



Sonoma County Community Development Commission
Sonoma County Housing Authority
1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

Landlord FAQ

Q: What is the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program?

A: The Section 8 Voucher Program provides rental subsidies to families and persons who have incomes that are 50% or less of the median income for Sonoma County. The Sonoma County Housing Authority administers this program.

Q: How will I benefit from renting to a Housing Choice Voucher household?

A: There are many benefits to renting to a Housing Choice Voucher Household:

- Regular, on time payments through direct deposit
- Unit listing and advertisement
- Protection from financial loss if your tenant suffers unexpected financial hardship. The tenant rent portion is calculated to be affordable based on the tenant income at any point in time. If they suffer a loss of income the Housing Authority payment portion increases.
- Auxiliary support to reinforce lease terms. When we are notified of any lease infraction we follow up with the household to reinforce Program Obligation to adhere to lease.
- You participate in providing equitable, safe, affordable housing in your community.

Q: How do I find a family with a Housing Choice Voucher?

A: Please contact our Landlord line 707-565-1259 to list your available unit. This listing will be given to persons seeking homes with a Housing Choice Voucher.

Q: How much does the tenant pay, and how much does the Housing Authority pay?

A: The tenant pays an amount that is roughly equivalent to 30% of their monthly income. The Housing Authority pays the balance of the total rent to the property owner. In some cases, the tenant may pay more than 30% of their income. Landlord and tenants are given advance communications regarding any change in payments.

Q: Does the Housing Authority pay Security Deposits?

A: In some instances, yes. If the Housing Authority is paying the Security Deposit for a household they will supply you a promissory letter. This letter is a binding agreement that payment will be issued. If you have not been given a promissory letter the tenant is responsible to pay the Deposit.

Deposit payments are direct deposited with the first rental payment. Refer to question "when will I receive payments" for additional information.

Q: Can I collect my standard security deposit and first and last month's rent?

A: The property owner can collect the standard security deposit amount as long as it corresponds with State and Local laws. The property owner will get the tenants portion of the first month's rent from the tenant. The Housing Authority's portion of the rent will be direct deposited once the following are completed:



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Sonoma County Housing Authority

1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

- Unit Passes Inspection
- Housing Assistance Payment Contract is signed by the owner
- Tenancy Addendum is signed by the Tenant and the Owner
- The Housing Authority receives a copy of the executed lease/rental agreement
- Direct deposit authorization and payee data record form

Q: How much rent can I charge?

A: The Housing Authority lists the current Payment Standards and Utility costs on the website. The payment standards are the amount the Housing Authority can pay for a rent. The housing authority must factor in utilities as part of the rental cost. Units where tenants pay full utilities if marked at the max payment standard may not qualify.

Q: I have my own rental agreement. Can I use it?

A: A property owner must use their own rental agreement. The Housing Authority will attach a Tenancy Addendum to your rental agreement. Your rental agreement must conform to State and Local law as well as HUD regulations prohibiting certain lease provisions, most of which are already prohibited by State law.

Q: Are there any prohibited lease terms?

A: The lease you sign should be the standard lease you use for any other rental units. Terms of the lease must be in accordance with state and local law. All changes to the lease must be communicated to the Housing Authority.

Q: Can a tenant move in before the inspection is complete?

A: The Housing Authority is committed to not creating any delays in the lease up process. Moving a tenant into a unit that has not passed inspection is not prohibited but may result in issues if there are repair delays or the unit never passes inspection. The tenant is responsible for full rent until a unit passes inspection.

Q: How does the rental process work?

A: Once you have selected a tenant, the tenant has a form called a "Request for Tenancy Approval." The property owner and tenant need to fill this form out and return it to our office with a sample copy of the rental agreement.

After receiving the Request for Tenancy Approval, the HQS Inspector will contact you within five working days to arrange an appointment to inspect the unit. When the unit passes the inspection, lease-up documents will be emailed to you by the Housing Authority. These documents will need to be signed and returned to the Housing Authority. The documents will be processed by the Housing Authority and the Accounting Department.

The Housing Authority cannot accept a lease or rental agreement with an effective date earlier than the effective date of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract.



