



The BULLETIN

Quarterly news about Section 8 in Seattle • MARCH 2006 • For landlords and service providers

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Advocacy update

The President's budget and state legislative issues



Dear housing provider,

President Bush released his proposed 2007 Federal Budget in early February, and thankfully, Section 8 funding increases slightly from current levels.

The 2007 budget proposes a 2.6 percent increase in Section 8 funding over the Fiscal Year 2006 appropriation. Specifically, the budget calls for \$14.43 billion for renewal of expiring Section 8 tenant vouchers. However, this increase does not take inflation into account.

Though at this stage of the process, the 2007 budget does not bear bad news for Section 8, it could be better. The Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, a national non-profit organization that advocates for public and affordable housing, estimated that Section 8 needs to be funded at \$14.7 billion in order to provide sufficient funding for existing vouchers.

Unfortunately, the budget for public housing did not fare as well as Section 8. A proposed cut in the Public Housing Capital Fund of nearly 12 percent could mean a loss of about \$1.4 million for the Seattle Housing Authority. This funding supports needed repairs and capital improvements to maintain safe, quality housing for public housing residents.

Typically, the President's Budget is only the starting point for budget discussions. The difficult budget process for 2006, which started a year ago, only recently concluded with across-the-board cuts to housing and other social service programs. The process for the 2007 budget promises to be equally difficult, but we will continue to advocate for maximum funding

for Section 8, as well as public housing and other community development programs.

On a local level, I recently participated in the twelfth annual Housing Advocacy Day, sponsored by Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance and Washington State Coalition for the Homeless. The main goal of the day was to advocate face to face for supporting affordable housing for all. Advocates also pressed for funding to ensure continued services for the homeless, disabled, those living with HIV/AIDS, and victims of domestic violence.

The issue on the forefront of the agenda was HB 2418, The Home Security Fund bill. The bill covers the following main issues: a \$100 million supplement for the Housing Trust Fund, an increased investment in the Washington Families Fund, and \$4.8 million for the Energy Matchmakers program. These programs all leverage public funds with private dollars to double the impact for the low-income community, though housing development, support services and reductions in energy costs.

Housing Advocacy Day was a great way for a large group of stakeholders to educate legislators and seek support for the bill. It was inspiring to see the number of people who showed passionate support for housing issues. So far, efforts have paid off. The House of Representatives passed the bill 72-24, and sent it to the Senate. While the budget has not yet been completed, so far legislators are looking favorably on this bill

In addition to overseeing the Section 8 program, my role as director of housing advocacy gives me the important opportunity to continually engage policymakers on a local and federal level to support the preservation and improvement of affordable housing for our community. I hope you will continue to share your priorities and concerns regarding these issues.

LISA CIPOLLONE,
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING ADVOCACY
AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



News you can use

More vouchers out there!

New participants accepted into the program at faster rates

Last summer, Seattle Housing Authority started issuing vouchers to families on the waiting list for the first time in over two years.

After a series of cost-reducing policy changes, SHA was able to bring down its average cost per voucher in order to fund previously unused vouchers.

Now, the Section 8 department's goal is to put those unused vouchers into circulation as quickly as possible. "We will be significantly increasing the number of vouchers that we issue each month," said Issuance Supervisor Ethel Waldo. Landlords who frequently rent to Section 8 tenants may see an increased interest in their units.

"The most common vouchers we issue are for studios, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units," Waldo noted. However, voucher holders are allowed to rent a larger unit, such as a one-bedroom instead of a studio, as long as it fits within the budget established when they get their voucher.

Landlords who frequently rent to Section 8 tenants may see an increased interest in their units.

"For the past couple of years, when landlords rented to voucher holders, they were just moving to a new house or apartment within the program. Now, we have a whole new group of folks who are new to the program and less familiar with the process." Though each new voucher holder attends an orientation and a one-on-one session to

learn how to find housing with the voucher, the process can still be confusing. "We urge landlords to be patient with new voucher holders, and of course, ask to see the voucher before agreeing to rent."

