCVP is to ensure that eligible households receive decent, safe sanitary, and affordable housing. All persons living in the household must be authorized by both the Chester Housing Authority and the owner. The income of all household members must be disclosed to the CHA to determine the correct amount of the rental subsidy. Omission or misrepresentation of household income or composition constitutes fraud and program abuse and can result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

TERMINATION OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Families who fail to fulfill their programmatic or lease obligations jeopardize their continued participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Under the program rules the family must:

1. Supply requested information regarding household composition, income, and citizenship. Any information provided must be true and complete.
2. Disclose and verify social security numbers
3. Supply information verifying that the family is living in the unit when requested
4. Notify the CHA if there is an extended absence from the property
5. Allow the CHA to inspect at reasonable times after reasonable notice
6. Notify the PHA and the owner in writing before moving out of the unit or terminating the lease
7. Use the assisted unit as a residence for the family and the assisted unit is the family's only residence.
8. Promptly notify the CHA in writing of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child.
9. Request CHA written approval to add additional persons to the household.
10. Promptly notify the CHA in writing if any family member no longer resides in the unit.
11. Give the CHA a copy of any owner eviction notice.

12. Remain current on tenant-paid utilities bills and provide and maintain any appliances not provided by the owner under the lease.

The family must not:

1. Own or have any interest in the unit.
2. Commit any serious or repeated violations of the lease.
3. Commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with the program.
4. Engage in drug-related criminal activity or violent or criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.
5. Sublease or sublet the unit or assign the lease or transfer the unit.
6. Receive housing choice voucher program housing assistance while receiving another housing subsidy
7. Damage the unit or premises (other than damage from ordinary wear and tear) or permit any guest to damage the unit or premises.
8. Receive housing choice voucher program housing assistance while residing in a unit owned by a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother of any member of the family, except for reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with a disability
9. Engage in abuse of alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the other residents and persons residing in the immediate vicinity of the premises.
10. Engage in, or threaten abusive or violent behavior toward CHA staff and its contractors or CHA representatives
11. Fail to remain current on any repayment agreement for monies owed under a prior tenancy

Illegal Tampering of Utilities

The CHA will terminate the assistance of any household where there is illegal tampering of gas, water, and electricity. Utility tampering is a violation of the lease and program rules is a felony and risks the health, life, and safety of residents and neighbors.

It is the head of household's responsibility to ensure all tenant-paid utilities remain in service.

In accordance with HUD regulations, an eviction for serious or repeated violations of the lease is grounds for termination of housing assistance.

In the event of a programmatic violation, the CHA will send the family a **Notice of Pending Termination** with a copy to the owner. An informal hearing will be held to determine continued participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

ONE STRIKE

The CHA has adopted zero tolerance policy for drug-related and violent criminal activity for both families and owners. One Strike applies to drug-related activity, violent criminal activity, and abuse of alcohol that threatens the peaceful enjoyment of the premises for others.

One Strike applies to household members or their guests either on or off the premises. Owners as well as families can be denied, barred or terminated from the Housing Choice Voucher Program for drug-related and violent criminal activity.

INFORMAL HEARINGS

In the event of a programmatic or lease violation resulting in a court-ordered eviction or judgment, the CHA will issue a **Notice of Pending Termination** to the family with a copy to the owner. The family will be scheduled for an informal hearing to determine their continued participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Families have the right to be represented at the informal hearing and to review the documents that were used in making the decision to terminate assistance. Your landlord may choose to attend the informal hearing and provide support documentation to the CHA for the determination of continued assistance.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

Your assigned Occupancy Specialist is your primary point of contact for participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Occupancy Specialist must complete annual reexams and ensure that eligible families are leased in decent safe and sanitary units at the right cost.

If you have a question related to your subsidy or lease up in a unit, you should contact your assigned Occupancy Specialist. Any midyear change in income or

household members that occurs following the initial lease up or annual review should be referred to your assigned Occupancy Specialist.

The CHA also has individuals assigned to address specific client service needs. It is important to contact the right staff person to reduce the waiting period for getting a response. For example, any unresolved maintenance issues are to be referred to the Compliance Specialist.

The CHA Housing Choice Voucher Program offices are at 35 East 5th Street, Chester, PA 19013.

The telephone number for the main switchboard is **610-876-5561**. Dial the main number followed by the appropriate extension and you will reach the appropriate party. Staff extensions, office locations, and e-mails are listed on the following page:

CHA HCVP CONTACT INFORMATION

<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>
Annual Reexaminations/Lease-Up	<p>Agustina Martinez, Ext. 210 A-B Spanish Speaking Participants, HOPE VI amartinez@chesterha.org</p> <p>Georgette Fontenette, Ext, 120 C-F and Tenants of Tom Brawley, Heartley Homes, Ernie Ellis, Larney Gray, Joanne Blythe, James lacona Exclusive Investments, Stephen Bundrick, GlenNor Properties/Jim Dilliuo gfontenette@chesterha.org</p> <p>Ms. Bonnie Downs, Ext. 205 G-K Matopos Senior and Chatham Terrace PBV bdowns@chesterha.org</p> <p>Sandi Joshua, Ext. 237 L-O sioshua@chesterha.org</p> <p>Duane Lee, Ext. 213 P-R, FSS sioshua@chesterha.org Incoming Ports</p> <p>Betty Raison, Ext. 236 S-Z braison@chesterha.org</p>

For move requests or to report a change in income or household members report to the front desk at 35 East 5th Street to receive instructions and begin paperwork. Allow 30 days for income reviews to be completed and at least 60 days to complete a move. HCVP participants must be certified as tenants in good standing to move with continued assistance to a new unit.

**Unit Complaints-Owner failure to make repair
Rent Negotiations and Annual Rent Increase Approvals**

Wilsa Charles, Ext. 109
Compliance Specialist
wcharles@chesterha.org

**Initial Lease-Up Inspections, Annual Inspections,
Complaint and Quality Control Inspections**

McCright Associates
610-879-8423

FYI--CHA must order the inspection. McCright will either contact you by letter or a McCright Call Center representative will call you with the inspection appointment day and time. You are responsible for having an adult present at the scheduled inspection. If you have to change the appointment, please contact McCright directly and provide at least 48 hours notice. **You will be charged for failure to show for a scheduled appointment. Excessive no shows are grounds for termination of rental assistance.**