



Section 8 101

Understanding the Basics



Tampa Housing Authority
Assisted Housing Department

"Building A World Class Community, One Family, One Neighborhood at a Time"

Table of Contents

What is the Housing Choice Voucher program (HCV).....	4
What is the Housing Choice Voucher?.....	4
What is the Difference between HCV and Public Housing?.....	4
Where can I take the Housing Choice Voucher?.....	4
How Does the Voucher Work?.....	4
What is the amount the HCV will pay?.....	4
What is a Payment Standard?.....	5
What is the Total Tenant Payment?.....	5
What is the Utility Allowance?.....	5
When is a Utility Allowance Used?.....	5
What is a Utility Reimbursement?.....	5
How Does the Housing Agency Determine the Bedroom Size?.....	5
Who can I add to my Housing Choice Voucher?.....	6
Does the property have to be Inspected?.....	6
What is the Role of the Housing Agency, Tenant and Landlord?.....	6-7
What Factors should I consider when searching for a unit?.....	7
How can I prepare for the Housing Choice Voucher?.....	8
Frequently Asked Questions?.....	9-13

What is the HCV Program?

The HCV Program is a federal rent subsidy that assists extremely low-income households with monthly rental payments for those eligible applicants.

What is a Housing Choice Voucher?

A voucher is a document issued by the Housing Agency that authorizes the family to search for a unit, and lists the obligations of the family under the program. The voucher also provides the bedroom size allocated by the Housing Agency and the time frame required to find a unit.

What is difference between HCV and Public Housing?

In the HCV program the rental subsidy is tied to the housing choice voucher and you must find a unit in the private housing market. In Public Housing, the subsidy is tied to the unit you applied for and is not portable.

Where can I take the HCV voucher?

The voucher may be used at any agency that operates the Housing Choice program (HCV) in the United States. This is known as Portability. The Tampa Housing Authority covers all of Hillsborough County except for Plant City as the city has its Housing Agency.

How Does the HCV Voucher work?

Most eligible families are required to pay at least 30 percent (but no more than 40 percent initially) of their monthly-adjusted income toward rent directly to the landlord. The Tampa Housing Authority pays the landlord the difference between the rent to owner and the tenant's portion.

What is the amount the HCV will pay?

The maximum amount that the Housing Agency will pay is an amount equal to the Payment Standard minus the family's total tenant payment.

What is a Payment Standard?

This is an amount established by the Housing Agency for a particular unit size and is between 90% to 110% of the Fair market rents in the area of jurisdiction. THA's payment standard is set at 100% of the FMR which can be found at www.thafl.com.

What is the Total Tenant Payment?

The total tenant payment is the higher of the following:

- 10% of monthly gross income
- 30% of monthly adjusted income (gross income minus any deductions mandated by HUD regulations for which the family qualifies)
- Minimum rent (Tampa Housing Authority's minimum rent is \$50)

What is the Utility allowance?

By definition, a **utility allowance** is an amount equal to the estimate made or approved by a PHA or HUD of the monthly cost of a reasonable consumption of tenant paid utilities.

When is a utility allowance used?

A utility allowance is calculated for an assisted family if the family is responsible for paying the cost of any utilities. The approved utility allowance schedule is given to families along with their Voucher. The utility allowance is **based on the lower of actual unit size selected or the family's voucher size.**

What is a Utility Reimbursement?

When a family's income is low enough such that the total subsidy is an amount greater than the rent to owner, the PHA makes a payment to cover the utility costs. This payment is known as the utility reimbursement. Note that the situation occurs only when the family is responsible for paying part or all of the utilities.

How does the agency determine the bedroom size for my family?

The housing agency establishes standards to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms and amount of subsidy for families of different sizes and compositions. One bedroom generally will be assigned for each two family members of the same sex.

Who can I add to my household?

- Members will only be added to the household composition through court awarded custody, birth, or adoption.
- THA may also allow the addition of household members based on civil union, marriage, or domestic partnership. The addition of the member(s) will not allow for an increase in voucher size or allow for overcrowding of the unit.
- Consideration will also be provided to allow for the addition of elderly or disabled that are considered immediate family member (s) who are only being added due to the necessity of care. The addition of the member will not allow for an increase in voucher size or allow for overcrowding of the unit.

