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OCHA mission

To provide safe, decent and sanitary housing conditions for very low-income families and to manage resources efficiently.



Housing Authority

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

JANUARY 2020

OCHA Web page Update

Check out Orange County's Housing and Community Development web page on the Orange County website. Program participants and participating landlords can now access forms and request information on the Housing Choice Voucher web page. Forms can be completed and submitted right from the page.

Participants can report income changes and submit their verifications right from the website. Landlords are able to post their vacancies of their units to prospective tenants of the HCV program. This convenience will expedite program processes. Go to www.orangecountync.gov/HCV and see what other exciting news to come.



Move Process

Participants requesting to move will be required to submit a Notice to Vacate Form. The owner or agent will be required to complete, sign, and date the bottom portion of the form prior to submission to the OCHA.

Once completed, the participant will return the form to OCHA. If the participant deemed eligible to move, within 30-days, each participant will receive either a denial letter or an approval letter stating when their voucher will be available for pickup.

It is the responsibility of the owner or agent to enforce the terms of the lease. If the participant is currently in violation of the lease, the request to vacate may be denied until the participant has cured the lease violations. Such lease violations include, but are not limited to: *non-payment of rent, damages, and unauthorized people living in the unit who are not on the lease.* If eviction is pursued, both participants and owners must provide the OCHA with a copy of the writ for the OCHA to begin the termination process.

HUD UPDATES

PAYMENT STANDARDS FOR 2020

The payment standards are based on the Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) set by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The payment standard is not the maximum rent and considers both rent and utilities.

The payment standard, tenant's income, and utility allowance all factor in when determining if a rent amount would be considered affordable for a tenant.

A rent determination analysis will also be conducted when approving the rent amount.

1 BEDROOM = \$934

2 BEDROOM = \$1,088

3 BEDROOM = \$1,461

4 BEDROOM = \$1,635

Participant Reminders:

Annual Recertifications

As of May 1, 2019, the Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA) no longer conducts face-to-face annual recertification appointments.

It is mandatory that all participants be recertified in order to determine continual eligibility of the Housing Choice Voucher program. Participants are required to complete the annual recertification packet and submit it along with the supporting documentation that verifies declaration of household:

- Assets
- Income
- Expenses
 - Medical – *elderly and/or disabled families*
 - Child care

The recertification packet must be returned to the OCHA on or before the return date printed on the packet. Failure to complete the recertification process may result in termination of the HCV program.

All participants are responsible for meeting their family obligations in order to remain on the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Utility Allowance Change

Effective October 1, 2018, the OCHA conducted a new utility allowance study for Mobile Homes, Single family homes and multifamily units. The new utility allowance could possibly affect the tenant's rental portion at the participant's annual recertification. If a participant rental portion increases at the annual recertification, a thirty (30) day notice will be provided to the participant and the owner. However, if the participant rental portion decreases at the annual recertification, the decrease will be effective the first day of the following month.

HCV Participants cannot Rent from Relatives

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) prohibits families receiving Housing Choice Voucher assistance from renting from relatives. This means a participant who rents a unit owned by a relative is in violation of the Family Obligations and can be terminated from the HCV Program and/or required to repay assistance. The owner of the unit would also be in violation of the Housing Assistance Payment Contract.

The HUD defines relatives as immediate family members including parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, sisters, brothers, or any member of the assisted family.

Rent Increases



All rent increases **must be** approved by OCHA in order to take effect. The notice served to the tenant should be sent to OCHA.

Landlords are required to give a 60 day notice. The rent amount must be reasonable in order to be approved. After the request is processed, both the owner and tenant will be mailed a notice of approval or denial.

If approved, a rent change notice will be mailed to both parties. The notice will list the effective date of the new contract rent, the new tenant rent amount, and the amount of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) OCHA will pay. The new contract rent amount will remain effect for a period of 12 months. Owners may request rent increases no more than once every 12 months.

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