

CHOOSING A TENANT

The choice of a tenant is always up to the landlord. Whether choosing a tenant participating in the rental assistance program or choosing a market tenant, we strongly recommoned that you do a thorough screening of your tenants.

Please remember that this is your tenant, SSHDC is not a party of any lease.

SECURITY DEPOSITS

The payment of a security deposit is the tenants responsibility. This should be collected and held by the landlord in accordance with Mass State Law requirements.

DETERMINING THE RENT

RENT REASONABLENESS

The Housing Agency must certify and document on a case-by-case basis that the contract rent for each unit for which a lease has been approved is:

- 1) reasonable in relation to rents currently being charged for comparable units in the private unassisted market; and
- 2) not in excess of rents currently being charged by the owner for comparable unassisted units.

This process is done by conducting a rental survey for each city/town that we administer the program in. Surveys are completed quarterly, the information is obtained by calling newspaper ads, contacting rental agents and information provided by landlords regarding their rental units.

The information from the survey is compiled by town and bedroom size. When an inspection is performed the inspector will give the unit a grade based upon the overall condition of the building. The grade is used with the survey to determine a reasonable rent.

THE TENANT PORTION OF RENT AND UTILITY ALLOWANCE

Recent changes in the rental assistance programs have mandated a merger between the certificate and voucher programs. In accordance with these regulations the tenant's share of the rent will be calculated based upon a payment

standard for the town where the unit is located. The tenant share will be between 30-40% of their adjusted gross income toward rent and utilities.

For each utility (heat, hot water, cooking, electricity) the tenant is responsible for paying, there is a Utility Allowance deduction.

Utility Allowances are not actual costs, but are determined by an estimation chart, accounting for differences in building types (single family, high rise, etc.), the type of fuel (gas, oil, electric), and the number of rooms which meet the bedroom criteria.

INSPECTION STANDARDS

SSHDC is required to comply with two sets of inspection standards. They are the housing quality standards established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and our contracting agency, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

1. HUD'S HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS)

Federal Standards for the Section 8 Program

DHCD can not waive any of these requirements

There are no "CONDITIONAL APPROVALS" of a unit that fails the HQS standards. A HAP Contract can not be prepared on the basis of an agreement that a failed item will be repaired within a certain time period.

2. DHCD INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

Additional standards required by DHCD

DHCD may review waiver requests

3. MASS. STATE SANITARY CODE

Enforced by local Boards of Health

Occupancy Permit or Certificate of Fitness

Compliance with the Mass. Lead Law is required

INSPECTION PROCEDURES

The potential tenant will have some paperwork that needs to be completed by both the landlord and tenant. This packet is called the request for lease approval. Be sure to complete all areas and sign each area as instructed. If the family has a child under the age of 6, we require the landlord to submit a letter of compliance from a licensed lead paint inspector. This must be submitted before the inspection can be scheduled.

Once the completed paperwork has been submitted, the program representative will contact you with any questions. If all is set for the inspection to take place, an inspection clerk will contact you to schedule an inspection. Initial inspections are generally scheduled within 5 working days after the completed paperwork is received and any questions answered.

The inspector will make a determination that the unit fails inspection, meets the pass/repair requirement – meaning there are some repairs that need to be completed but the unit meets the standards to begin a lease, or, the unit passes inspection. You will be informed at the time of the inspection of the results. Written reports will be sent to both the landlord and tenant.

Families with children under 6

There can be no defective paint inside or out, regardless of the lead content (HQS). Check porches, window wells, holes in plaster.

Any unsafe site or neighborhood conditions (waterways, railroad tracks, out-buildings, abandoned cars).

Rail spacing on porches, decks or lofts can be no more than 6".

Exterior Condition

Any obvious site conditions that would be hazardous, unsafe or unsanitary (standing water, debris, glass, sharp objects).

Missing or damaged siding or shingles which would allow weather to enter building.

Check stairs, rails, porches for broken, cracked, missing or insecure parts.

Garbage cans or dumpster present?

Exterior lighting at each exit doorway and fire exit passageway.

Exterior doors must be lockable for security. Locks which require a key to get out are not allowed.

Interior-Common Hallway Conditions

Adequate lighting

10+ units require emergency lighting with exits clearly marked.

A smoke detector is required.

Handrails are required on all sections of stairs with 4 or more risers or with an unprotected height (over 30") which are used by the tenant on a regular basis. Reasonably spaced balusters are required (with children under 6, no more than 6" spacing).

LEASE-UP PROCESS

Once the unit has either passed inspection or been determined a pass/repair we can process the lease, lease addendum and contract. This will be processed in our office and sent to the landlord for the necessary signatures.

You may choose to use your own lease or the HUD model dwelling lease. If you choose to use your lease we need to review and approve it. HUD requires that a lease addendum and contract be used.

YOU SHOULD NOT ALLOW A TENANT TO MOVE-IN UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN AUTHORIZATION FROM THE PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVE.

Housing Assistance Payments

Once the lease addendum and contract have been returned signed, we will release the housing assistance payments. Payments are sent on the first of each month for that month. For leases and contracts that are returned after the checks run for the first, we process a check run on the 15th of the month. Completed paperwork must be received 5 business days prior to the check run. For some, the first housing assistance (hap) payment will be retroactive to the beginning date of the lease and include payment through the end of the month payment is received. From that time forward payments will be made on the first of each month.

CONTINUING ASSISTANCE

Each year the program participant is required to go through a recertification process. This includes verification of family size and income. At this time we are also required to perform our annual inspection of the unit. We notify the tenant of the inspection date and request that they notify the landlord.

TERMINATING A TENANCY

The requirements to terminate a tenancy are the same with a rental assistance participant as with a market tenant. All terminations should be in compliance with the lease and Mass. State Laws. We do ask that you supply our office with copies of any notices sent to the tenant.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT
OUR OFFICE AT:**

**SOUTH SHORE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORP
169 SUMMER ST
KINGSTON**

1-781-422-4200, 1-800-242-0957, FAX 1-781-585-7483