



Section 8 Property Owner Information Guide



**Norwalk Housing Authority
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What is Section 8?

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program provides a rent subsidy on behalf of an eligible family. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides funding for this program.

The eligible family is issued a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher by a local, county or state agency, which is proof of their eligibility to participate in the program. The family must locate its own housing with a landlord who is willing to participate in the program.

The Housing Authority will work with the owner to make sure the unit is in decent, safe, and sanitary condition.

When everything is finalized the family will pay a portion of the rent directly to the landlord. The balance of the rent will be paid to the landlord by the Housing Authority.



Who is the Norwalk Housing Authority?

The Housing Authority is a division of the Community Development Department of the City of Norwalk, and Housing Authority staff are city employees. The Norwalk Housing Authority receives federal funds to operate the Section 8 program. Housing Authority staff receives direction from the Housing Authority Commission for Section 8 related local policy and program implementation issues. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds, regulates and monitors the program.

What kinds of housing are eligible?

Rental apartments, condominiums, and single-family homes located within the City of Norwalk are eligible. Units must be free of safety, fire, and health hazards.

Who are Section 8 participants?

Section 8 participants are very low-income families and individuals. A very low-income family is a family earning less than 50% of the area median income. Families completing a Section 8 application are placed on a waiting list according to certain selection criteria. When the family has reached the top of the list, they are interviewed to determine if they still meet the eligibility requirements and selection criteria for the program. If so, they are given a voucher.



Can my current tenant receive a Section 8 voucher?

If you have a tenant who is struggling to pay the rent, refer them to the Norwalk Housing Authority. At times, the waiting list will be closed to new applications. When the Housing Authority is accepting applications, your tenant will need to complete an application, and be placed on the waiting list. When they reach the top of the list, your tenant will be screened for eligibility. You cannot be related to the Section 8 tenant who leases from you.

Top Ten Reasons for Landlords to Participate

1. You are guaranteed the major portion of your rent by the federal government.
2. Section 8 guarantees landlords a ready pool of tenants that landlords can screen.
3. The Housing Authority will advertise your vacancy for free.
4. You maintain the flexibility of renting some of the units in your building to Section 8 participants while maintaining other units in the private market.
5. You have the same rights and responsibilities for screening subsidized families before agreeing to rent to them as for unsubsidized families.
6. You have the right and responsibility to evict problem tenants for non-payment of rent or for disturbing the neighbors' peaceful enjoyment of their homes, and with Section 8, you may keep the Housing Subsidy during an eviction.
7. You may receive additional benefits for program participation, such as a signing bonus, coverage for tenant-caused damages and free, informative workshops.
8. Because the waiting period is very long, Section 8 tenants have a great incentive to be good tenants. If a Section 8 tenant is evicted for lease violations, they will lose their voucher.
9. The Housing Authority inspects once a year and will let you know how the tenant is caring for your property.
10. You have a strong belief that all people are entitled to decent, safe, and sanitary housing.

Steps for Owner Participation

No application or registration is required. Prospective landlords are contacted directly by the voucher holders who are searching for a place to live or wish to use Section 8 assistance for their current rental unit. If you wish to advertise your rental units directly to voucher holders, contact the Housing Authority at (562) 929-5588.

If you are approached by a prospective Section 8 tenant, follow these easy steps:

1. Verify that the person has been issued a current voucher from a Housing Authority. You may request that the participant show you their voucher.
2. Screen the applicant using your normal screening procedures. The Housing Authority has not screened the family's behavior or suitability for tenancy.
3. Following the screening, the landlord and the voucher holder completes the Request for Tenancy Approval packet, which includes:
 - Request for Tenancy Approval form provides the Housing Authority with unit information including rent amount, utilities, bedroom size, owner information, and amenities.
 - W-9 with the owner's tax I.D. and payment information.
 - Lead Disclosure Statement
 - Include a copy of your Property Tax Bill or Grant Deed.
4. At this time the owner should retain the Instruction Sheet, Section 8 Tenancy Addendum, and model lease. The owner is responsible for providing and executing the lease with the tenant as soon as the unit is approved by Housing.

Note: You may complete and submit a Request for Tenancy Approval even if the unit has not been vacated by the current resident, as long as you have an approximate vacancy date.



What does the Housing Authority do with the Request for Tenancy Approval?

1. Check the paperwork for completeness.
2. Confirm unit address is in the City of Norwalk and confirm ownership information.
3. Confirm that the rent does not exceed the tenant's maximum allowable rent.
4. Perform an inspection. The inspection will be performed within five working days of the date the Request for Tenancy Approval was received (unless the unit is not vacant or is not ready for inspection).
5. Make sure the rent charged is reasonable. The rent must not exceed rents for comparable, unassisted units in the area.

How much rent can I charge?

Because units vary in size, quality, and amenities, there is no set rent amount you may charge. You may charge as much for the unit as you are charging for other unassisted units in the same building. The Section 8 unit cannot be the highest rent. If the rental unit is a single family home or condominium, your rent cannot exceed rents for comparable units in the neighborhood.

Each tenant is given a maximum rent. The maximum rent will be different for each household due to variations in the tenant's income and unit size. The maximum rent is the housing subsidy plus 40% of the tenant's adjusted monthly income. If you are asking for more rent than the tenant is allowed, then the unit cannot be approved for that tenant. However, other tenants could be eligible.

