

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Introduction for Prospective Landlords and Refresher for Current Landlords

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HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION AND REFRESHER FOR LANDLORDS

What You'll Learn:

- Housing Choice Voucher Program History
- DCHA Mission Statement
- Housing Choice Voucher Program Legal Relationships
- Initial Inspections
- Annual/Biennial Inspections
- Quality Control Inspections
- Emergency Inspections
- Lead-based Hazards and Safety
- Monthly Payments
- How to get started?
- Transfer Process
- Evictions Process
- Housing Enjoyable Living Program (HELP)
- **Myths and Misconceptions...**
- Questions and Answers

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Brief History:

- The Housing Choice Voucher Program (previously called Section 8) was established as part of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.
- The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and was developed to provide decent, safe, and affordable housing to eligible families.
 - DCHA also administers local vouchers that follow the same rules and principles as the federal voucher program.
- HUD establishes the rules, regulations, and guidelines that govern the program.

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Mission Statement:

The District of Columbia Housing Authority:

- Provides quality affordable housing to extremely-low through moderate income households;
- Fosters sustainable communities; and
- Cultivates opportunities for residents to improve their lives.

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Housing Choice Voucher Program Legal Relationships:

- **What is a voucher?**
 - A voucher is a subsidy to assist eligible families with their rent.
 - Families are given 180 calendar days to locate a unit.
 - Issuance and expiration date are noted on the voucher. Pay attention to the expiration date!
 - A valid voucher will be signed by the tenant and a HCVP staff.
- **What is a lease?**
 - A contractual agreement between the lessee or tenant to pay the lessor or landlord for the use of an asset (such as a house, apartment, townhouse, etc.).
- **What is a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract?**
 - HAP subsidy is the rental assistance payments made on behalf of the eligible family participating in the HCV program. The HAP contract is an agreement between DCHA HCV program and the landlord of a unit occupied by an assisted family.

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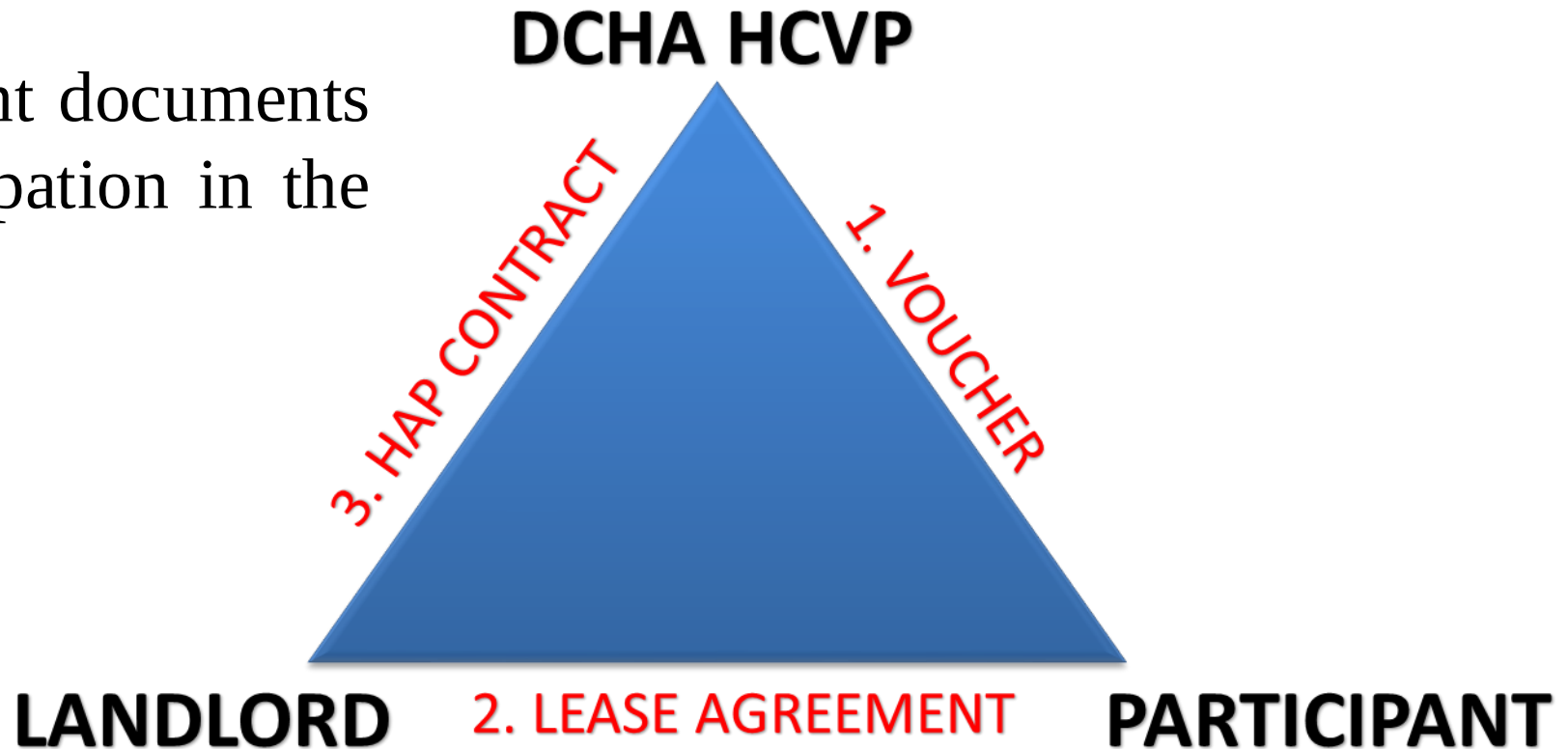
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Housing Choice Voucher Program Legal Relationships:

