WHAT IS SECTION 8?

The Section 8 program provides assistance for low income families in the private rental market through the Housing Assistance Payments Program.

RENTAL VOUCHER HOLDERS select a unit from the private rental market. Rental assistance makes market rate housing affordable. Program participants normally pay no more than 30% of monthly adjusted income towards rent and utilities. The Housing Assistance Payment subsidizes the balance of the rent to the property owner.

HOW CAN I BECOME A PART OF THIS RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

Eligibility for a rental voucher is determined by the local Housing Authority based on the total annual gross income and family size and is limited to U.S. citizens and specified categories of noncitizens who have eligible immigration status. In general, the family's income may not exceed 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live. Median income levels are published by HUD and vary by location. The HA serving your community can provide you with the income limits for your area and family size. During the application process, the Housing Authority will collect information on family income, assets and family composition. The Housing Authority 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 rental assistance payment.

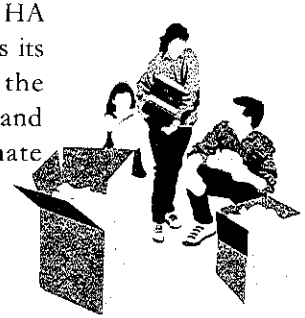
If the Housing Authority determines that your family is eligible, the Housing Authority will put your name on a waiting list, unless it is able to assist you immediately. Once your name is reached on the waiting list, the Housing Authority will contact you and issue to you a rental voucher.

WHERE CAN I LIVE?

Once your family has been issued a Housing Choice Voucher by the Housing Authority, you can search the private rental market in your community for a housing unit that is decent, safe and sanitary according to Housing Quality Standards (HQS) established by HUD and the local Housing Authority. (Request a copy of the HUD booklet "A Good Place to Live!," available from the local Housing Authority or HUD to guide you in finding a unit that meets these Standards.) When you have found a suitable unit and the owner agrees to lease the unit to your family under the housing choice voucher program, the Housing Authority will inspect the unit to assure that it is suitable. After the unit passes HQS inspection and the rent has been approved, the landlord and tenant enter a lease for an initial term of one year. The Housing Authority and the landlord sign a Housing Assistance Payments Contract through which the rent is assisted on your behalf. You will be responsible for the monthly payment of the difference between the total rent and the Housing Assistance Payment.

CAN I MOVE AND CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THIS ASSISTANCE?

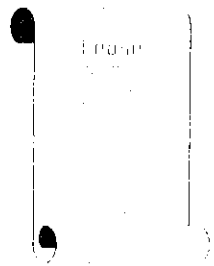
A family's housing needs change over time with changes in family size, job locations, and for other reasons. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is designed to allow families to move without the loss of rental assistance. Moves are permissible as long as the family notifies the HA ahead of time, terminates its existing lease within the appropriate provisions, and finds acceptable alternate housing.



Under the voucher program, new voucher holders may choose a unit anywhere in the United States if the family lived within the jurisdiction of the HA issuing the voucher when the family applied for assistance. Those new voucher holders not living within the jurisdiction of the HA at the time the family applies for rental assistance must initially lease a unit within that jurisdiction for the first twelve months of assistance. A family that wishes to move to another HA's jurisdiction must consult with the HA that currently administers it rental assistance to verify the procedures for moving.

WHAT IS THE TERM OF THE LEASE AND CONTRACT?

After one year, the lease is renewed for a specified time period (ex., month-to-month, six months, etc.). You may vacate with a notice after the term of the lease expires. If you remain in the unit, you are recertified for eligibility and the unit is inspected for Housing Quality Standards annually, at which time the landlord may request an annual adjustment rent increase which must be approved by the Housing Authority. This request must be submitted in writing to the Housing Authority and to you sixty days prior to renewal.



HOW DO I APPLY?

If you are interested in applying for a voucher, contact the Housing Authority on the back of this brochure. For further assistance, contact the HUD office nearest to you.

ROLES – THE TENANT, THE LANDLORD, THE HOUSING AGENCY, AND HUD

Once the Housing Authority approves an eligible family's lease and housing unit, the family and the landlord sign a lease and, at the same time, the landlord and the HA sign a housing assistance contract which runs for the same term as the lease. This means that everyone – tenant, landlord and the Housing Authority – has obligations and responsibilities within the voucher program.

Tenant's Role: When a family selects a housing unit, and the Housing Authority approves the unit and lease, 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 the HA of any changes in income or family composition.

Landlord's Role: 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 dwelling unit must pass the program's housing standards and be maintained up 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 the HA.

Housing Authority's Role: The HA administers the voucher program locally. The HA provides a family with the rental assistance that enables the family to seek out suitable housing and the HA enters into a contract with the landlord to provide rental assistance payments on behalf of the family. If the landlord fails to meet his/her obligations under the lease, the HA has the right to terminate assistance payments.

HUD's Role: To cover the cost of the program, HUD provides funds to allow HAs to make housing assistance payments on behalf of the families. HUD also pays the HA a fee for the costs of administering the program. When additional funds become available to assist new families, HUD invites HAs to submit applications for funds for additional rental vouchers. Applications are then reviewed and funds awarded to the selected HAs on a competitive basis.

For information in your area:

Wausau Community Development Authority
550 East Thomas Street
Wausau, WI 54403
(715) 845-4144

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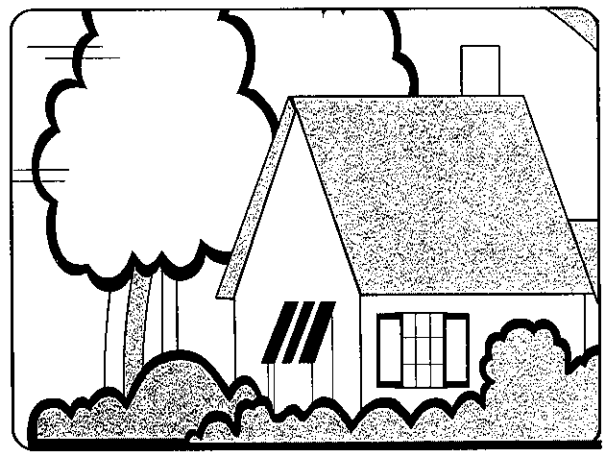
APPLICANT/RESIDENT INFORMATION SECTION 8 HOUSING



Housing Choice Voucher Program