Does the property have to be inspected?

Yes, all units will need to pass a Housing Quality Standard Inspection prior to moving in as well as every year within twelve months from last annual inspection.

What is the Responsibility of the Housing Authority, Tenant and Owner?

Tampa Housing Authority

- Review all applicants to determine whether an applicant is eligible for the program.
- Explain all the rules of the program to all of the families who qualify.
- Issue a Voucher and, if necessary, assist the family in finding a place to live.
- Approve the unit, the owner and tenancy.
- Make housing assistant payments to the owner in a timely manner.
- Ensure that owners and families comply with the program rules.
- Provide families and owners with prompt, professional service.

The Family

- Provide the agency with complete and accurate information.
- Find a place to live that is suitable for your family and qualifies for the program.
- Cooperate in attending all appointments scheduled by the Housing Agency.
- Take responsibility for the care of your housing unit.
- Comply with the terms of your lease and with the owner.
- Comply with the Family Obligations of your Voucher.
- Report all income and household composition changes within 10 days.

The Owner or Landlord

- Screen families who apply to determine if they will be good renters.
- Comply with Fair Housing Laws, and not discriminate against any family.
- Maintain the housing unit by making necessary repairs in a timely manner.
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract with the Housing Agency.
- Collect the rent due by the family and otherwise enforce the lease.

What Factors should I consider when searching for a unit?

You should select a place that meets your family's needs.

- **Schools** – consider the distance from the housing unit to the school.
- **Safety** – consider the neighborhood and its surroundings. Try to avoid high crime areas.
- **Work** – consider the distance from the workplace to the housing unit.
- **Childcare** – consider the availability in area of the housing unit.
- **Public Transportation** – consider the access to public transportation in the area of the housing unit.
- **Costs** – consider the utility responsibilities and maintenance costs associated to unit

How Can I prepare for the HCV program?

- Stay in compliance with your current housing unit.
- Gather all important documents like social security cards, birth certificates, income, assets, etc...
- Provide complete and accurate information.
- Start searching for areas that will meet your family needs.
- Pay off or make arrangements on your utility bills.
- Be prepared to furnish information about your rental history to prospective landlords.

For further information on our Housing Program please contact our customer service department at (813) 253-0551.



Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ #1:

Q. How long do you have for leasing a voucher?

A. The Housing Choice Voucher is valid for a period of at least sixty calendar days from the date of issuance. Requests for extensions to the voucher are rarely provided except for requests for reasonable accommodations for those who are considered disabled.

FAQ #2:

Q. Do you have to get on the waitlist for HCV?

A. Generally families are required to be on a waitlist prior to receiving assistance; however, because you are being relocated from a subsidized property, you will receive a higher preference and automatically come to the top of the waitlist for immediate processing.

FAQ #3:

Q: Will a misdemeanor keep you from getting HCV?

A. Every situation will be reviewed individually. Bring these issues to your case manager's attention.

FAQ #4:

Q. If we lose our job on HCV will we be evicted or will rent adjust like with public housing?

A. Any change in income or composition will be adjusted as long as it is reported in writing within 10 days through an interim change form. Decreases in income will be effective the following month of reporting.



FAQ #5:

Q. Where can I go with my HCV voucher?

A. The voucher may be used at any agency that operates a Housing Choice Voucher program (HCV). If you choose to stay locally, the Tampa Housing Authority covers all of Hillsborough County except for Plant City as the city has its own Public Housing Agency.

FAQ #6:

Q. Do you have to have a job to get on HCV?

A. Employment is not a requirement; however, you will be required to attend monthly meetings to discuss and review a zero income form. This form allows the agency to review all expenses and income.

FAQ #7:

Q. Does the HCV program conduct background screenings?

A. Yes, our agency will screen applicants as thoroughly and fairly as possible for drug-related and violent criminal behavior within the last five years. We will also conduct a National sex offenders search.

FAQ #8:

Q. How long do I have to use and lease up the voucher?

A. The initial maximum time for a voucher issuance is 60 days. You will be required to find a unit that will pass an inspection and return all necessary documents within the 60 day time frame.

FAQ #9:

Q. Will we have to move every year if we go into HCV?

A. No. The only times you will need to move is if your landlord chooses not to renew a lease, the unit goes into abatement of payment due to failing to pass an inspection, or foreclosure.