There are three (3) important documents that are required for participation in the program:

- Voucher
- Lease Agreement
- HAP Contract



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UNDERSTANDING THE RESPONSIBILITIES

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Determine eligibility

Issue voucher

Approve or disapprove rental unit

Schedule and conduct inspection

Pay monthly subsidy to landlord

Update and recalculate tenant rental portion based on reported income and household changes

Enforce rules and regulations as stipulated in HAP contract and Family Obligations

LANDLORD

Screen tenant for residency

Charge reasonable rent

Enforce the lease

Collect security deposits and tenant rent portion

Maintain unit decent, safe, and sanitary

Manage all rental functions for assisted unit, including utilities and services as stated in lease

PARTICIPANT/TENANT

Sign lease and abide by terms of lease and Family Obligations

Pay rent portion on time to landlord

Report household member or income changes within 30 days

Search for housing and landlords willing to participate in HCVP

Maintain unit and allow DCHA and landlord to inspect



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Privacy Act Statement. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is authorized to collect the information required on this form by Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f). Collection of family members' names is mandatory. The information is used to authorize a family to look for an eligible unit and specifies the size of the unit. The information also sets forth the family's obligations under the Housing Choice Voucher Program. HUD may disclose this information to Federal, State and local agencies when relevant to civil, criminal, or regulatory investigations and prosecutions. It will not be otherwise disclosed or released outside of HUD, except as permitted or required by law. Failure to provide any of the information may result in delay or rejection of family voucher issuance.

Please read entire document before completing form Fill in all blanks below. Type or print clearly.		Voucher Number t00000001
1. Insert unit size in number of bedrooms. (This is the number of bedrooms for which the Family qualifies, and is used in determining the amount of assistance to be paid on behalf of the Family to the owner.)		1 Unit Size 1
2. Date Voucher Issued (mm/dd/yyyy) Insert actual date the Voucher is issued to the Family.		2. Issue Date (mm/dd/yyyy) 01/01/2020
3. Date Voucher Expires (mm/dd/yyyy) must be at least sixty days after date issued. Voucher is issued. (See Section 6 of this form.)		3. Expiration Date (mm/dd/yyyy) 03/01/2020
4. Date Extension Expires (if applicable)(mm/dd/yyyy) (See Section 6. of this form)		4. Date Extension Expires (mm/dd/yyyy) 06/28/2020
5. Name of Family Representative Jane Doe	6. Signature of Family Representative <i>Jane Doe</i>	Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy) 01/01/2020
7. Name of Public Housing Agency (PHA) District of Columbia Housing Authority		
8. Name and Title of PHA Official Jackie Lockhorn, Orien. Co	9. Signature of PHA Official <i>Jackie Lockhorn</i>	Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy) 01/01/2020

1. Housing Choice Voucher Program

A. The public housing agency (PHA) has determined that the above named family (item 5) is eligible to participate in the housing choice voucher program. Under this program, the family chooses a decent, safe and sanitary unit to live in. If the owner agrees to lease the unit to the family under the housing choice voucher program, and if the PHA approves the unit, the PHA will enter into a housing assistance payments (HAP) contract with the owner to make monthly payments to the owner to help the family pay the rent.

B. The PHA determines the amount of the monthly housing assistance payment to be paid to the owner. Generally, the monthly housing assistance payment by the PHA is the difference between the applicable payment standard and 30 percent of monthly adjusted family income. In determining the maximum initial housing assistance payment for the family, the PHA will use the payment standard in effect on the date the tenancy is approved by the PHA. The family may choose to rent a unit for more than the payment standard, but this choice does not change the amount of the PHA's assistance payment. The actual amount of the PHA's assistance payment will be determined using the gross rent for the unit selected by the family.

2. Voucher

A. When issuing this voucher the PHA expects that if the family finds an approvable unit, the PHA will have the money available to enter into a HAP contract with the owner. However, the PHA is under no obligation to the family, to any owner, or to any other person, to approve a tenancy. The PHA does not have any liability to any party by the issuance of this voucher.

B. The voucher does not give the family any right to participate in the PHA's housing choice voucher program. The family becomes a participant in the PHA's housing choice voucher program when the HAP contract between the PHA and the owner takes effect.

C. During the initial or any extended term of this voucher, the PHA may require the family to report progress in leasing a unit at such intervals and times as determined by the PHA.

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Sample Voucher Document

Block #1: Unit Size

Block #4: True Voucher Expiration

Block #6: Voucher Holder Signature

Block #9: HCVP Staff Signature

Pay Attention to the Expiration Date!

