

How to Become a Landlord

Landlords in the private market can lease their apartments to families in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The program is federally funded and administered by the Wayland Housing Authority (WHA). The process of renting to a family in the Section 8 Housing Voucher Choice program is similar to renting to a family in the private market – the landlord screens and selects tenants, collects rent and maintains the property. ...

Participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program

When you rent an apartment to a WHA Section 8 Voucher holder you become a WHA landlord. You may contact the WHA Section 8 Department when you have an apartment available for rent.

How it Works

Eligible families will receive a “Voucher” from the WHA. The Voucher will state the amount of rent the WHA will pay directly to the landlord. The remaining portion is the responsibility of the tenant. Families must find housing within a certain time frame of receiving a Voucher, usually 60 days. You may ask to see the family's Voucher.

Applicant Screening

The WHA screens Voucher holders for program eligibility only – to determine how much rent the WHA will subsidize and how much rent the tenant will pay on their own. As in the private market, the owner is responsible for screening applicants for suitability as tenants. Selecting tenants, whether Voucher holders or not, is limited only by fair housing requirements and the prohibition of discrimination as established by federal and state law.

What Steps are Involved in Renting to a Family with a Voucher?

Step 1: Agree on Rent

If you choose to rent to a family with a Voucher, complete the Request for Tenancy Approval form and have the family hand deliver the form back to the WHA. WHA will confirm that the rent is reasonable before proceeding.

Step 1: Schedule the Inspection

Once the rent is agreed upon and WHA has reviewed the Request for Tenancy Approval, WHA's inspector will call you to set up the inspection.

Step 3: Sign the Lease

After the inspection has been conducted and the apartment has been approved, WHA will let you know how much the WHA will pay you each month (the Voucher amount) and how much the tenant will pay you. This amount should add up to the total rent.

You will then sign a lease with the family. Under Massachusetts law, you may take a security deposit

equal to one month's rent when the lease is signed. The lease is between you and the family.

Step 4: Sign the Housing Assistance Payments Contract

The Housing Assistance Payments Contract is your agreement with the WHA. It guarantees you the subsidy payment and other benefits as long as the family remains in the apartment and the apartment remains in compliance with the State Sanitary Code. The WHA will also ask that you certify that you are the present owner of the property.

Step 5: Your Tenant Moves In!

What Happens After I Rent to the Family?

Every year, the WHA will determine whether the family is still eligible for the Housing Choice Voucher program and whether the apartment is still in compliance with the State Sanitary Code. A change in the family's income or size may result in a change in their share of the rent and subsidy payment. If the apartment is no longer in compliance with the State Sanitary Code, the WHA will notify you in writing, and you will be given enough time to make the repairs.

You may request an increase in the rent annually (as stated in your lease), but the WHA must determine that the requested amount is reasonable in comparison to other market rate apartments in the same building and neighborhood. Any rent increase may result in the family having to pay the difference between the original rent amount and the increased rent amount.

Can the Lease be Terminated, if Necessary?

Your lease with the family should state how much notice you must give your tenant if you want to terminate the lease. The eviction process is the same for a family with a Voucher and an unassisted family. You may consult an attorney or bring the matter to the local Housing Court. You do not need the WHA's permission to evict a tenant who is in violation of the lease. You should send the WHA copies of the eviction notice.