Free advertising for your vacant units

When tenants receive their voucher, they usually pick up an up-to-date list of available units, which is maintained by SHA. Landlords are encouraged to submit as many units as they like on these lists – free of charge.

► **List your unit online**

Go to www.seattlehousing.org and click on "Section 8 landlords" under the "Housing" menu. Scroll down to the section called "Free advertising for vacant units."

► **Call us to list your unit** at 206-239-1663

Landlord *workshops*

**Every third Tuesday
5:30 -7:00 pm**

at
PorchLight
907 NW Ballard Way
Suite 200

Cross street is Leary Way in Ballard
Directions at www.seattlehousing.org

Questions?

Contact Mike Jung at
mjung@seattlehousing.org
or 206-239-1672.

Upcoming sessions:

April 18: Updates on the voucher program

- Status of voucher issuance: how many vouchers in the Seattle market?
- Other changes in program
- Feedback from you: what do you want out of the Section 8 program?

May 16: Topics for spring

- Painting Season: keeping units in good condition
- Move-out time: settling up with your tenant—SHA's role, and yours.

March 21: Housing Choice Voucher Orientation

- First time working with the Seattle Housing Authority?
- What to expect: when a prospective tenant moves out.



Working together

Move-in basics

A quick guide to renting to a voucher holder

More voucher holders looking for places means more landlords participating in the program, and more questions about the process. Landlords getting ready to rent will receive detailed instructions, but here are some of the most frequently asked questions about the move-in process:

I have a prospective tenant who is a Section 8 participant, now what?

When participants receive their vouchers, they also get a yellow packet called "Leasing Kit for Landlords." Prospective tenants should give this to you when they are ready to rent your unit.

In the packet, you'll find an overview of the Section 8 program, step-by-step instructions about the process, and information on inspections and lead-based paint requirements. Also included are several forms for you to fill out and return to PorchLight, including the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA), a W-9 and a lead-based paint disclosure.

How long will it take to get an inspection?

Generally, it will take from 5 to 10 business days to process an RTA and schedule an inspection.

What factors can hold up the process?

The unit is not affordable for the tenant in question, or SHA needs more information to determine if the rent is reasonable: In this case, Certification Specialist Deborah Blake or Owner Liaison Mike Jung will contact you to discuss the issue, get additional information, and determine whether we can agree on a rent amount.

There are missing forms, or forms are incomplete: It may take additional time while we track down the needed information or missing signatures.

The unit fails inspection: It will take additional time to reschedule and reinspect the unit. You should contact the inspector who did the first inspection to reschedule an inspection once the failed items have been addressed. (See "Common reasons for failed inspections" on page 4.)

Once the unit passes inspection, when does the tenant move in?

The tenant can move in any time after the inspection passes.

When does SHA send out payment?

Before we begin Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) on the unit, SHA will mail you a contract. When you sign and return it with a signed copy of the lease, SHA will send out payment retroactive to the move-in date.

Who do I contact with questions?

Request for Tenancy Approval issues and initial inspection scheduling questions:
Contact Deborah Blake at (206) 239-1676 or dblake@seattlehousing.org

Questions about the contract and initial payment:
Contact Michael Anderson at (206) 239-1635 or manderson@seattlehousing.org

Rent reasonable concerns, general questions, upcoming events, lease compliance issues:
Contact Mike Jung, owner liaison at (206) 239-1672 or mjung@seattlehousing.org



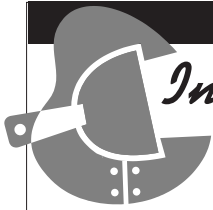
The Request for Tenancy Approval is the form that gets the ball rolling. RTA's are date stamped when we receive them at PorchLight and are processed according to that date.



The RTA and Lead-based Paint Disclosure must have the signatures of both the landlord and the tenant.



In mid-month moves, if SHA has already paid HAP for a tenant to a previous landlord, we will not begin paying HAP to the new landlord until the first of the following month. That means a tenant may be responsible to pay unsubsidized rent for those days.