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Housing Assistance Payment Contract:

The HAP Contract contains the terms and agreements for which DCHA/HCVP, the landlord and tenants are to abide by.

Housing Assistance Payments Contract (HAP Contract) Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance Housing Choice Voucher Program

U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development
Office of Public and Indian Housing

Part A of the HAP Contract: Contract Information

(To prepare the contract, fill out all contract information in Part A.)

1. Contents of Contract

This HAP contract has three parts:
Part A: Contract Information
Part B: Body of Contract
Part C: Tenancy Addendum

2. Tenant

3. Contract Unit

4. Household

The following persons may reside in the unit. Other persons may not be added to the household without prior written approval of the owner and the PHA.

5. Initial Lease Term

The initial lease term begins on (mm/dd/yyyy): _____
The initial lease term ends on (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

6. Initial Rent to Owner

The initial rent to owner is: \$ _____
During the initial lease term, the owner may not raise the rent to owner.

7. Initial Housing Assistance Payment

The HAP contract term commences on the first day of the initial lease term. At the beginning of the HAP contract term, the amount of the housing assistance payment by the PHA to the owner is \$ _____ per month.
The amount of the monthly housing assistance payment by the PHA to the owner is subject to change during the HAP contract term in accordance with HUD requirements.

8. Utilities and Appliances

The owner shall provide or pay for the utilities/appliances indicated below by an "O". The tenant shall provide or pay for the utilities/appliances indicated below by a "T". Unless otherwise specified below, the owner shall pay for all utilities and provide the refrigerator and range/microwave.

Item	Specify fuel type	Paid by
Heating	☐ Natural gas ☐ Bottle gas ☐ Electric ☐ Heat Pump ☐ Oil ☐ Other	
Cooking	☐ Natural gas ☐ Bottle gas ☐ Electric ☐ Other	
Water Heating	☐ Natural gas ☐ Bottle gas ☐ Electric ☐ Oil ☐ Other	
Other Electric		
Water		
Sewer		
Trash Collection		
Air Conditioning		
Other (specify)		
		Provided by
Refrigerator		
Range/Microwave		

Signatures

Public Housing Agency

Print or Type Name of PHA

Signature

Print or Type Name and Title of Signatory

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Mail payments to:

Owner

Print or Type Name of Owner

Signature

Print or Type Name and Title of Signatory

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Name

Address (street, city, state, zip code)

Utility responsibilities and
fuel types

PHA and Owner
Signatures

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Eligible Applicant Requirements:

- A household is deemed eligible only after:
 - Attending initial eligibility appointment and meeting income guidelines.
 - All adult household members must pass Criminal History checks.
- Each eligible applicant must also attend an Orientation Briefing to be issued a voucher to search for a unit.
 - Briefings address various issues: program processes, family obligations, housekeeping, housing search practices/ etiquette, etc.
 - Notification is provided to the current landlord when a voucher to search for a unit is issued.



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Inspections:

- All HCVP inspections are conducted by certified DCHA staff, free of charge to participating landlords.
- Types of inspections:
 - Initial
 - Annual/Biennials
 - Emergency
 - Quality Control

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Initial Inspections:

- An Initial Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection must be conducted and passed before the unit is eligible to receive Housing Assistance Payments (HAP).
 - Initiated upon receipt of a **completed** Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) Packet
 - Review the pre move-in inspection checklist included with the RFTA packet and address any deficiencies in unit prior to submission to ensure minimal delays in lease-up process.
- Landlords will be provided an appointment date and approximate time to conduct the inspection.

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Initial Inspection Timeline:

- **Determining Eligibility:** *5 Business Days* after submission
 - Includes: verifying ownership, rent determination, all forms are signed/ provided.
- **Scheduling Inspection:** *7 Business Days* after submission
 - Will be notified via Owners' Portal.
- **Missing Documents Due:** *10 Business Days* after submission
 - Failure to address issues listed in Owners' Portal by 10th day will result in scheduled inspection and RFTA packet being cancelled.
- **Conducting Inspection:** Within *12 Business Days* after submission
 - If unit fails initial inspection you will be allowed 14 days to make repairs and pass re-inspection.



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Annual/Biennial Inspections:

- HQS inspections are conducted annually; typically, around the tenant's anniversary month.
 - Biennial inspections are offered through DCHA's 'Moving to Work' designation.
 - Unit must not have had a final failed inspection in the past two years.
 - May be subject to higher percentage of Quality Control inspections.
- To ensure that the unit passes inspection, you should:
 - Include provisions in your lease that address maintenance and inspections that test all smoke detectors and landlord provided appliances;
 - Review your original inspection checklist to ensure all required repairs are completed prior to inspection date and time.

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Emergency Inspections:

- The health and safety of the tenant is in jeopardy when there is:
 - No electricity or gas
 - No water utility
 - No working appliances (stoves, refrigerators, etc.)
 - Inoperable smoke and carbon monoxide detector(s)
 - No heat, during the winter months

Important Note

DCHA/HCVP is required to provide landlords with a 24 hours notice (typically next business day) to correct the violation(s) for an emergency inspection. Failure to correct violation(s) within 24 hours can result in contract termination.



