

# Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Process Flowchart



**Resident submits** (with assistance from service providers) HCV application and all necessary documentation.



Upon application approval, resident is invited to HCV Briefing. After Briefing, **resident receives voucher** (must sign, date and submit to OCHA). Resident also receives Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) "Moving" packet. They should complete the highlighted area.



**Resident commences housing search.** Tools available to assist in search include:

- Housing Opportunities List, managed by Housing Access Coordinator.
- Affordability Estimator which provides a range of rents resident can afford.
- The ability to transfer voucher outside of Orange County for more expansive search (see Portability FAQ)



**Resident identifies a unit and verifies that landlord will accept voucher clients.** If so, the resident gives their partially-completed RFTA packet to landlord for them to complete and submit to OCHA.



OCHA processes RFTA, and if approved schedules HQS Inspection. Upon the unit passing inspection, **resident signs lease and moves in.** Landlord sends signed lease to OCHA, which then executes Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with landlord. If applicable, OCHA then sends Landlord Incentive (LIP) payment to landlord.

## To Keep in Mind During Housing Search

- One of the biggest chronic obstacles for HCV participants finding units in Orange County is the lack of affordable units in general and lack of affordable units with landlords who are also willing to accept HCV tenants. This is a longterm, ongoing problem that OCHCD continues to devise solutions for (see back for some examples).
- Having trouble finding a unit does not mean the participant or service provider is personally failing. Our participants are averaging 3-4 months between the time their voucher is issued and the time they sign a lease. Many participants are taking much longer than that.
- If you are having trouble finding a unit, please communicate with HCV Staff. We can work with service providers to increase support, and in special cases make a referral to our Housing Access Coordinator.

## How HCV Rent Is Calculated

We must always keep in mind the payment standard for each unit, based on Fair Market Rents in our specific county (<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>):

2021-2022 Orange County Payment Standards	
Efficiency	\$1,126
One-Bedroom	\$1,133
Two-Bedroom	\$1,319
Three-Bedroom	\$1,701
Four-Bedroom	\$1,9935

Factors we must take into account when determining the affordability of a unit:

- **Are utilities included?**  
If not, the amount of eligible rent will be lower, because we have to factor in that a portion of income is needed for utilities.
- **Which utility companies service the unit?**  
Certain companies have higher rates. The Orange County jurisdiction has a much wider variety of utility companies than most Housing Authorities.
- **Is the unit attached (apartment, condo, townhouse) or free-standing?**  
Houses have higher utility costs, which means rents must be lower to be eligible.
- **Remember:**  
"Gross Rent" = Rent + Utilities. The higher the utilities are, the lower the rent will need to be to make up for it. Everything must add up to our payment standard, the Fair Market Rent.

## OCHCD Is Constantly Seeking to Expand Affordable Housing Inventory through Landlord Outreach

- Owners receive **Landlord Incentive Program (LIP)** payments of \$1,000 for signing lease with HCV clients (\$500 for repeating owners).
- OCHA's Risk Mitigation fund covers damages incurred by tenants.
- OCHCD strives for quick response time to address any landlord concerns. The department engages in quarterly Landlord Workshops in order to discuss program and hear feedback.



### What Participants and Service Providers Can Tell Hesitant Landlords

- Inform them of the Landlord Incentive and Risk Mitigation Programs (see above)
- Subsidy payments from the county are punctual and stable: they will never have to worry about collecting their rent.
- Increased housing stability for owners: retention rates are significantly higher for HCV tenants compared to non-HCV tenants.

For questions or more information please contact the HCV Program Manager:  
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