



Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, Missouri

201 Switzler Street, Columbia, MO 65203
Office: 573.443.2556 ♦ TTY Relay 800.735.2966 ♦ Fax: 573.443.0051 ♦ www.ColumbiaHA.com

To: Karl Skala, Third Ward City Council Representative

From: Phil Steinhaus, CEO

Date: November 16, 2018

RE: Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Information

The Columbia Housing Authority has the following number and types of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers:

- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (Tenant-Based) 1,062
 - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers (Tenant-Based) * 125
 - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers (Project-Based) ** 25
 - Continuum of Care Vouchers (Tenant-Based) *** 65
- Total 1,277

* Vouchers with supportive services for homeless Veterans.
 ** Patriot Place Apartments
 *** Vouchers with supportive services for homeless persons with disabilities

Units Under Lease

We currently have 937 households under lease with a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. Due to federal funding limitations we are not able to fully fund all of our tenant-based vouchers.

Consequences for Criminal Activity

The CHA has a very strict crime-free housing lease addendum and violations of this addendum will result in the termination of the family’s housing assistance. This applies to all members of the household and any guests of the household.

On a daily basis the CHA reviews the City, County, and MU arrest records and issues termination notices when someone from the household is arrested or a guest is arrested at the household’s address.

Hearing Process

The CHA follows a HUD prescribed hearing process that affords the voucher holder to appeal the circumstances of the termination of their housing assistance. This is a two stage process that includes an informal hearing with CHA staff followed by a formal hearing, if requested. There is a Formal Hearing Panel that consists of a representative of the CHA Board of Commissioners, a community representative, and a CHA resident representative. The decision of the Formal Hearing Panel is final.

The CHA does not have to wait for a conviction to proceed with terminating housing assistance for criminal activity. By federal law the CHA may act on a preponderance of the evidence in making its decision. This is established through the hearing process.

Eviction Process

Since the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program involves the CHA subsidizing the rent for income-eligible families to rent from private landlords, it is the responsibility of the private landlord to evict their tenants. While the CHA can terminate their housing assistance, the CHA cannot evict tenants from private properties.

Inspection Process

The CHA inspects all rental properties on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program in Columbia and Boone County once a year. Rental properties must comply with the HUD prescribed Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection process.

All units must pass an HQS inspection before the tenant can move in. Inspections are then conducted annually. All tenants can call for an emergency inspection at any time at no cost to the tenant. Landlords are given a reasonable amount of time to make the necessary repairs based on the nature of the violation. Violations of Emergency, Health, and Safety violations must be corrected in 24 hours. Failure to correct violations is a violation of the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract between the CHA and the landlord and the lease is terminated and the family issued a moving voucher so they can move to other rental housing.

Crime-Free Housing Strategy

The CHA conducts criminal background checks on all applicants for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The CHA denies applications for anyone with criminal activity in the past five years.

The CHA and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program have been accused of being responsible for criminal activity in rental neighborhoods in the past. While someone with a Housing Choice Voucher might rent in a neighborhood with a high crime rate, it does not correlate that voucher holders are committing the crimes. In fact, at the 3rd annual Columbia Landlords Against Crime summit in 2012, the CHA was recognized for having the “Most Successful Crime-Free Housing Strategy.” Voucher holders have a big incentive not to be involved in criminal activity since they will lose their housing assistance.

There are proven strategies that landlords can employ to ensure crime-free housing:

- Inspect their rental properties at least once a month.
- Report any unauthorized persons living on their property to the CHA.
- Check the arrest records for any of their tenants or rental property addresses.
- Review the Columbia Police Department’s Dispatch Data on a regular basis at:
<https://www.como.gov/CMS/911dispatch/police.php>
- Check the Community Crime Map on a regular basis at:
<http://communitycrimemap.com/>