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Quality Control Inspections:

- HQS inspection that examine a sample of housing units within the PHA's jurisdiction each year and occurs throughout the year.
- A full inspection is conducted as a follow-up review to:
 - Identify any inconsistencies with the inspection protocol; and
 - Determine the validity of the original inspection.

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Lead-based Hazards and Safety:

- If the unit/property was built prior to 1978, has cracking, chipping, peeling or chalking paint or surfaces, it may have lead-based paint hazards in the unit/property.
 - If any of the above is identified during an inspection, the HQS Inspector will require you to get a lead-based certification that the unit/property is lead-based free.
 - In your reference material, there are a list of City-certified Lead-based companies that you can use to certify the unit/property as lead-based free.
- It is now required that all landlords complete the Lead Based Disclosure Form for DC Rental Properties that is located in the RFTA packet.

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Unit Abatements:

- The assisted unit will be abated following two failed inspections.
 - HAP subsidy will cease effective the first day of the following monthly accounting period.
 - Example: 2nd inspection failed January 10th HAP subsidy for February will be held.
- Owner and tenant will receive ‘Contract Cancellation Notice’ informing both parties of the abatement effective date and effective date of HAP termination.
 - Tenant cannot be held responsible for any withheld HAP subsidy while the unit is under abatement.
 - Tenant will be issued a voucher to move if requested by family.

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Unit Abatements Cont'd:

- Third inspection is offered and must be requested at least 10 business days prior to date of contract cancellation.
 - 3rd Inspection Fee - \$75.00
- HAP Contract automatically terminated if...
 - 3rd inspection fails
 - 45 days have passed from abatement effective date without passed inspection.



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Unit Abatements Cont'd:

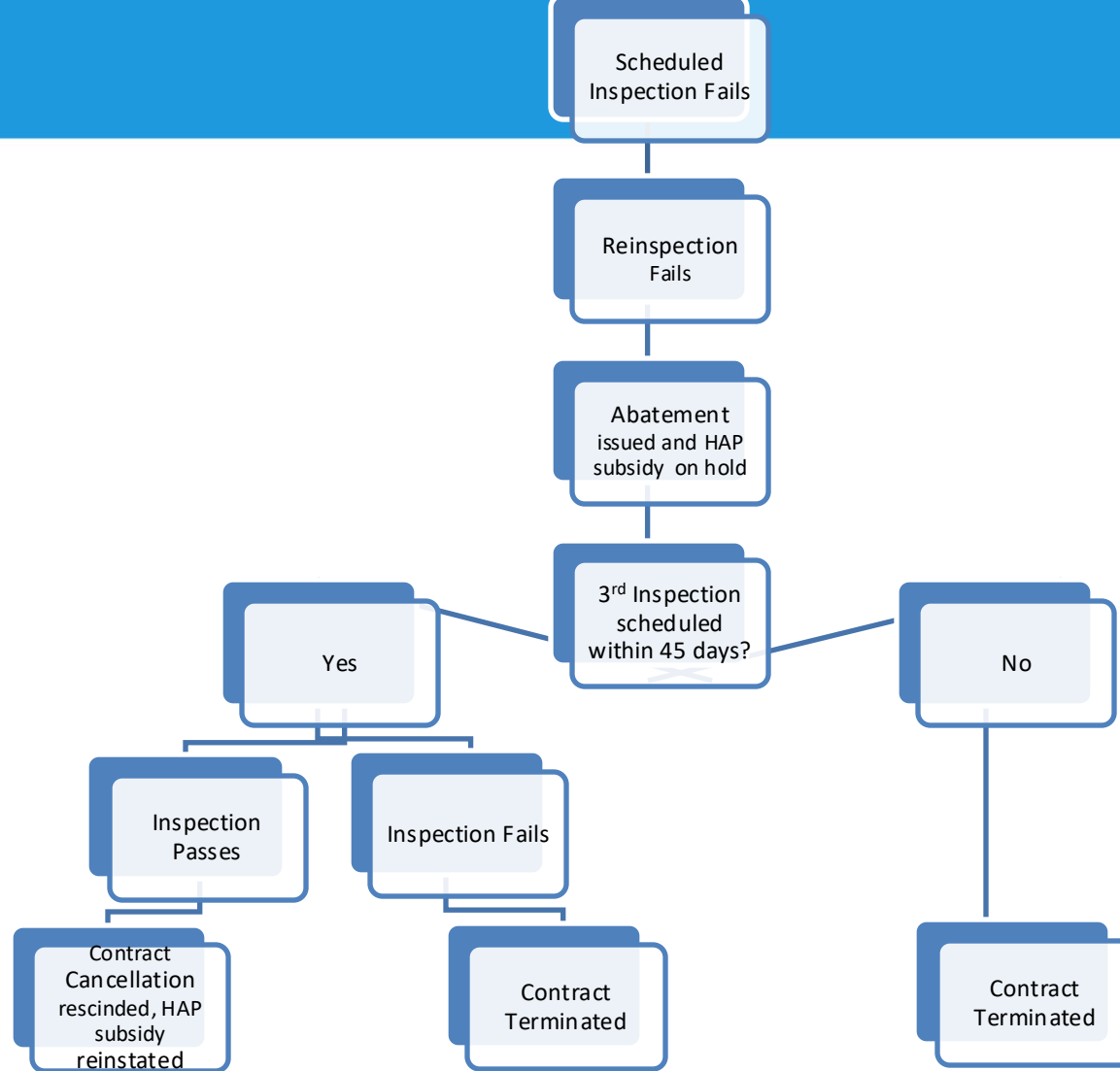
- HAP Contract *cannot* be reinstated once terminated.
 - Tenant will be responsible for total/gross rent only after contract termination date.
 - It becomes the landlord's responsibility to enforce the lease agreement.
- If unit passes third inspection, payment will be reinstated from date of passed inspection.
 - Landlord will not receive payment for days unit was under abatement!