FAQ #10:

Q. How often do they have to get recertified under HCV?

A. Annually.



FAQ #11:

Q. How often is the unit inspected in HCV?

A. The unit is inspected once a year (within 12 months of last or initial inspection). Special inspections are conducted when requested by landlord or tenant. Quality control inspections may occur due to the housing authority examining a sample of units recently inspected.

FAQ #12:

Q. What do I do when something is wrong in the unit when I am on HCV?

A. First, you should contact the landlord/owner and make him/her aware of problem and follow up with the owner in writing. If landlord does not respond or fix the issue, contact your counselor for a special inspection or further guidance in writing.

FAQ #13:

Q. If I want to rent a house that is not on HCV. Can I talk the owner into getting on the HCV program so I can rent that house?

A. Yes. The owner packet is located on our website www.thafl.com under forms. The owner would be required to complete the packet and return with all the necessary documents.

FAQ #14:

Q. What are the steps for a landlord who wants to start putting their house on the HCV program?

A. The owner would have to have a family that has a Housing Choice Voucher. Once the owner has an eligible family, he or she would have to complete the owner packet and return with the requested documents.

FAQ#15:

Q, Who can I add to my household?

A. Addition of family members other than by birth, adoption, marriage, court-awarded custody will not be permitted..



FAQ#16:

Q. Can I keep my child part of the household if they go away to college?

A. Yes, if the child is a full time student, the family may decide to consider the child either temporarily or permanently absent. If the family decides that the member is temporary absent, income of that member will be included in total household income, the member will be included on the lease, and the member will be included for determination of Voucher size.

FAQ#17

Q. Can I keep my child part of the household if they go away to the military?

A. No, this person will be considered permanently absent.

FAQ #18:

Q. Can we rent from a family member on HCV?

A. No, you cannot rent a unit owned by a parent, child, grand-child, sister or brother or any member of the family, unless approving the unit would provide reasonable accommodation for a family member who is a person with disabilities.

FAQ #19:

Q. How much will HCV pay?

A. The maximum subsidy amount THA will pay is the lower of payment standard or gross rent minus your total tenant payment.

FAQ #20:

Q. Is there a limit on how many people can relocate under HCV? If everyone wanted HCV will there be enough to go around?

A. All families that are relocating and are determined eligible will receive a Housing Choice Voucher.

FAQ #21:

Q. What are the current payment standards for HCV?

A. Effective October 1, 2014

Efficiency	\$610	3 bedroom	\$1280
1 bedroom	\$765	4 bedroom	\$1533
2 bedroom	\$959	5 bedroom	\$1762



FAQ #22:

Q. What's the max amount residents can earn and still be qualified for HCV?

A. It all depends on family composition. Public housing residents under relocation can go up to 80% of HUD's income guidelines for program eligibility. If the tenant's 30% of income is more than the rent to owner, then the family is deemed self-sufficient and will be terminated from the program within 6 months of the change.

FAQ #23:

Q. How does one go about using the voucher to go out of state?

A. The first step is to contact THA of your intent to move to another state. THA will assist you in locating the correct housing authority. The portability paperwork will be sent directly to that agency. Time limits on the voucher still apply so it is vital that research is done of the housing market prior to moving.

FAQ #24:

Q. Mary Bethune Hi-Rise today is elderly or disabled. And some of the residents are disabled but are not 62. Will we be able to move to an elderly community which has the 62 year or older rule?

A. In most cases, if that is the rule than no; however, that would be up to the property to make decision.

FAQ #25:

Q. What do I do if a landlord quotes me a certain rent then after he learns that I have a HCV voucher he says the rent is xx dollars more? A friend of mine on HCV said that's what she ran into.

A. If an owner quotes you a higher price it is illegal. Rent for families that are receiving assistance are to be the same for those not receiving assistance. The rule of thumb is to always remain truthful and report everything to your case manager and housing counselor immediately in writing.

Mission Statement

The Housing Authority of the City of Tampa promotes the development and professional management of a variety of affordable housing opportunities, facilities and supportive services to nurture neighborhoods, provide economic development and self-sufficiency activities for residents, assuring equal access to safe, quality housing for low and moderate income families throughout the community

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Authority**

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