

## RIHA HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

The Housing Choice Voucher Program is the federal government's primary program for assisting very low-income individuals and families find housing in the private market. Housing Choice Voucher program participants come from all races, ages, religions and ethnic backgrounds. They are male, female, married, single, and divorced — in other words, they come from all sorts of backgrounds. Most program participants work in some capacity and many work full-time. With funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the RIHA Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program offers participants maximum mobility and broader range of housing choice in selecting where they live. Using a HCV, elderly, persons with disabilities, military veterans and working families can identify quality housing anywhere in the city of Rock Island with the assurance that they will not have to pay more than 30 percent of their adjusted income toward rent. Housing options typically belong to private owners and landlords and include single-family homes, townhouses and/or apartments.

To be eligible for rental assistance, participants must qualify under HUD income limits and other eligibility criteria. Generally, a family interested in participating in the HCV program must apply to RIHA when the waiting list is open, and applications are being accepted. RIHA must give public notice in multiple media outlets, the RIHA Newsletter and website detailing when the waiting list will open and where applications will be taken.

Eligible applicants, who are accepted for the program, are issued a HCV and are responsible for finding a suitable rental unit of their choosing. The landlord must be willing to lease the unit to the HCV holder. The unit must be of appropriate size and rent and must meet a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection.

Once RIHA approves an eligible individual's or family's housing unit, the participant and the landlord sign a lease and at the same time, the landlord and RIHA sign a Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract that runs the same term as the lease. This means that everyone — program participant, landlord and RIHA — has obligations and responsibilities under the voucher program.

## HCV PROGRAM 3-WAY PARTNERSHIP

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program Partnership works well when each player does his or her part. The players include RIHA, the landlord, and the HCV program participant. Specific responsibilities for each partner are highlighted below.

### RIHA

- ▶ Pays landlord guaranteed monthly payment equal to the difference between rent paid by the program participant and the approved rent for the unit
- ▶ Inspects participant units at least once every year
- ▶ Investigates potential fraud or program abuse by participants or landlords
- ▶ Provides quality customer service to HCV landlords and program participants
- ▶ Notifies landlord of any change in subsidy amount

### LANDLORD

- ▶ Performs all management and related rental functions for the assisted unit, including program participant screening and selection
- ▶ Maintains the unit in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS), including unit maintenance
- ▶ Complies with equal opportunity/fair housing requirements
- ▶ Prepares information required under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract and furnishes the information to RIHA
- ▶ Collects security deposit, program participant portion of the rent, and any charges for damages to the unit above normal wear and tear from tenant
- ▶ Enforces program participant obligations as a tenant under the signed lease agreement
- ▶ Pays for utilities and services agreed upon in the lease
- ▶ May **not** collect side payments from HCV program participant or charge more rent than approved by RIHA

### PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

- ▶ Supplies information determined necessary by RIHA and/or HUD to administer the program, including completion of scheduled income reviews
- ▶ Pays utilities that are not supplied by the landlord in accordance with lease
- ▶ Provides and/or maintains the appliances for which they are responsible in accordance with the lease
- ▶ Accepts responsibility for and corrects damages inflicted to unit by family member or guest, within timeframe specified within lease
- ▶ May **not** commit serious or repeated violation(s) of the lease
- ▶ Notifies RIHA and their landlord 30 days in advance, prior to moving or terminating the lease



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## LANDLORD

Landlords own and manage their properties and enter landlord-tenant relationships with qualified eligible families. Rent is negotiated by the landlord and RIHA at the beginning of the lease term. The landlord receives a guaranteed monthly payment from RIHA equal to the difference between the rent paid by the program participant and the approved rent for the unit. The utility charges are typically paid directly to the utility company. Generally, the contract rent plus the allowance for the utilities paid by the family may not exceed HUD's Fair Market Rent for the area.

The landlord maintains the same responsibility as he/she would with any other tenant including rent collection, unit upkeep and maintenance, collection of damage deposit from program participants, reporting vacancies, and if necessary, evictions.

## PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Program Participant is responsible for abiding by the terms and conditions of the landlord lease and HCV program requirements. Participants are required to pay the security deposit and for any Housing Quality Standards breach caused by tenant failure to pay utilities or appliances, or damages to the rental unit beyond the normal wear and tear caused by any member of the household or a household guest.

## ROCK ISLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

Rock Island Housing Authority pays the landlord a guaranteed monthly payment equal to the difference between rent paid by the program participant and the approved rent for the unit and inspects participant units at least once every year while providing quality customer service to HCV landlords and program participants.

Regardless of income, most families have the same concerns; security, employment, getting the best possible education for their kids, and wanting a safe decent place to live. By becoming part of the RIHA's HCV program, either as a landlord or as a program participant, you will be taking part in one of the nation's fastest growing housing programs.

**For more information, contact a  
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or via email at [section8@RIHA4rent.org](mailto:section8@RIHA4rent.org).**



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