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# San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program: Overview from a Participant's Perspective

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Azucena Valladolid  
Executive Vice President of Rental Assistance and  
Workforce Development  
Rental Assistance Division

Carrie Bell  
Senior Vice President of Rental Assistance  
Rental Assistance Division



# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

## Path to Success

### Work-Able Families

- At least one adult is under 55 (under age 62 starting July 1, 2024), not disabled, and not a full-time student ages 18-23
- Subject to minimum rent:
  - 1 Work-Able adult = \$400/month
  - 2 or more Work-Able adults = \$650/month
- Income ranges to calculate tenant's portion of the rent
  - Lower end of the range is used for the calculation
  - Encourages participants to increase income

### Elderly/Disabled

- All adult family members are 55 or older (62 or older starting July 1, 2024), disabled or a full-time student ages 18-23.
- Tenant's portion of the rent is 28.5% of adjusted monthly income.
- Minimum monthly rent is \$0.



# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Occupancy

## Household Recertification

- Full recertification of household income and family composition every two years (biennial)
- Family receives a Recertification Packet.
- Verification of household composition, income and deductions
- Rent calculation
- Reported family annual income
  - Expenses related to deductions from family income
  - Other factors that affect adjusted income
- Notification of changes to family and landlord



# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Occupancy (Continued)

## **Interim Household Recertification**

- Family can request this in writing or verbally at any time.
- Only factors that have changed will be verified.
- Often requested for decreases in income.

## **Mandatory Interim Reporting *Within Ten (10) Days***

- Household member moves out of assisted unit
- Minor moves into assisted unit
- Changes from full-time student status to a lesser level
- New source(s) of income for zero-income households



# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Occupancy (Continued)

## Moves

- Families are permitted to move with continued assistance to another unit within SDHC’s jurisdiction.
  - Once every 12 months, unless a reasonable accommodation is given or under extraordinary circumstances exist
- Restrictions on Moves:
  - Cannot be in initial term of lease
  - Unit not in “Fail” status due to tenant-caused damages
  - No lease violations
  - File not with Program Integrity Unit (PIU)
  - Must be current with payments, if on payback plan.
  - Not a Work-Able, zero-income household



# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Occupancy (Continued)

## Portability

- The right to receive tenant-based voucher assistance to lease a unit outside SDHC’s jurisdiction
- The ability to lease a unit anywhere in the United States where a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program exists

## Port-in

- When a family is issued a voucher from another housing agency and leases a unit in SDHC’s jurisdiction
- Households porting into SDHC’s jurisdiction are subject to SDHC’s HCV guidelines.

## Port-out


- When a family leases a unit outside of SDHC’s jurisdiction



# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

## Raise and Expand Access with Community Help (REACH)

- Started to assist applicants with updating or completing Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Wait List applications.
  - Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) provided in person or additional assistance.
- Now a pilot initiative for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher programs.
  - CBOs provide assistance to applicants and participants
    - Gather verifications for SDHC applicants and certifications
    - Help complete forms
    - Provide general information
  - CBOs offer assistance in person and by telephone.



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### Raise and Expand Access with Community Help (REACH)

The REACH program focuses on providing assistance to current program participants who require additional help to access and utilize SDHC's online systems, complete routine program-related paperwork, and to help gather required verifications. Community-Based Organizations (CBO) staff have a general understanding of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, required documents, general eligibility criteria, biennial and interim certifications, and the waitlist application. They will assist applicants and participants complete routine Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program paperwork.

#### CBO Services

REACH CBOs will provide SDHC program participants in person and by appointment assistance with the following items:

- Providing physical space for clients and supplies and equipment needed to access SDHC online systems, including, but not limited to computers, internet access, and scanners to scan and upload documents
- Completing certification paperwork
- Completing interim certification paperwork required to report changes such as household composition, annual income, medical expense deductions, and other changes
- Gathering verification documents, such as SSA/SSI benefit letters, proof of unemployment denial or award of benefits, CalWORKs/Adoptions Assistance/Foster Care payments, VA or other pension benefit documentation
- Assisting with filling out and completing Wait List applications and updating information on existing Wait List applications on the SDHC Rental Assistance Wait List Portal
- Creating email accounts required to create accounts in the Housing Commission's online portal and future applications

#### REACH Partners

These organizations will be available to take in person appointments to assist applicants in completing forms, assist with gathering information, and complete Waiting List Updates:

1. <b>Casa Familiar:</b> (619) 428-1115 119 West Hall Avenue, San Ysidro, CA 92173 161 West San Ysidro Boulevard, #B 101-102, San Ysidro, CA 92173	4. <b>Refugee Assistance Center:</b> (619) 793-9010 4265 Fairmount Avenue, San Diego, CA 92105
2. <b>Chicano Federation:</b> (619) 285-5600 3180 University Avenue, Suite #110, San Diego, CA 92104	5. <b>Horn of Africa Community:</b> (619) 583-0532 5348 University Avenue, Suite 101, San Diego, CA 92105
3. <b>Logan Heights Community Development Corporation:</b> (619) 858-0563 3040 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104	6. <b>United Women of East Africa Support Team:</b> (619) 501-7804 6523 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92115

#### Request an Accommodation due to Disability

If you are a person with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation, please call the Housing Commission at (619) 231-9400

#### General Questions

If you are already receiving Housing Assistance from the Housing Commission and have general questions regarding your assistance, please call (619) 231-9400.

If you have questions regarding your Wait List application or registering for the new Housing Commission Wait List Portal, please contact the Wait List Call Center at 619-578-7640.

*CBO staff are not subject matter experts regarding the Housing Commission policies and will not make policy determinations.*

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[f](#) [i](#) [in](#) [v](#)

[www.sdhc.org](http://www.sdhc.org)



# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Inspections

## Federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) minimum quality standards for tenant-based and project-based programs
- To ensure housing is decent, safe and sanitary
- HQS standards apply to the unit at initial occupancy and during the term of the lease.
- SDHC inspects each unit under contract at initial move-in and at least every two years (biennially).





# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Inspections (Continued)

## **National Standards for Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE)**

- New inspection protocol combining requirements of Uniform Physical Conditions and Standards (UPCS) and HQS into one standard for all HUD programs
- Implementation date extended to October 1, 2024
- Housing authorities can continue to utilize other standards such as HQS.



# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Inspections (Continued)

## Missed and Failed Inspections

- Emergency fail items that endanger the family's health or safety must be corrected within 24 hours of notification.
- For non-emergency fail items, repairs must be completed within 30 days.
- If an inspection is cancelled, or results in a no-show, another inspection is scheduled approximately 14 days from the no-show/cancellation.
- If a family misses or cancels three inspection appointments, SDHC will consider the family in violation of program Family Obligations and will determine if the process to terminate the family's assistance should begin.

## Rent Reasonableness

- Conducted during initial inspections to determine reasonableness of owner's requested rent.
- SDHC reviews current market rents for comparable units to ensure rent amount requested is reasonable prior to the tenant moving into a new rental unit and when the owner requests a rent increase.





# SDHC – Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Program Integrity

- The Program Integrity Unit reviews allegations of program violations.
- SDHC provides families with a written description of their responsibilities at the intake briefing and at every recertification.
  - All adult members must certify to abide.
- Families failing to meet program requirements may be subject to program warnings, repayment plans and actions up to the termination of rental assistance.
- HCV participants have an opportunity for administrative reviews and impartial informal hearings when they disagree with SDHC decisions.



## Questions & Comments