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Monthly Payments:

- DCHA/HCVP pays a monthly Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) for a family directly to the landlord
 - If the family has a rent portion, DCHA/HCVP pays its portion and the family pays their portion.
- Payments are processed twice a month:
 - On or around the 1st and 15th day of the month.
- Direct Deposit is mandatory for all owners participating in the program.
 - No paper checks will be processed or mailed.

Important Note

It is the responsibility of the landlord to collect the tenant portion of rent.

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Owners' Portal:

- DCHA/HCVP now requires all landlords to use the Owners' Portal.
- Your access information will be provided once you become a participating landlord in the program.
- As a participating landlord in the program, you will be able to:
 - Submit documents, request inspections, see and dispute inspection results, review and sign contracts, request rent increases (subjected to availability of funds), track all your tenants in the program and view and dispute payments.



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Owners' Portal:

- Visit the following website: dcha.hcvportal.org.

- Can be accessed through DCHA main webpage

- 'Landlords' tab 'Login'

- New account setup for first time landlords:

1. Click on "Sign Up" below the words "New to the HCV Program? Have a RFTA packet to upload?"
2. Enter the Email Address and password you want to use for your Owner Portal Account and click "Register".
3. Activate your new account (click the link in your email inbox)
4. Login to your new Owner Portal account. Go to **MOVES > UPLOAD MY RTA** to submit your completed Lease Up Package. No Vendor# is necessary. Enter your prospective Tenant's Name, Voucher Number and Unit Address. Click on "Select File" to attach your completed Lease Up Package. Then, click on "Submit" to send the package to DCHA.

- Once first RFTA package is received you will be provided with a vendor code to complete your individual Owners' Portal account.

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- Blank RFTA packet available through Owners' Portal under the Resource Tab.



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Rent Reasonableness



Location



Size



Amenities



Utilities

- HUD requires that PHAs ensure rents charged by owners to Housing Choice Voucher Program participants are reasonable.
- PHAs must compare the requested rents for voucher assisted units to rents for similar unassisted units in the marketplace to determine what is reasonable.
- PHAs are required to:
 - Complete a market study annually;
 - Set a payment standard annually;
 - Update the utility allowance schedule annually; and
 - Complete a unit by unit rent reasonableness analysis.



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Fair Housing Law In the District of Columbia:

- It is illegal to discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived factors:

Federal Protected Traits

- Race
- Religion
- National Origin
- Sex
- Color
- Disability
- Familial status(including pregnancy)

Locally Protected Traits

- Age
- Marital status
- Personal appearance
- Sexual orientation
- Family responsibilities
- Matriculation
- Political affiliation
- Sealed Eviction Record

- Gender identity or expression
- Source of income
- Place of residence or business
- Status as a victim of an intra-family offense
- Homeless Status

Please thoroughly review the federal Fair Housing Act and the DC Human Rights Act.

You can learn more by visiting: <https://ohr.dc.gov/fairhousing> or <https://dhcd.dc.gov/service/fair-housing>

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Regulations on Tenant Screening Process

1. Landlords may charge an application fee to prospective tenant, but no more than \$50.
2. Landlords may not charge any fee other than application fee prior to signing a lease with prospective tenant.
 - No holding deposits allowed for prospective tenant using a government funded housing voucher.
3. Landlord may only charge a singular application fee should prospective tenant apply to one or more units owned or operated by that landlord and if application is within 30 calendar days.

Learn more about the new laws by visiting <https://code.dccouncil.gov/> and reviewing § 42–3505.10. *Tenant screening*



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Fair Criminal Record Screening for Housing Act of 2016:

- Requires landlord to disclose all eligibility criteria *prior* to accepting application fees:
 - Financial/ Credit, employment, criminal, rental history, etc.
- Limits inquiry of applicant's criminal background or arrest history to only *after* conditional offer of housing is made (i.e., other eligibility criteria have been met).
 - Inquiry limited to pending criminal accusations or specific convictions that have occurred within the past **seven (7) years**.
 - Specific convictions listed in law can be found Section 3(d) of Fair Criminal Record Screening for Housing Act of 2016.