Housing Quality Standards

In order to pass inspection, the dwelling unit must be decent, safe and sanitary and meet the following general criteria:

1. The unit and its surroundings must be clean and free from vermin, insect and rodent infestation.
2. The unit must be self-contained providing space and security for: a living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom or living/sleeping room. Exterior doors and windows must be lockable.
3. Must have adequate ventilation. Must have adequate and safe heat.
4. The unit must have operable smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
5. Kitchens must have a sink with hot and cold running water, adequate storage, preparation and serving space, and disposal facilities for garbage.
6. At least two electrical outlets are required in each room. Living and sleeping rooms shall include at least one window that opens. A fixed ceiling or wall light must be installed in kitchen and bathroom. These light fixtures must be complete with globe or cover.
7. The unit must be structurally sound with no severe defects. The approaches to the unit must not present a danger of tripping or falling, and elevators must be in safe operating condition.
8. The interior must be free of all dangerous pollutants, such as carbon monoxide, sewer gas, fuel gas and dust.
9. There must be an approved safe water supply.
10. There must be no chipping or peeling paint in the interior or exterior of the unit which may present a lead poisoning hazard.
11. Water heaters must have a temperature pressure relief valve with discharge line, and each water heater must be securely fastened to a wall stud with earthquake straps.
12. Interior floor coverings must be clean and free of trip hazards.

Other criteria include:

- No safety hazards, such as bare electrical wires, uncovered electrical outlets, torn carpet, broken windows, missing vent screens, poor condition of halls, stairways, porches and walkways.
- Mail facilities must be secure.
- Appliances should be in good operating condition.
- The building must provide an alternative means of exiting in case of fire.
- Bedrooms must have a closet and one window that opens.

What happens after the inspection?

If the unit does not pass, the inspector will give you a list of items that need to be repaired. When you have made the repairs, you must contact the inspector for another inspection appointment.

As soon as the unit passes inspection and the rent is approved, you may enter into a lease with the tenant.

The lease start date must be the later of:

1. The day **AFTER** the unit passes inspection,
2. The day **AFTER** the unit is determined to be rent reasonable, or
3. The day **AFTER** both tenant and landlord sign the lease.

The lease must:

- Be a twelve month term.
- Include the Section 8 tenancy addendum.
- Be the same Lease used for unassisted tenants in the building.
- Specify what utilities and appliances are to be supplied by the owner.
- Comply with State and Local laws.

What if I do not normally use a lease?

If you do not normally use a lease, the residence is a single-family home or condominium, or you only rent to Section 8 tenants, you may use the model lease provided by the Housing Authority in the Request for Tenancy Approval packet. You are responsible for completing the lease and having the tenant sign it.

Can I collect a full security deposit?

Yes. You may collect up to two months rent for unfurnished units and three months for furnished from the tenant. Some voucher holders may have security deposit coupons issued by the City to assist with payment of the security deposit.

How and when will rent payments be made?

The Housing Authority calculates the amount of assistance each family receives. The level of assistance is based on family size and income. The Housing Choice Voucher Program requires a written agreement between the Housing Authority and the landlord authorizing monthly payments on behalf of the tenant. You will receive these payments on the 1st business day of each month. The tenant pays the remaining rent share directly to you.

Can I charge the tenant extra rent for utilities?

No. The tenant may only pay the portion of rent specified by the Housing Authority. If you collect additional amounts from the tenant for any reason, you will be violating your Contract with the Housing Authority and will be required to repay the tenant all excess payments.

Your lease must specify what utilities you are including. If your lease says that you are providing water, then you may **not** charge the tenant extra for water, even if usage or costs increase.

The Housing Authority may approve extra payments for the security deposit. If you permit a tenant to move in with a small security deposit with the agreement that the tenant will pay an extra amount each month until the security deposit is paid in full, then give a copy of the written agreement to the Housing Authority with the lease.

Housing Assistance Payments Contract

When your lease is received and approved by the Housing Authority, the Housing Authority will prepare a Contract for the housing subsidy. You will not receive any rental subsidy payments until you have signed the Contract.

The Contract will specify the amount the Housing Authority will pay each month.

Ownership and Payee Changes

If you move, do not forget to notify the Housing Authority of your new address and telephone number. All changes must be submitted in writing.

If you are selling the unit, be sure to notify the Housing Authority immediately. We will need to know the buyer's name, address, telephone number and tax I.D. number. The Housing Authority will ask the new owner if they will accept the existing Contract or if they would like a new Contract.

Roles and Partnerships

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a federal government agency that is accountable for public housing and assisted housing programs, has the following responsibilities:

- Interpret housing legislation and create program rules;
- Allocate housing assistance payment funds;
- Provide technical assistance and training to Housing Agencies;
- Monitor Housing Agency's compliance with program requirements and production goals.

Norwalk Housing Authority has the following responsibilities:

- Determine initial and ongoing family eligibility;
- Certify that units meet federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS);
- Make Housing Assistance Payments to owners;
- Monitor program performance and compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations.

The Owner has the following major responsibilities:

- Screen the family for selection and leasing;
- Notify Housing immediately upon learning of a vacate by a Section 8 tenant.
- Comply with the Housing Assistance Payments Contract, the lease, and Section 8 tenancy addendum;
- Comply with Housing Quality Standards (HQS), and Federal, State, and local laws;
- Perform normal landlord functions during tenancy (e.g., grounds and building maintenance, rent collection, and lease enforcement);

The Tenant responsibilities include:

- Abide by the requirements of the lease and tenancy addendum;
- Abide by HUD mandated family obligations or responsibilities that include:
 - Providing income and family information required by the Housing Authority;
 - Find an approvable unit;
 - Pay the tenant portion of the rent as approved by the Housing Authority;
 - Maintain the unit in accordance with the lease;
 - Cooperate with the Housing Authority in annual and special inspections.

Thank you for your interest in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Please contact us at (562) 929-5588 if you have any questions or to list your rental unit.



Equal Housing Opportunity

Federal and State laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, age, national origin, disability & handicap in the sale or rental of virtually all housing. Tenants are urged to report any instances of discrimination.