

## Section 8 Department

St. Clair County Housing  
Authority (618) 277-3290

# Briefing Packet



If there is anyone with a disability which requires assistance, please let us know before we proceed

## Welcome To St. Clair County Housing Authority's (SCCHA) Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program



We are pleased to offer you Section 8 Rental Assistance. The Section 8 HCV Program is designed to assist you with rental assistance payments, while assuring that you are in decent, safe and well-maintained housing. In this meeting, we explain important information about the Section 8 Program and answer questions before you begin your search for housing.

### The Housing Authority (HA) will:

- Establish your portion of the rent, which is based on 30% of your income.
- We will assure well-maintained and safe assisted housing by inspecting the unit initially and annually.

### You Will Be Responsible For:

- Searching for your housing
- Paying your security deposit
- Cleaning your unit
- Reporting needed repairs to the owner
- Paying your portion of the rent to the owner
- Keeping all tenant-paid utilities active

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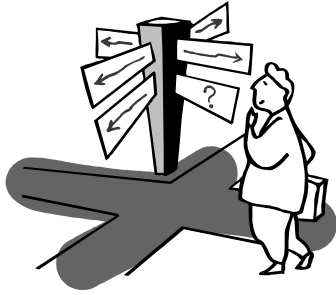
## The Land Lord Packet

The Landlord Packet contains documents that need to be completed by the family and the owner before we can assist you with your housing payment. The landlord packet contains the following documents:

- Directions for completion of the forms
- Request for Lease Approval - owner and tenant to complete
- Lease Addendum- owner and tenant to complete
- Contract Part A - owner to complete
- Contract Part B - owner to complete
- Owner Information Sheet - owner to complete
- W-9/ Internal Revenue form- owner to complete
- Lead Paint Disclosure - owner and tenant to complete
- Pre-inspection Form- optional for completion by tenant and owner



## General Information about Section 8



*Wondering who is Responsible For What?  
Read General Information about Section 8*



*Want to know about your Voucher?  
Read Voucher*



*Are you ready to start your search for housing?  
Read Search for Housing for suggestions.*

Here we have outlined your basic responsibilities, as well as those of the landlord and the SCCHA. Please make yourself familiar with this section.

### SCCHA Responsibilities

- To inspect and approve your unit
- To annually review family size
- To issue payment to the landlord

### Tenant Responsibilities

- To search for housing
- To provide complete, accurate, and truthful income/family information

### Tenant Responsibilities Cont.

- To pay the tenant portion of rent
- Adhere to lease terms and conditions
- Cooperate with annual inspection and recertification
- Keep appointments with SCCHA

### Landlord Responsibilities

- Comply with HUD/PHA requirements
- Screens and selects tenants (SCCHA only determines program eligibility)
- Maintains Property in compliance with HQS

## Voucher

This document tells you:

- The number of bedrooms you are assigned,
- The dates you can search for housing
- The rules you must follow to continue participation in the Section 8 Program (additional rules from federal regulations may apply)

A family must submit a competed request for tenancy approval (RFTA) prior to the expiration of the voucher.

Once the RFTA has been submitted, the time on the voucher stops, or is suspended. If the unit is unacceptable for the program, the family will be given the remaining time on the voucher from when it was suspended to *look for new housing*.

## Search For Housing

The St. Clair County Housing Authority includes the following areas:

Alorton, Belleville, Brooklyn, Carondelet, Caseyville, Centreville, parts of Collinsville, Cahokia, Dupo, East St. Louis, Fairview Heights, Fairmont City, Fayetteville, Freeburg, Lebanon, Lenzburg, Marissa, Mascoutah, Millstadt, New Athens, O'Fallon, Smithton, St. Libory, Shiloh Summerfield, Swansea, and Washington Park.

You can search for housing in any of these cities. For the convenience of Section 8 participants, SCCHA maintains a "Landlord Referral List" containing rental units potentially available to persons holding a Section 8 Voucher. Use of the referral list is strictly voluntarily and SCCHA makes no guarantees that you will be selected by the landlord or that the unit will pass inspection. The list is available in the Lobby of the Central Office and is generally updated weekly (By Monday afternoon).

We recommend that you begin your search as soon as possible.

## Restrictions on Renting to Relatives

The Housing Authority **cannot** approve a unit if the owner is the parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of the

family, unless the HA determines that approving the unit would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with a disability.



*Thinking of renting from someone you know?  
Read Restrictions on Renting to Relatives first.*

## Portability

You may consider searching for housing in areas outside of the St. Clair County jurisdiction. Portability means you may use your voucher in an area that is not within the St. Clair County Housing Authority jurisdiction.

A list of housing Authorities located in the Metro East area is included in this packet. You are not, however limited to living within the Metro East.