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Fair Criminal Record Screening for Housing Act of 2016:

- Requires landlord to provide statement that applicants may provide evidence of errors within their criminal record, rehabilitation, or other mitigating factors.
- Requires landlord to provide written notice of specific reason for withdrawing conditional offer along with notice of applicant's right to file complaint with D.C. Office of Human Rights.
 - Applicant has 20 days to request free copy of information used during application process (including criminal background report) - landlord then has ten (10) days to provide.

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Remember, it is illegal to...

- Deny a reasonable accommodation or allow reasonable modifications for persons with disabilities.
- Inform a family a unit is not available when it is.
- Advertise to preferred groups only.



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How do I get started?

- 1. Advertise Your Property**
- 2. Screen Applicants**
- 3. Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) Packet**
- 4. Prepare for Inspection**
- 5. Execute/ Sign the Lease and HAP Contract**
- 6. Move-In Process**

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1. Advertise Your Property

- Visit rental website to advertise your property (www.dchousingsearch.org, affordablehousing.com, etc.).
 - Be sure to mention “Voucher Holders are Welcome” in your advertisement.
- Meet and Lease events



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2. Screen Applicants Thoroughly

- Contact former landlord references;
- You may visit applicant's current residence, if this is/was required of all applicants and current tenants;
- Review the issued voucher for unit size and expiration date; and
- Ensure household composition has not changed since the voucher was issued.

Important Note

Voucher holding families should be screened no differently than a market rate renter.

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2. Screen Applicants Thoroughly Cont'd...

- Follow Fair Criminal Record Screening for Housing Act of 2016.
 - Using third-party platforms which conduct criminal history and credit reports simultaneously are in violation.
- DCHA only conducts criminal background checks at initial eligibility.
 - DCHA **does not** conduct credit checks.

Important Note

It is your responsibility to screen your applicants. DCHA/HCVF does not select your tenant for you, therefore choose wisely and judiciously. DCHA/HCVF is only responsible for the subsidy to help the family pay the rent.

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3. Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) Packet

- RFTA packet contains unit information and related forms that must be completed in their entirety before an inspection can be conducted and payments made.
 - Can be found in Owners' Portal: **Resources** **Program Forms** **'Blank Lease Up Package'**
 - The packet contains the following:
 - RFTA Document and Checklist, Agent/Management Agreement (if applicable), Form W-9, Lead-based Paint Disclosure Form, Ownership Information (Recorded Deed updated), Owner Current Address and Contact Information, Direct Deposit Request Forms, Pre Move-in Inspections Checklist.

Important Note

Please complete the entire packet and provide all requested documents. Failure to do so will slow the process and may result in your packet being canceled.



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4. Preparing Your Unit for an “Initial” Inspection

- Each unit must pass a DCHA/HCVP Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection.
- Units will only be inspected twice, **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
 - If unit fails inspections twice, repairs will need to be made and RFTA packet will need to be resubmitted if landlord and tenant want to continue lease-up process.
- The landlord or a representative over the age of 18 must be present during the inspection.
 - If no one is home, a failed inspection will be noted for the unit.
- All units submitted for initial inspection must be **vacant** and **empty** at time of inspection.
 - No furniture is allowed, including staging furniture.
- Once your unit passes inspection a Housing Program Specialist/Housing Program Coordinator (HPS/HPC) will contact you to begin the move-in process.

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5. Execute/Sign the Lease and HAP Contract

- HPS/HPC will request for signed lease by email and provide:
 - Approved contract rent
 - Move-in date and initial lease terms
 - Rent breakdown
- The submitted lease should:
 - Have the correct unit address listed
 - Match the approved contract rent
 - Be at least 12 months and begin and end on the agreed upon date
 - Clearly list utility and appliance responsibilities (must match submitted RFTA)
 - Only list DCHA/ HCVP approved household members

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5. Execute/Sign the Lease and HAP Contracts Cont'd

■ HAP Contract Signing:

- The HAP Contract will be provided for signature after receipt of approved lease.
- DCHA/ HCVP will execute contract and process initial HAP subsidy once signed and returned.
- Payments will be made based on effective date of executed contract.

Important Note

Landlord MUST return both executed lease agreement and HAP contract within 60 days or contract will be terminated.

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5. Execute/Sign the Lease and HAP Contracts Cont'd

- Tenant Portion and HAP Contract
 - The family is required to pay at least 30% of their gross annual adjusted income towards their rent and utilities (if applicable).
 - The owner will receive the difference from HCVP if the family is responsible for a rent portion. *In some instances, HCVP pays the entire contract rent.*
- It is illegal to receive payments unapproved by HCVP from the tenant.
 - Side payments are actionable offenses under federal law.
 - Anyone found guilty of violating this act can be fined and/or debarred from participating in the program.

