

HUD's Role

HUD provides funds to allow housing authorities the ability to make housing assistance payments on behalf of families. HUD also pays a fee to SHA for the cost of administering the program. When additional funds become available to assist new families, HUD invites PHAs to submit applications for funds for additional housing choice vouchers. Applications are then reviewed and funds awarded to the selected PHAs on a competitive basis. HUD monitors SHA's voucher program administration to ensure regulations are properly followed.

Restrictions on assisting Non-Citizens

Effective June 19, 1995 individuals must be U.S. citizens or eligible immigrants to qualify for SHA's programs. Eligible immigrants must have their status verified by Immigration and Naturalization Services. (INS).

To determine and verify eligibility, the Housing Authority requires that each family member declare his/her immigration status. At least one family member must be able to declare U.S. Citizenship or eligible immigrant status to receive assistance. Housing assistance will be pro-rated based on specific program regulations if there are family members unable to declare eligible status. If no family member can declare eligible status, assistance will be denied.

Non citizen students are ineligible family members even though they are in the country lawfully. The student's visa must be provided, but status verification and declaration are not required. Non-citizen students will be listed on the statement of ineligible family members.

Acceptable documents of eligible immigration status: (must be originals)

- Resident Alien Card (I-551)
- Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-151)
- Arrival Departure Record (I-94)
- Temporary Resident Card (I-688)
- Employment Authorization Card (I-688B)
- Receipt issued by INS for replacement of any of the above documents that shows verification of entitlement.

All documents in connection with U.S. citizenship/eligible immigrant status will be kept on file for five years. A birth certificate is not acceptable verification of status.

Statement of Non-discrimination

The Housing Authority of the City of Salem does not discriminate against any person because of disability, race, color, religion, sex, marital status, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, and/or domestic partnership in accessing, applying for or receiving assistance, or in treatment or employment in any of its programs and activities. All public meetings are held in accessible locations. Appropriate aids (TDD, interpreters, readers, assistance filling out forms, etc.) will be provided upon request. Complaints regarding accessibility of the Authority's programs to individuals with disabilities should be submitted in writing to Terry Frazier, Salem Housing Authority, P.O. Box 808, Salem OR, 97308-0808. Questions or comments may be made by phone at 503-588-6368, or TDD, 503-588-6447. Requests for aid may be directed to a Housing Assistance Representative, Occupancy Coordinator or other appropriate employee. The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin. Federal law also prohibits discrimination on the basis of age. Complaints of discrimination may be forwarded to the Administrator, Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of HUD, Washington, D.C. 20410.

Drug & Violence-Free Housing

The Salem Housing Authority is committed to promoting drug and violence-free housing. All families are screened for drug-related and violent criminal activity.



SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

FACT SHEET



Salem Housing Authority

360 Church Street SE
Salem OR 97301

Mailing: P. O. Box 808,
Salem OR 97308-0808
Phone: (503) 588-6368 or
(503) 588-6448
TDD: (503) 588-6447
FAX: (503) 588-6465

Website: www.cityofsalem.net/sha

E-mail: housing@cityofsalem.net

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS FACT SHEET

What are housing choice vouchers?

The Housing Choice Voucher program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private rental housing market. Since assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHAs) like Salem Housing Authority (SHA). SHA receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program.

A family that is issued a housing choice voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the family's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. This unit may include the family's present residence. Rental units must meet minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by SHA.

SHA pays a housing subsidy to the landlord on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Under certain circumstances, a family may use its voucher to purchase a modest home.

Am I eligible?

SHA determines eligibility for a housing choice voucher based on the total annual gross income and family size and is limited to US citizens and specified categories of non-citizens who have eligible immigration status. In general, the family's income may not exceed 50% of the median income for the Salem-Keizer area. By law, SHA must provide 75 percent of its vouchers to applicants whose incomes do not exceed 30 percent of the area median income. Median income levels are published by HUD and vary by location. SHA can provide you with the income limits for the Salem-Keizer community.

During the application process, SHA will collect information on family income, assets, and family composition. SHA will verify this information with other local agencies, your employer and bank, and will use the information to determine program eligibility and the amount of the housing assistance payment.

Local preferences and waiting list - what are they and how do they affect me?

Since the demand for housing assistance often exceeds the limited resources available to HUD and local housing agencies, waiting periods are common. In fact, SHA may close its waiting list at any time when it has more families on the list than can be assisted.

Housing Choice Vouchers - how do they function?

The housing choice voucher program places the choice of housing in the hands of the individual family. A low-income participant family is encouraged to consider several housing choices to secure the best housing for the family's needs. The number of bedrooms for which a voucher participant is eligible is determined by family size and composition regulations.

SHA determines the payment standard that is needed to rent a moderately-priced unit in the local housing market and this standard is used to calculate the amount of housing assistance a family will receive. The payment standard does not limit or affect the amount of rent a landlord may charge or the family may pay. The family can select a unit with a rent that is below or above the payment standard.

The housing unit must pass inspection before SHA can approve the unit. When the voucher holder finds a unit and reaches agreement with the landlord over the lease terms, SHA must inspect the unit and determine that the rent requested is reasonable.



A family with a Housing Choice Voucher must pay 30% of its monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities, and if the unit rent is greater than the payment standard, the family is required to pay the additional amount. By law, when-

ever a family moves to a new unit where the rent exceeds the payment standard, the family may not pay more than 40 percent of its adjusted monthly income for rent and utilities.

Can I move and still receive voucher assistance?

A family's housing needs change over time with changes in family size, job locations, and other reasons. The housing choice voucher program is designed to allow families to move without the loss of housing assistance. Moves are permissible as long as the family notifies SHA ahead of time, terminates its existing lease within the lease provisions, and finds acceptable alternate housing. Check with SHA about specific requirements related to moving.

Tenant's Obligations

After SHA approves the unit and lease agreement, the family signs a lease with the landlord for at least one year. The tenant may be required to pay a security deposit to the landlord. After the first year the landlord may initiate a new lease or allow the family to remain in the unit on a month-to-month lease. When the family is settled in a new home, the family is expected to comply with the lease and the program requirements, pay its share of rent on time, maintain the unit in good condition and notify SHA of any changes in income or family composition.

Landlord's Obligations

The role of the landlord in the voucher program is to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to a tenant at a reasonable rent. The unit must pass the program's housing quality standards and be maintained to those standards as long as the owner receives housing assistance payments. In addition, the landlord is expected to provide the services agreed to as part of the lease signed with the tenant and the contract signed with SHA.

SHA's Obligations

SHA enters into a contract with the landlord to provide housing assistance payments (HAP) on behalf of the family. If the landlord fails to meet the owner's obligations under the lease, SHA has the right to terminate assistance payments. SHA must reexamine the family's income and composition at least annually and must inspect each unit at least annually to ensure that it meets minimum housing quality standards.