



Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- I. **PRE-LEASE**
- II. **INSPECTION** (skip to)
- III. **DURING TENANCY** (skip to)

PRE-LEASE

Is there any direct cost to the landlord for participating in the EHV program?

A: No, there are no direct costs to the landlord.

Does participation in the EHV program complicate the leasing process for the landlord (e.g., more paperwork)?

A: The landlord does need to complete additional paperwork with the Housing Authority regarding payment agreements and inspections. However, Families Forward works diligently to assist the landlord with the paperwork and is looking at creative ways to facilitate inspections such as virtual inspections.

How long does it take from the time I agree to receive a voucher holder for the tenant to occupy the unit and for me to begin collecting rent?

A: This largely depends on when the unit is ready to inspect and how long it takes for the landlord to send back the required documents and signed Housing Assistance Payment contract. The Housing Authorities are committed to prioritizing the leasing process for EHV's.

Does the landlord have a say in approving/declining the proposed tenant?

A: Yes. The landlord should use the same criteria to screen all tenants, except by law, vouchers are to be considered income.

Does the program prevent or alter the credit check and background verification process?

A: No, it is at landlords' discretion what their eligibility requirement are.

Can I require my standard security deposit and does the public housing authority or Families Forward help tenant pay the security deposit?

A: Yes, landlords/property owners can require their standard security deposits. To encourage and incentivize property owners and landlords to participate in the EHV program, Families Forward will pay 100% of the security deposit on behalf of the tenant.

Our communities have minimum qualifications such as credit, background checks, employment verification, including income requirements of 2.5x rent (voucher is taken into consideration when calculating this), rental verification, with room for increased deposits if the applicant does not quite meet the qualifications. Does Families Forward pre-screen participating tenants by community requirements prior to tenants applying?

A: Yes! We have worked with a variety of families and do our best to match them with properties who we feel would be a good fit and meet their requirements.

The longest we can hold a unit is 14 days once the unit is vacant. Is this enough time for a unit to be approved and a tenant placed?

A: For the most part that should be sufficient time, but we do also offer to pay a vacancy fee to hold a unit for up to a month. The payment would be a months' rent.

INSPECTION

What happens if there is a conflict with an inspection? Is there an appeal process? Can an older unit be grandfathered into an older building code?

A: PHAs are required to conduct three types of inspections: initial, annual, and special inspections, including quality control inspections. Inspections result in pass, fail, or inconclusive reports. Pass inspections require no further action by the PHA. Fail or inconclusive inspections require follow-up reinspection or PHA verification to confirm the correction of the HQS infractions. Depending upon the nature of the item responsibility for correction of fail or inconclusive items may be the responsibility of the owner or tenant. Public housing authorities follow federal regulations that govern Housing Quality Standards in assisted units. These regulations are completely separate from local building codes.

I find that Housing Authority is making it difficult for landlords due to the delay of home inspections. Can you talk more about that?

A: Families Forward's team can help with pre-inspections and help bring properties up to par so when Housing Authority inspections take place there is a quick turn around.

Are inspections conducted per tenant or per apartment? For example, can we submit the RTA for upcoming units without anyone being placed yet?

Per Apartment, the RTA would need to be submitted for the specific tenant who has been approved for the unit.

DURING TENANCY

What is the current fair market rent that HUD/local public agencies pay?

A: Payment standards vary based depending on the housing authority. While each housing authority has its specific payment standards, which should be verified, the Housing Authority primarily approve rents based on comparable rents in the area.

How much do tenants pay?

A: The housing voucher family must pay 30% of its monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities, and if the unit rent is greater than the payment standard the family is required to pay the additional amount. By law, whenever a family moves to a new unit where the rent exceeds the payment standard, the family may not pay more than 40 percent of its adjusted monthly income for rent. The appropriate housing authority pays the remaining portion.

In the worst-case scenario, may I terminate the lease? What are the requirements? (90-day notice).

A: Yes, the landlord can terminate in accordance to lease guidelines. In addition, owners and tenants are advised that HUD termination policies and procedures must be followed when initiating a termination, including proper notices and documentation. When the eviction is not for cause, a 90-day notice must be provided.

Does the tenant pay its portion of the rent directly to the landlord and the public housing authority pays the difference directly to the landlord?

A: Yes, both the tenant and Housing Authority will make payments directly to the landlords, Families Forward will check in monthly to ensure payments.

How would I request a rent increase?

A: Landlord would need to complete an increase of rent form and submit it 60 days before the new amount goes into effect.

Does the program allow the landlord to adjust/increase rent annually based on market conditions?

A: Yes, however rent increases are based solely on market conditions and must be requested at least 60 days in advance of the effective date.

The City of Santa Ana has recently adopted a rent stabilization ordinance. How does this impact Emergency Housing Vouchers and Section 8 Vouchers in the City of Santa Ana?

A: Section 8 and emergency vouchers are exempt from the City's rent stabilization ordinance.

If warranted, can the tenant be evicted and, if so, is the eviction process undertaken by the Housing Authority or landlord?

A: Yes, the tenant can be evicted by the landlord.

What is Families Forward's role in tenant approval and monitoring process?

A: Our Housing Resource Specialist's role is to help facilitate client landlord communication, overall relationship, and to help mitigate potential tenant challenges. Additionally, families are connected to supportive case management and resources such as career support, counseling, and basic needs to ensure housing stability.

How does the Housing Authority or Families Forward ensure to the landlord that any tenant issues will be resolved quickly and effectively?

A: Landlords are welcome to contact Families Forward at any time when faced with tenant issues. We have a 24/7 Landlord Hotline, which guarantees you will receive a response. We will go above and beyond to connect clients to appropriate resources and services to ensure successful tenancy.

If we currently have some tenants we see are in trouble, or having difficulty paying rent, can we get them involved with Families Forward?

A: Yes. Families Forward can provide eviction prevention and support families at risk of experiencing homelessness for many cities throughout Orange County. If we cannot provide the needed resource our team can connect the tenant to the appropriate resource.

Is this program temporary or once a family has a voucher it is good unless they violate the program?

A: Vouchers are permanent and a family can benefit from it until any breach of policy.

How long can a tenant receive assistance? Is their eligibility periodically evaluated?

Tenants receive assistance from vouchers permanently. Families Forward will offer supportive services to tenants for up to 1 year. Landlords can continue to seek Families Forward support as needed. Tenant eligibility is not re-evaluated except income determination/assessment.

Can the vouchers cover utilities charged by the landlord in addition to rent? Additionally, our lease requires continuous renters' insurance coverage. Could the voucher also cover this?

The vouchers do not cover utilities but the calculation for tenant portion will take into account utility allocations. Families Forward may also be able to assist with both utilities and renters' insurance.

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Yes! We have worked with a variety of families and do our best to match them with properties who we feel would be a good fit and meet their requirements.

Our longest lease term available is 9 months, with increased rates for 6 months or month-to-month leases, could this still be approved?

A 12-month lease is typically required. It is based on what the market calls for which is 12 months depending on the Housing Authority, they may be flexible.

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