San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program:
Overview from a Participant’s Perspective
Presentation to the SDHC Board of Commissioners
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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.
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
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
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
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.
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).
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.
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 request a rent increase.
• 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