Important Note

It is the responsibility of the landlord to ensure they are collecting the family's portion of rent. The tenant may not pay more than their approved portion, as calculated by HCVP

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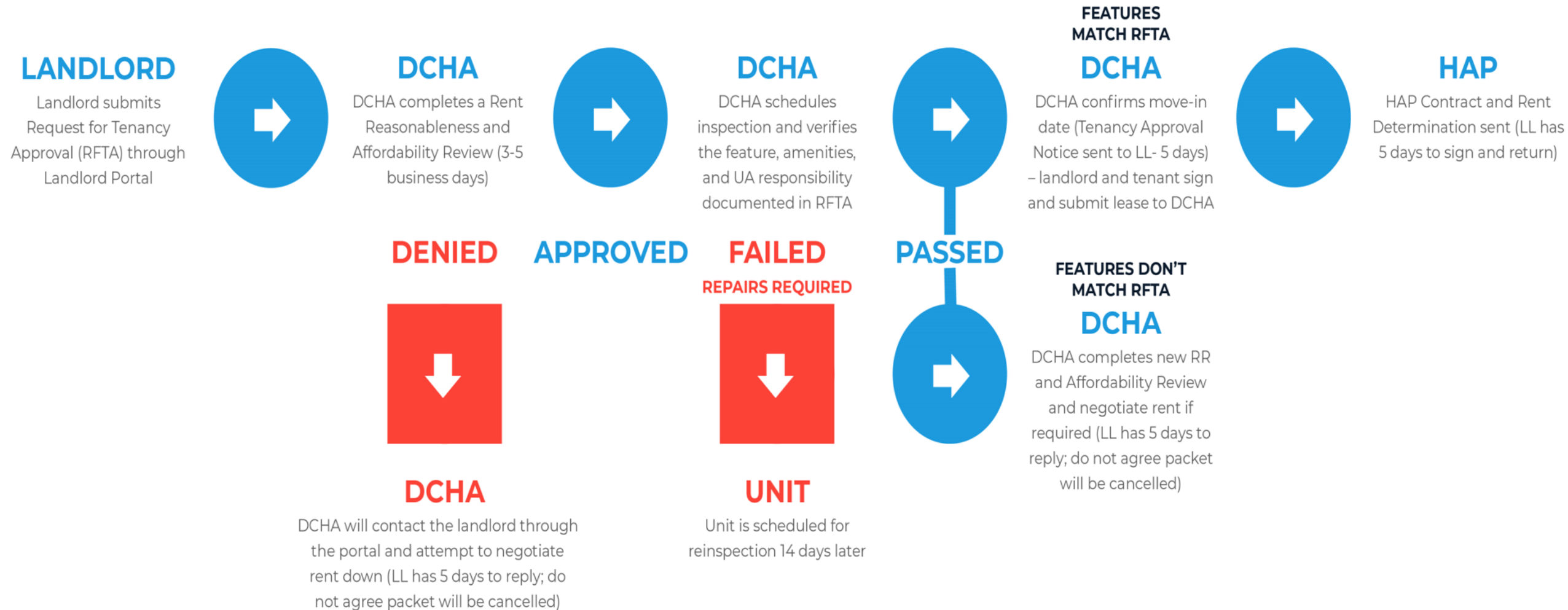
INTRODUCTION AND REFRESHER FOR LANDLORDS

6. Move-In Process

- Move-in dates are discussed and agreed upon by the owner and tenant as coordinated by the HPS/HPC.
- Family should not move in prior to HCVP approving the date.
 - HCVP will not prorate rental payments for any early move-in dates. It will be the tenants responsibility to cover those charges.
 - Please ensure that you have collected the full security deposit and lease is signed before your tenant takes possession of the unit.



Process Map: Lease Ups



Rent Increases

DCHA must complete a rent reasonableness assessment for each rent increase

- Landlords may request a rent increase for units that meet the following requirements:
 1. Passed inspection within 24 months of request
 2. The participants must have occupied the unit for at least 12 months.
- Landlords MUST notify tenants 60 days prior to the anticipated effective date of the requested rent increase request
- If at the time of the request, the Agency determines the that current contract rent is not reasonable, DCHA is required to adjust the rent downward
- If the requested amount is higher than the rent reasonableness amount from AHC, DCHA will approve the lesser amount



District of Columbia Housing Authority
300 7th Street, SW | 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 535-1000 | dchousing.org

Rent Increase Request Form

Rent Increase Policy: This Rent Increase Request form must be submitted at least sixty (60) days prior to the anticipated effective date of the requested rent increase. The family's share CANNOT be increased without prior written approval from the District of Columbia Housing Authority.

Rent Reasonableness Policy: Per federal regulation 24 CFR 982.507, the Authority will conduct a test to determine if the requested rent is reasonable. The rent charged for an assisted unit must be reasonable in relation to rents currently being charged for comparable units in the private unassisted market and must not be more than rents currently being charged in the premises for other households.

