



# HUD HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER LANDLORD NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first newsletter for the landlord mailing list. You can expect to receive quarterly newsletters with tips on working with the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program; regulatory updates; interesting research; and stories of HCV landlords, tenants, and public housing agencies (PHAs) from around the country.

This issue includes tips on marketing to HCV tenants, a timeline charting the beginning of the HCV Program, and a story about an HCV tenant.

We want to thank you for participating in the HCV Program. Through your partnership with your local PHA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), we house nearly 2.3 million families across the United States. Families with Housing Choice Vouchers are frequently some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Landlords like you offer these families a safe and affordable place to call home — especially important during this time of great upheaval.

Because of the importance of landlords to the program and a decline in participation, HUD's Landlord Task Force hosted a series of listening sessions in seven cities across the United States to hear landlords' experiences with the HCV Program. In fact, this newsletter is an outgrowth of these sessions, since many landlords described wanting to receive more regular information from HUD. To learn more about the listening sessions and the many other Task Force activities shown in the adjacent box, visit our HCV landlord resources [webpage](#).

Thank you again for partnering with HUD and your local PHA to rent to HCV tenants. We hope you enjoy this newsletter. If you have comments, questions, or ideas for articles, please contact [landlordtaskforce@hud.gov](mailto:landlordtaskforce@hud.gov).

Sincerely,

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



## HUD LANDLORD TASK FORCE EFFORTS

- Hosted seven Landlord Listening Sessions throughout the country in 2018
- Conducted multiple virtual focus groups with PHAs
- Created a HCV Landlord Resources webpage
- Creating a HCV landlord strategies Guidebook for PHAs
- Hosted three webinars in a continuing series
- Conducted HUD's First Landlord Symposium

## UPCOMING EFFORTS

- Four virtual landlord symposiums
- Additional resources for landlords and PHAs

# MARKETING TO HCV TENANTS

HUD frequently receives inquiries from landlords who want to rent their units to HCV tenants, but do not know where to market their available units to attract voucher holders. Marketing to families with housing vouchers is not unlike marketing to private market tenants.

Many families with vouchers look for units using standard online search engines such as [www.Zillow.com](http://www.Zillow.com), [www.Trulia.com](http://www.Trulia.com), [www.Craigslist.org](http://www.Craigslist.org), [www.apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com), and others. One way that landlords can let HCV applicants on these websites know they are welcome to apply is by adding information on the description to indicate an interest in HCV renters such as, "Housing Choice Vouchers accepted" or "Section 8 welcome."



Some families with vouchers may look for available units on websites that focus on families with housing subsidies. Two search engines are [www.socialserve.org](http://www.socialserve.org) and [www.gosection8.com](http://www.gosection8.com). One website might be more popular in a particular community. Landlords can search these websites to see if there are local listings. If so, chances are voucher households in the landlord's area do use this website. *(HUD does not endorse the websites listed.)*

Landlords may also consider reaching out to their [local public housing agency \(PHA\)](#) to inquire where most voucher families are looking for housing. PHAs are required to provide their voucher holders with information on where to search for units. Some PHAs also host their own unit listing service, which they advertise on their websites, or they allow landlords to list physical advertisements on bulletin boards and in lobbies.

A landlord finds and screens a voucher family for suitability, in the same way they would a market-rate tenant. Then the landlord and the voucher family will turn in the request for tenancy approval (RFTA) packet to the PHA. The RFTA starts the lease-up and housing assistance payment process. The PHA will then check to make sure the rent for the unit aligns with other similar units in the market, known as the Rent Reasonableness test, and schedule an Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection. The landlord should connect with their local PHA to make sure they understand their obligations and the program requirements that need to be addressed early on in the tenant selection and lease-up process.