Inspector's corner: Common reasons for failed inspections

Save time during the move-in process by prepping your unit to pass inspection the first time. Here's a list of the most common failed items. More complete information is available online at www.seattlehousing.org. Click on "Section 8 landlords" from the Housing menu, and choose "Inspections" from the list on the left.

- Utilities are not turned on at the time of the inspection.
- Gas or oil furnaces are not operating at the time of the initial inspection.
- Appliances are not working properly or have missing parts.
- The only smoke detector on any given level of a unit is located in a kitchen.
- Smoke detectors are not located near sleeping areas, on all levels, or in a common laundry room.
- Smoke detectors are not working properly; for example, they are missing batteries or their batteries are low on power.
- Outlet or light switch cover plates are broken or missing.
- Junction boxes or electrical panels are open, exposing wires and wire connections.
- Hot water tanks do not have a pressure/temperature relief valve and discharge line.
- Plumbing fixtures leak or drains are plugged.
- Window panes are broken or windows do not have locks.
- Deteriorated paint is present on any surface of the interior or exterior of buildings, fences, concrete surfaces or other structures on the property. (This rule applies to buildings built before 1978 and occupied by children under the age of 6 or a pregnant tenant.)



Phone: 206-239-1500 | Fax: 206-239-1770
E-mail: porchlight.info@seattlehousing.org | Web: www.seattlehousing.org

GENERAL QUESTIONS

To speak with a customer service agent about any Section 8-related issue or concern: Call 206-239-1728 and press 0.

TO LIST AVAILABLE UNITS

Call 206-239-1663 or go to www.seattlehousing.org and click on "Section 8 landlords" under the "Housing" menu.

TO CHANGE OWNER INFORMATION:

Changes must be submitted in writing. Fax to 206-239-1760, attention Mike Jung. Questions? call Mike at 206-239-1672

SECTION 8 MANAGER

Barbara Strayer 206-239-1620

OWNER LIAISON

Mike Jung 206-239-1672

OCCUPANCY SUPERVISORS

Tenant based: 206-239-1636
Tenant based: 206-239-1619
Mod. rehab./project-based: 206-239-1649

NEW MOVE-IN TEAM

Status of tenancy approvals: 206-239-1676
New Move-In Fax: 206-239-1760
Contracts and leases 206-239-1635

ISSUANCE TEAM

206-239-1592

INSPECTIONS

Initial/annual inspections: 206-239-1645
Re-inspections: 206-239-1576
Inspections supervisor 206-239-1621

INSPECTORS

Bruce Brines 206-239-1689
Bill Francis 206-770-6735
Paul Gimmi 206-239-1632
Nancy Jones 206-239-1616
Sue Nigg 206-239-1639
Nancy Shutes 206-239-1646
Lora Wait-Hoy 206-770-6729
Mike Yost 206-239-1654

What is PorchLight?

The PorchLight Housing Center is a division of the Seattle Housing Authority, the city's largest provider of low-income and affordable housing. PorchLight manages the Section 8 Program and applications for public housing.

A focus on service

Located in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood, PorchLight is a place where people seeking housing assistance can learn about and apply for it. We are committed to high quality customer service to clients, participating landlords and our partners in Seattle's affordable housing continuum.

Want to learn more?

Call 206-239-1500 or visit us at www.seattlehousing.org (click on "Housing," then "PorchLight") or come to our landlord workshops, every third Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm at PorchLight.

Did you know...

...that SHA's Impact Property Services provides lead-based paint abatement services? Impact Property Services offers affordable, efficient service for your deteriorated paint problems. We have a high level of expertise from years of experience and respond quickly to service requests. We can provide both EPA certified lead-based paint risk assessors and EPA certified lead-safe workers, including painters and carpenters. Call us today at 206-716-1310, extension 13.

...that you can find support for owners on our Web site? Visit us at www.seattlehousing.org today and click on "Section 8 landlords" for helpful resources and information.

...that the City of Seattle provides free information about property owner rights and city ordinances? Call 206-684-7979 for more information.