

Chapter 8

VOUCHER ISSUANCE AND BRIEFINGS

[24 CFR 982.301, 982.302]

The PHA's goals and objectives are designed to assure that families selected to participate are equipped with the tools necessary to locate an acceptable housing unit. Families are provided sufficient knowledge and information regarding the program and how to achieve maximum benefit while complying with program requirements. When eligibility has been determined, the PHA will conduct a mandatory briefing to ensure that families know how the program works. The briefing will provide a broad description of owner and family responsibilities, PHA procedures, and how to lease a unit. The family will also receive a briefing packet which provides more detailed information about the program including the benefits of moving outside areas of poverty and minority concentration. This chapter describes how briefings will be conducted, the information that will be provided to families, and the policies for how changes in the family composition will be handled.

A. **ISSUANCE OF VOUCHERS** [24 CFR 982.204(d), 982.54(d)(2)]

When funding is available, the PHA will issue vouchers to applicants whose eligibility has been determined. The number of vouchers issued must ensure that the PHA stays as close as possible to 100 percent lease-up. The PHA performs a monthly calculation electronically to determine whether applications can be processed, the number of vouchers that can be issued, and to what extent the PHA can over-issue (issue more vouchers than the budget allows to achieve leaseup).

The PHA may over-issue vouchers only to the extent necessary to meet leasing goals. All vouchers which are over-issued must be honored. If the PHA finds it is over-leased, it must adjust future issuance of vouchers in order not to exceed the ACC budget limitations over the fiscal year.

B. **BRIEFING TYPES AND REQUIRED ATTENDANCE** [24 CFR 982.301]

Initial Applicant Briefing

A full HUD-required briefing will be conducted for applicant families who are determined to be eligible for assistance. The briefings will be conducted in groups. Families who attend group briefings and still have the need for individual assistance will be referred to Housing Program Manager.

Briefings will be conducted in English. However, letters will be forwarded to applicants inviting them to briefing which will state the need for them to contact the Housing Authority within 48 hours of the meeting if a special accommodation is needed for interpreting.

The purpose of the briefing is to explain how the program works and the documents in the voucher holder's packet to families so that they are fully informed about the program. This will enable them to utilize the program to their advantage, and it will prepare them to discuss it with potential owners and property managers.

Briefing Session

1. Before a family is issued its Housing Choice Voucher, it is most important that the family be fully informed of its responsibilities, as well as:
 - a. The Authority's Equal Opportunity Housing Plan
 - b. Its obligations to abide by the terms of the Lease Agreement.
2. The briefing sessions will be planned and scheduled to accommodate the prospective Housing Choice Voucher holders, so that the family can be shown how to:
 - a. Determine allowances for utilities.
 - b. Make an informal inspection of a dwelling unit.
 - c. Assist in the filing and following through on a discrimination complaint.
3. The families will be provided with a list of housing units made available to the Housing Authority and will be given a map of the county with the participating cities highlighted. The Housing Authority will not steer HC Voucher holders.

The PHA will not issue a voucher to a family unless the household representative has attended a briefing and signed the voucher. Applicants who provide prior notice of inability to attend a briefing will automatically be scheduled for the next briefing. Applicants who fail to attend 2 scheduled briefings, without prior notification and approval of the PHA, may be denied admission based on failure to supply information needed for certification. The PHA will conduct individual briefings for families with disabilities at their home, upon request by the family, if required for reasonable accommodation.

Issuance of Housing Choice Vouchers to Participating Families

1. A Housing Choice Voucher will be issued to applicants for a term of 60 days. The Housing Choice Voucher will expire after a (60) day term.
 - a. Notification will be made to the applicant in writing of the availability of a Housing Choice Voucher.

- b. If the applicant does not respond within twelve (12) working days, the application may be placed on the inactive list.
 - c. When applicant appears for the briefing all data must be checked for current accuracy and updated if necessary.
2. If a Housing Choice Voucher expires the applicant may be allowed to renew the Housing Choice Voucher an additional 30 days at the discretion of the Program Administrator. Housing Choice Vouchers shall not be issued beyond 120 days under any circumstances except to accommodate disabled and handicapped families.