Tenant/Participant Name	Tenant/Voucher ID	
Street Address	Apartment Number	Complex Name, if applicable
City	State, Zip Code	
Owner or Company Name	Vendor ID	Main Telephone Number
Mailing Address	City	State, Zip Code
E-mail Address	Telephone Number	Agent Name, if applicable

Property Description and Rent Information:

Current Rent: _____ Requested Rent: _____ Effective Date: _____

of Bedrooms: _____ # of Bathrooms: _____ Square Footage: _____ Year Built: _____

Structure Type: ☐ Single Family Detached Home ☐ Low Rise ☐ Semi-Detached/Duplex
☐ High-Rise w/Elevator ☐ Rowhouse/townhouse ☐ Manufactured Home

Revised 08/23/2023



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Appeals – Lease Ups and Rent Increase Requests

New Lease Appeal Process

- If you submitted an RFTA and DCHA determined the reasonable rent was lower than your request, DCHA's Housing Program Specialist (HPS) team will contact you through the portal to negotiate the rent
- If you wish to appeal that decision, the HSP team will provide you with a "comparable form" to complete and submit to AHC at ownercomps@GoSection8.com. The process takes 3-5 business days.
- When AHC informs you the comparable you submitted was validated, you will notify the HPS via the Owner's portal "Message Center."
- The HPS will rerun the Rent Reasonableness and update you accordingly.

Rent Increase Appeals

- If you requested a rent increase and it was denied. DCHA will provide you a Rent Increase Ineligibility Letter via the owner's portal "Message Center."
- You may appeal by emailing: hcvpappeals@dchousing.org
- DCHA's Quality Assurance team is managing these inquiries



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Move-Out Process:

- Tenants are permitted to move after the initial lease term:
 - Typically after 1 year of residing in the unit.
 - Must be in good standing under current lease (no outstanding rent or tenant-responsible utility bills).
- Tenant must provide proper notice to landlord and HCVP:
 - Typically with a 30 days or more notice as stated in lease;
 - Self-certification notice to HCVP acknowledging notice was provided to and received by landlord;
 - Be aware of exceptions (**VAWA, Reasonable Accommodations and HAP Contract Termination**).

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Eviction Process:

As a landlord you should **always**:

- Understand the District of Columbia's Landlord and Tenant Laws;
- Retain copies of the lease, contracts, receipts, repair requests, pictures, and notices;
- Issue a receipt for tenant rent payments; and
- Serve legally required notices.
 - Take prompt action for lease violations and notify the household's assigned HPS/HPC.

Important Note

Please notify HCVP of any pending eviction proceedings with your tenant.

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DCHA Offered Services:

- Landlord/Tenant Mediation
 - Mitigate ongoing tenant issues in a personal setting with trained DCHA staff.
 - Common Issues: unpaid rent, unpaid utility/ water bills, lease violations, housekeeping issues, etc.
 - Avoid costly and time-consuming court process.
- Housing Enjoyable Living Program (HELP)
 - Training and review of family obligations relating to housekeeping allowing tenants to better understand the importance of tidiness and general unit upkeep.

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Highlights and Refresher:

- All documents required to start the lease-up process are on the Owners' Portal under the 'Resources' tab.
- Complete the RFTA packet in its entirety...missing signatures, initials, forms, etc., **all** hold up the lease-up process.
- Address any issues listed on the pre move-in inspections checklist prior to submitting the completed RFTA packet.
- Track the lease-up process through the Owners' Portal, check regularly since anything missing will be listed under the RFTA packet that was uploaded.

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Highlights and Refresher Cont'd:

- **Enforce your lease** and notify the HPS/HPC immediately if any legal notices are issued to your tenants.
- HCVP cannot act if we do not know!
- DCHA is **only** responsible for the monthly HAP subsidy.
- Remember we do offer mediation services to help resolve any recurring tenant issues.
- Screen **all** adult household members as you would a non-HCVP family.
- **DO NOT** allow the tenant to take possession of the unit or move in without HCVP's approval.

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Myths and Misconceptions...

1. **It is almost impossible to evict a Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) participant when they violate the lease. – *False***
 - Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) participants are bound by the terms of the lease and are subject to evictions as is any non-voucher holder/market renter/tenant.
2. **Landlords that participate in the program are required to use a lease agreement provided by DCHA/HCVP that contains relaxed provisions. – *False***
 - Landlords are required to use the same lease agreement that is being used for their market renters/tenants.
3. **Once a landlord leases to a voucher participant, you are required to lease to every other voucher participant that approaches you for housing from that point on. – *False***
 - Landlords can opt to cancel their relationship with DCHA/HCVP at any time. However, we ask that you allow the tenant reasonable time to locate a new place. You will still receive monthly payments until contract termination takes place.
4. **Landlords are not allowed to collect security deposits. – *False***
 - Security deposits should not exceed the monthly contract rent and should adhere to local laws. If you allow a tenant to move into your unit before receiving a security deposit, HCVP will not intervene on your behalf to help get that payments or any other rental payments due.

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More Myths and Misconceptions...

5. HCVP requires Housing Quality Standards(HQS) beyond that one would consider being “average.” - *False*
- HUD has provided a list of minimum Housing Quality Standards (HQS) that a dwelling unit must meet in order to qualify. These standards address the basic needs of decent, safe and affordable housing.
6. **Payments to the landlord can stop without warning.** – *False*
- DCHA/HCVP does not “freeze” or “fail to pay” Housing Assistant Payments (HAP) without reason or notice. Landlords who experience problems receiving payment should contact DCHA/HCVP to determine if or when payments should be made.



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QUESTIONS?

Landlords can visit www.dchousing.org for information on the payment standards and submarket rents, the Administrative Plan, updates and other important information about the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