Sonoma County Community Development Commission
Sonoma County Housing Authority
1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

Q: When will I receive my payments?

A: The Housing Authority issues approximately 3500 payments to landlords every month. Due to the volume of payments issued all payments are made on the second working day of every month and the middle of every month. There is sometimes a delay in initial payment due to the check processing schedule. All initial documents from the landlord must be received 2 days in advance of this schedule to be set up for payment.

The Housing Assistance Payment Contract signed by Property Owners is a binding contract. Once signed Property Owners are guaranteed they will receive the agreed upon rental payment.

Q: Why does the Housing Authority require a tax identification or social security number in order to issue rental payments?

A: This is an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirement for any person or entity that received rent payments in excess of \$600 per year.

Q: What if I have not received my First-of-the-Month payment?

A: If you have not received your deposit as usual, and are concerned, contact the Accounting Department. The telephone number is (707) 565-7515.

Q: What will happen if an overpayment has been made to my account?

A: In the event you discover an overpayment has been made to you, please call (707) 565-7515. If we become aware of an overpayment, we will notify you of the overpayment and the amount owed. You will have the option of paying the overpaid amount back to the Housing Authority or having a future payment reduced. If you have no other tenants who receive assistance from this agency, we will request that you return the amount of the overpayment to our offices as soon as possible.

Q: Can the Housing Authority Direct Deposit your checks?

A: Yes. The Housing Authority requires that all owners sign up for direct deposit. The Housing Authority will provide you with the Direct Deposit Authorization form.

Q: If I choose to take a Section 8 tenant, do I have to choose the first one that applies?

A: No. The Housing Authority encourages the property owner to screen their applicants thoroughly. We want you to get the best Section 8 tenant possible. Because the Housing Authority does not manage the unit for you, we want you to have a tenant that you are confident will take care of your property. However, fair housing and equal opportunity practices must be followed.

Q: If I take a Section 8 tenant, do I always have to take a Section 8 tenant for my unit or for my whole building?

A: No. The Contract is for the tenant chosen only. Once that tenant vacates, the property owner is under no further obligation to rent to a Section 8 participant. Likewise, they are not obligated to rent any other units to Section 8 participants.



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Sonoma County Housing Authority

1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

Q: What if I have an address change or the ownership of a rental unit changes?

A: Please contact the Housing Authority Landlord Line 707-565-1259. We will provide you with proper documents related to the change of ownership.

Q: How do I increase rent?

A: Property Managers to increase rent will issue their standard rent increase notice to the tenants and supply a copy to the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority requires a 60-day notice for rent increases for increases that are 10% or less and a 90-Day notice for rent increases that are more than 10%. Rent increases must fall in line with state regulations and restrictions outlined in AB1482.

Q: What if a tenant damages my unit?

A: Damages to the unit are managed between the property owner and tenant. The property owner should conduct periodic inspections of the unit to ensure the unit is maintained. The Housing Authority conducts biennial unit inspections and can perform special unit inspections if notified of habitability concern.

Q: How do I ask a tenant to leave?

A: Property Owners are responsible for managing tenancy in their units. Property Owners must follow applicable state and local laws regarding terminating tenancy. Laws regarding notice to vacate are continuing to change. We encourage you to seek legal advice about issuing proper notices.

Many tenancy challenges can be resolved. Property owners are encouraged to notify the housing authority immediately if there is non-compliance with the lease so we can support the communication to tenants regarding the importance of adhering to lease agreements.

To terminate the tenancy of a tenant who participates in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, the landlord must first give the tenant the applicable 3, 30, 60, or 90- day notice of termination under California law, and the landlord must give the public housing agency a copy of the notice at the same time. If the landlord simply decides not to renew the rental agreement, or decides to terminate the HAP (housing assistance payment) contract, the landlord must give the tenant 90 days' advance written notice of the termination date, to occur on or after the expiration date of a rental agreement for a fixed-term. If the tenant does not move out by the end date of the notice, the landlord must follow California law to evict the tenant.

Additional Questions? Please contact the Landlord Line at 707-565-1259