An applicant may request an extension beyond 60 days providing the following circumstances exist:

- A. Waiting for a unit to become available. (The Request For Lease Tenancy must be on file with the Housing Office.)
 - B. Unusual situations proof of being ill for a long period of time, (20-30 days).
 - C. Being called out of the area for a long period of time for emergencies (20-30 days).
3. An extension will not be granted without good cause. If good cause is not granted by the Administrator the application will be placed in withdrawn file.
 4. Failure to request renewal will result in expiration of the Housing Choice Voucher and withdrawal of the application.
 5. The Housing Program Manager will be responsible for issuing the Housing Choice Vouchers to eligible families.
 - a. The Housing Program Manager will monitor the selection process to make sure that the number of current Housing Choice Vouchers HAP contracts do not exceed the number of units authorized.

Briefing Packet [24 CFR 982.301(b)]

The documents and information provided in the briefing packet for the voucher program will comply with all HUD requirements.

The family is provided with the following information and materials

The families will be given a packet of material to include:

1. Request for lease approval.
2. Addendum and lease.
3. Information regarding lead base paint poisoning hazards, symptoms, and precautions.
4. Copy of HQS if requested for inspection of housing units and Certifications of Compliance with the Housing Authority Housing Quality Standards.
5. Information as to the gross family contribution and fair market rent appropriate for family size and composition.
6. The Housing Authority's schedule of allowance for utilities and other services.
7. Information sheet explaining continued participation of family moves.
8. HUD Form 903.1 (Are You a Victim of Housing Discrimination). This form will also be made available in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Korean and Russian.
9. HUD Form H-593 (A Good Place to Live)
10. Information regarding FMR's.
11. Procedures for notifying HUD or the Housing Authority of any required side payments or other over charges of HQS violations found in unit.
12. A list of known units accessible to the handicapped.
13. County maps for boundaries.
14. Information regarding hearing as required in Section 882.209 (11)b(4).

Information packet including an explanation of how portability works, including a list of neighboring housing agencies with the name, address and telephone number of a portability contact person at each for use by families who move under portability.

A map showing areas representing various income levels of the jurisdiction and surrounding areas for the purpose of expanding housing opportunities for families.

Information regarding the PHA's outreach program which assists families who are interested in, or experiencing difficulty in obtaining available housing units in areas outside of minority concentrated locations.

A list of properties or property management organizations that own or operate housing units outside areas of poverty or minority concentration (required for PHAs).

- * An Owner's Handbook, an HQS checklist and sample contract.
- * Procedures for notifying the PHA and/or HUD of program abuses such as side payments, extra charges, violations of tenant rights, and owner failure to repair.
- * The Family Self Sufficiency program and its advantages.

If the family includes a person with disabilities, the PHA will ensure compliance with CFR 8.6 to ensure effective communication.

Move Briefing

A move briefing will be held for participants who have given a proper 30 day notice to their landlord, not later than the 1st day of the month, and who will be reissued a voucher to move on an individual basis by the attending case manager. Each mover is instructed on the parameters of their pending move.

Owner Briefing

Prospective owners are briefed by the Housing Program Manager on a one on one basis, either by a conference call or by an in-person meeting at the owner's request.

All new owners are briefed by the case managers or the intake specialist. The briefing covers the responsibilities and roles of the three parties (Landlord, Participant, Housing Authority). This briefing is conducted prior to the signature briefings. The purpose of the briefing is to assure successful owner participation in the program.

Signature Briefing

All new owners will be required to attend a signature briefing at the office to execute contracts and leases. Other owners will be encouraged to attend signature briefings to reduce future conflict between the owner and tenant. The briefing covers the responsibilities and roles of the three parties.

Port in Briefings

Port in briefings are held at least once each week on a regular basis. Port-in participants are briefed on the Johnson County Housing Authority Program rules and responsibilities they must uphold.

C. ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN AREAS WITHOUT LOW INCOME OR MINORITY CONCENTRATION

At the briefing, families are encouraged to search for housing in non-impacted areas and the PHA will provide assistance to families who wish to do so. The Johnson County PHA jurisdiction has not posed a problem of families residing in impacted areas. Families are encouraged to seek housing throughout the county's jurisdiction.

* The PHA has maps that show various areas and information about facilities and services in neighboring areas such as schools, transportation, and supportive and social services.

D. ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES WHO CLAIM DISCRIMINATION

The PHA will give participants a copy of HUD Form 903.1 to file a complaint.

E. SECURITY DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS [24 CFR 982.313]

The owner is not required to but may collect a one month security deposit from the tenant.