*Thinking of living outside of St. Clair County?  
Read Portability first.*

## Grounds For Termination

The Housing Authority (HA) may deny or terminate assistance to a family for reasons including the following:

- If a family violates any family obligation as stated in the voucher and/or federal regulations
- If any member of the family has ever been evicted from public housing
- If any family member commits drug-related, violent, or other serious (felony) criminal activity
- If the HA determines that any family member is illegally using a controlled substance
- If the HA determines that any family member's abuse of alcohol interferes with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents
- If any family member commits fraud, bribery, or another corrupt or criminal act regarding any federal housing program
- If the family has engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior towards personnel
- If the family currently owes rent or other amounts to another HA in connection with Section 8 or public housing program(s)
- If the family breaches an agreement with the HA to pay amounts due
- If the family violated program requirements or failed to meet family obligations while previously participating in the Section 8 HCVF with another HA



Have questions about a SCCHA decision?  
Read Informal Hearings

## Informal Hearings

The HA must provide program participants with the opportunity for an informal hearing to consider whether certain HA decisions are in accordance with the law, HUD regulations and HA policies. An opportunity for a hearing is required for HA decisions regarding the following:

- Determination of annual adjusted income to compute Housing Assistance Payment
- Determination of appropriate utility allowances for tenant paid utilities from HA utility allowance schedule
- Determination of bedroom size under the HA subsidy standards
- Determination to terminate assistance for participant family because of family's action or failure to act.
- Determination to terminate assistance because the family has been absent from the assisted unit for longer than HUD rules or HA policy allow.



Want to Request a Hearing?  
Read Request for Informal Hearing Procedure

## Request for an Informal Hearing Procedure

A participant in the Section 8 program has the right to request an informal hearing solely for the purpose of determining whether or not a decision to terminate assistance was in compliance with HUD regulations or HA

policies. The request for an informal hearing must be submitting in writing and must be received by the Housing Authority within 10(ten) days from the date of the notification of determination.

Need an accessible unit?  
Read Notice to a Family w/ a disabled member



## Notice to Family with a Disabled Member

A family with a disabled member has a right to reasonable accommodation. Requests for accommodation should be submitted in writing or otherwise

communicated to the HA Staff. A family may request a current listing of accessible units known to the Housing Authority.



Expecting a Change in family Size?  
Read Notice of Changes to Family Composition....

## Notice of Changes to Family Composition During the Search for Housing.

If you are searching for housing when a change in family composition occurs, you have 30 days from the occurrence of the change to report the change to the HA.

However, the change must always be reported before and in conjunction with the submission of a "Landlord Packet."

What Information will SCCHA share with prospective landlords?

Read Privacy Reporting

## Privacy Reporting

We are required to provide information to prospective landlords about your previous

and/or current tenancy if this information is requested by a prospective landlord.

## Security Deposits

You must be prepared to pay the security deposit; the Housing Authority does not assist with security deposits payments. The HA does not set or

establish the security deposit amount which the owner may charge. The rule states that the owner cannot charge any more than he would for a tenant on the open market.



*Questions about your Security Deposit?  
Read Security Deposits*

## Subsidy Standard

The HA has assigned the number of bedroom(s) based on your family size. To avoid overcrowding, vouchers are

issued in accordance with the subsidy standards set forth below:

No. of Bedrooms	Number of Persons	
	Minimum	Maximum
0	1	1
1	1	2
2	2	4
3	3	6
4	4	8
5	5	10
6	6	12



*Have questions about the bedroom size on your voucher?  
Read Subsidy Standard*

Our general policy indicates that a bedroom may be expected to be shared by at least two children of the same gender. Units will be viewed as not to require use of the living room for sleeping purposes. A separate bedroom will be provided for an

elderly dependent residing with a younger family. Exceptions to the occupancy standard are considered when a physician or other qualified professional has provided documentation of the need for a separate bedroom or when city or local codes dictate a different occupancy standard.

## Instructions for the Family

Begin your search for housing immediately. You may look for a house, duplex, apartment or mobile home. There is valuable information in the booklet entitled "A Good Place to Live".

- Convenience for employment, schools and doctors
- The security deposit

When selecting your unit, consider the following:

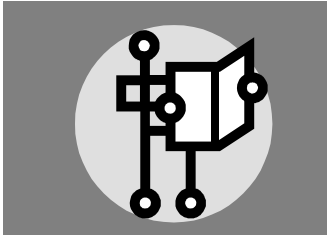
- The condition of the unit
- Utility responsibilities
- The location of the unit
- Public transportation accessibility

After you have found a unit you must:

1. Have the owner complete the landlord packet. The Housing Authority does not provide a lease. The owner is responsible for providing a lease agreement. Make sure you read and understand the lease before you sign. The owner must agree to sign a tenancy addendum which becomes part of the lease. If there is a conflict between the owner's lease and the



*What suggestions on what to look for?  
Read instructions for the family.*



Instructions for the family continued?