## SECTION 8 – HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER: THEN AND NOW

2000

2020

**1.4 million**  
families served



**2.3 million**  
families served

**15%**  
elderly or  
individuals



**28%**  
elderly

**13%**  
persons with  
disabilities



**26%**  
non-elderly  
disabled

Data source: HUD

# A LOOK BACK AT HCV

This is the first of several timeline articles covering the programs that came before the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Some readers may remember earlier programs and others may be surprised at how the program has changed.



**1970**

Creation of the Experimental Housing Allowance Program (EHAP) – This Congressionally mandated program tested the impacts and feasibility of providing low-income families with cash allowances to assist them in obtaining existing, decent rental housing of their choice. With a range of benefit types and requirements, EHAP provided lessons that helped develop the Section 8 Certificate Program.

- Served 30,000 households
- Program findings included:
  - » Payments had to be tied to payment standards to ensure families could locate a standard unit.
  - » Housing allowances did not create a demand for rental housing that drove up the cost of housing.
  - » Allowances did help preserve affordable housing by encouraging repairs and maintenance to meet HQS.

**1974**

The Development Act of 1974 amended the 1937 Housing Act by adding the Section 8 Certificate Demonstration Program, a tenant-based housing assistance program. It was also called Section 8 Existing as compared to Section 8 New which subsidized new construction, moderate or major rehabilitation by committing rental assistance to the new units through a master lease program.

- Served lower income families, with 30% required to be very low income.
- Introduced the fair market rent concept, permitted exception rents. Families could not rent above the FMR.
- Limited family contribution initially to 15 or 25 percent of income, but that was raised to 30 percent.
- Established screening and selecting the tenants as landlord role.
- Continued to maintain units according to HQS.

**1983**

The Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act repealed Section 8 New, but retained the Section 8 Existing Certificate Program. The act also created a new demonstration program to test a modified use of Section 8 vouchers, the Freestanding Voucher Program.

- Allowed for use of a payment standard other than the FMR (demonstration program).
- Allowed landlords with more expensive units to be part of the program if tenants chose to pay more than 30 percent of income.

1987

The Housing and Community Development Act made the demonstration voucher program permanent. Vouchers make up the difference between the FMR and 30 percent of family adjusted income.

- **Allowed family to choose to rent a more expensive unit, using more of their income. If unit was below payment standard family could keep some or all of savings.**
- **Introduced portability, allowing families to use their voucher in other jurisdictions. Later expanded to allow use in any jurisdiction in the country that operated a Section 8 tenant-based program.**
- **Added provisions that became known as “take one, take all,” where a landlord who accepted a Section 8 voucher could not decline other vouchers and “endless lease.” In the latter, the landlord had to renew a Section 8 tenant lease unless serious or repeated violations; Federal, state, or local law violations; or good cause. These provisions were intended to strengthen protections for voucher holders, but they raised concerns for landlords and their industry groups.**

Stay tuned for next issue’s Part 2 timeline to see what happened with these provisions!

To read more about the HCV Program’s past, see [Section 8 Tenant-Based Housing Assistance: A Look Back](#)



## SPOTLIGHT

In this recurring spotlight, the newsletter will highlight some of the landlords, PHAs, voucher tenants, and other partners so critical to the success of the Housing Choice Voucher Program. This spotlight focuses on an HCV tenant.

Voucher families come into the program through different paths. Adaora Onoura and her siblings were in foster care following the death of her mother and other family issues. She received a [Family Unification Program](#) voucher after she aged out of foster care. To work toward her future goals, such as improving job skills or saving for additional schooling, she participates in her PHA’s Family Self Sufficiency Program as do many HCV families. To see Ms. Onoura tell her own story or watch other Humans of HUD stories, go to the HUD website or HUD YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HUDchannel/search?query=adaora>

Humans of HUD builds on the popular “Humans of New York” photoblog to share stories of HUD’s impact on people’s lives.



## RESOURCES

For additional information on the HCV Program and resources for landlords and PHAs, please visit the [HUD HCV Landlord Resources webpage](#).

Click [here](#) to join the HCV Landlord mailing list.