Security deposits charged to families may be any amount the owner wishes to charge, (subject to the following conditions:)

* Security deposits charged by owners may not exceed those charged to unassisted tenants (nor the maximum prescribed by State or local law.)

For lease-in-place families, responsibility for first and last month's rent is not considered a security deposit issue. In these cases, the owner should settle the issue with the tenant prior to the beginning of assistance.

F. TERM OF VOUCHER [24 CFR 982.303, 982.54(d)(11)]

During the briefing session, each household will be issued a voucher which represents a contractual agreement between the PHA and the Family specifying the rights and responsibilities of each party. It does not constitute admission to the program which occurs when the lease and contract become effective.

Expirations

The voucher is valid for a period of at least sixty calendar days from the date of issuance. The family must submit a Request for Approval of the Tenancy and Lease within the sixty-day period unless an extension has been granted by the PHA.

If the voucher has expired, and has not been extended by the PHA or expires after an extension, the family will be denied assistance. The family will not be entitled to a review or hearing. If the

family is currently assisted, they may remain as a participant in their unit if there is an assisted contract in effect.

Suspensions

When a Request for Approval of Tenancy is received, the PHA will deduct the number of days required to process the request from the 60 day term of the voucher.

Extensions

* The PHA will extend the term up to 90 days from the beginning of the initial term if the family needs and request an extension as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by a family member with a disability. If the family needs an extension in excess of 120 days, the PHA will extend the voucher term for the amount of time reasonably required for said reasonable accommodation.

* A family may request a written request for an extension of the voucher time period. All requests for extensions must be received prior to the expiration date of the voucher.

* Extensions are permissible at the discretion of the PHA up to a maximum of an additional 60 days primarily for these reasons:

- * Extenuating circumstances such as hospitalization or a family emergency for an extended period of time which has affected the family's ability to find a unit within the initial sixty-day period. Verification is required.

- * The PHA is satisfied that the family has made a reasonable effort to locate a unit, including seeking the assistance of the PHA, throughout the initial sixty-day period. A completed search record is required.

- * The family was prevented from finding a unit due to disability accessibility requirements or large size number of bedroom unit requirement. The Search Record is part of the required verification.

- * If the vacancy rate for rental housing in the jurisdiction is less than 40%, 2 extensions will be granted automatically on request up to a total of 120 days.

* The PHA extends in one or more increments. Unless approved by the Housing Program Manager, no more than 2 extensions of 30 days or less will be granted and never for a total of more than an additional sixty days.

Assistance to Voucher Holders

Families who require additional assistance during their search may call the PHA Office to request assistance. Voucher holders will be notified at their briefing session that the PHA periodically updates the listing of available units and how the updated list may be obtained.

The PHA will assist families with negotiations with owners and provide other assistance related to the families' search for housing.

* After the first 60 days of the search, the family is required to maintain a search record and report to the PHA every 15 days.

G. VOUCHER ISSUANCE DETERMINATION FOR SPLIT HOUSEHOLDS
[24 CFR 982.315]

In those instances when a family assisted under the Section 8 program becomes divided into two otherwise eligible families due to divorce, legal separation, or the division of the family, and the new families cannot agree as to which new family unit should continue to receive the assistance, and there is no determination by a court, the Housing Director shall consider the following factors to determine which of the families will continue to be assisted:

- * Which of the two new family units has custody of dependent children.
- * Which family member was the head of household when the voucher was initially issued listed on the initial application
- * The composition of the new family units, and which unit contains elderly or disabled members.
- * Whether domestic violence was involved in the breakup.
- * Which family members remain in the unit.
- * Recommendations of social service professionals.

Documentation of these factors will be the responsibility of the requesting parties.

If documentation is not provided, the PHA will terminate assistance on the basis of failure to provide information necessary for a recertification.

H. REMAINING MEMBER OF TENANT FAMILY - RETENTION OF VOUCHER
[24 CFR 982.315]

To be considered the remaining member of the tenant family, the person must have been previously approved by the PHA to be living in the unit.

A live-in attendant, by definition, is not a member of the family and will not be considered a remaining member of the Family.

* In order for a minor child to continue to receive assistance as a remaining family member:

* The court has to have awarded emancipated minor status to the minor, or

* The PHA has to have verified that social services and/or the Juvenile Court has arranged for another adult to be brought into the assisted unit to care for the child(ren) for an indefinite period.

A reduction in family size may require a reduction in the voucher family unit size.