*Still have questions?  
Read Commonly Asked  
Question for answers.*

HA lease addendum, the HA lease addendum prevails.

2. Obtain a certificate of compliance from the appropriate city department or ask the owner for the copy. Monies paid for an occupancy permit are non-refundable.

3. Return the landlord packet and the certificate of compliance or city inspection to the Housing Authority office.

4. Once we receive your landlord packet, we will contact the owner to set up an inspection within 7 to 10 working days. At the time of the inspection:

\*All utilities must be on and all routine maintenance must be complete.

\*The Stove and refrigerator must be in the unit to pass inspection.

5. If the unit passes the inspection you may move into your new home.

\* If the unit does not pass inspection, we will allow the owner 30 days to make the repairs.

\* If the owner cannot make the need repairs, you may contact the office and begin the process again, provided there is time remaining on your voucher.

## Commonly Asked Questions

These are not all-inclusive solutions, but merely suggestions for how to handle various situations that may occur. The Section 8 staff is available to assist with additional concerns or problems.

**Q: What should I do before signing a lease?**

A: Conduct a personal inspection of the unit;

The inspector does not look for cosmetic beauty. Make sure you want to live there because the lease requires occupancy for one year.

**Read the lease:** make sure you understand your obligations.

**Q: May I move into the unit as soon as I find one?**

A: The Housing Authority cannot tell you and the owner what date you may move in. **But we can tell you when we will begin the contract (ie. payments on your behalf).** We will begin the contract and payment on the first day the unit passes inspection (unless you and the owner agree to a later date). **If the unit has not passed this agency's inspection and you have moved into the unit, you are responsible for that rent.**

**Q: What happens if I cannot pay my rent?**

A: Always pay your rent. As much as we would like to end on that note, we realize there are times when situations may prevent you from complying. The decision as to what happens depends on the owner. Some owners choose to evict immediately. **Contact your landlord and resolve the problem.** Serious or repeated violation of the lease such as eviction for non-payment of

rent or utilities that are shut off, or damage to unit beyond normal wear and tear can result in termination of the assistance.

**Q: What procedure should I follow if repairs are needed?**

A: Contact the owner. If the owner has not responded in a timely manner, write a letter to the landlord that explains the problem and send a copy of that same letter to the Housing Authority Inspection Manager.

**A word of caution:** if you caused the damages, you are responsible for the repairs.

**Never withhold rent based on needed repairs to the unit.**

**Q: What should I do if someone wants to move in with me?**

A: You must request approval to add any member to your unit. The Housing Authority and the owner must give you permission before anyone moves into your unit. Promptly notify the HA in writing of the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child.

**Q: What should I do if someone moves out of the home?**

A: Promptly notify the HA in writing if any family member no longer lives in the unit. Documentation of the former member's new residence will be required.

Continued on Page 7

**Q: What should I do when my income changes?**

**A:** A decrease in income should be reported, in writing, within 30 days of the change.

**Q: What should I do if I want to move?**

**A:** Check to see when your lease expires and for renewal provisions. The initial lease term is a minimum of one year. After the first year, the language in the lease dictates when you can move. A minimum 30 Day written notice from the first of the month is always required. If problems develop during the lease term, all parties (the owner, the tenant, and the Housing Authority) must agree to rescind or break the lease.

**Q: What should I do in order to get my security deposit back when I move?**

**A:** Return the unit to the owner in good condition; clean the unit thoroughly and return the keys.

**Q: What must I do to keep my Section 8 Housing?**

**A:** Follow the rules and regulations of the housing program and adhere to the lease. Each year, the Housing Authority is required to complete an annual reexamination. This is simply a review of your income and family size to determine that you are in the appropriate sized unit and to determine that your rent is consistent with your income. **It is essential that you keep scheduled appointments with our office and the inspector.**

St. Clair County  
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**We're on the Web!**

**See us at:**

[www.sccha.org](http://www.sccha.org)

We hope the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program will be a great benefit to you and your family and that your experience with us will be a pleasant one. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office.

### Section 8 Staff

**General Phone Number**

(618) 277-3290

**Extensions**

**Leasing and Application Staff**

Sandy Thomas..... 6855  
Sharron Ward..... 7048

**Leasing Manager**

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Ceattress Clay..... 6861  
Sierra Hopson..... 7027  
Suellen Riley Keen..... 7029

**FSS Coordinator**

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**Inspection Staff**

Eric Heinzl.... 6966

**Inspection Manager**

Charlie Herr ..... 6965

**Program Director**

Pamela Jackson..... 6860

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