



The BULLETIN

Quarterly news about Section 8 in Seattle

JUNE 2006

For landlords and service providers

1 SHA is creating a new Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting list

2 All about our vacancy listing service; agencies issuing vouchers, too

3 Fair Housing: Keeping on the right side of the law

4 Inspector's Corner: What we look for in hot water tanks

Section 8 update

New waiting list of 4,000 names created by lottery



Dear housing provider,

On May 15, Seattle Housing Authority began accepting applications from heads of households who wanted a chance for a spot on a new Section 8 waiting list of 4,000 names to be created by lottery.

Because of cuts in federal funding, we closed our previous Section 8 waiting list to new households in July, 2003. This Spring, as we starting issuing vouchers to the last prospective participants on that list, it became apparent that a new waiting list would soon be needed.

The lottery was announced to the public in April. We followed up with newspaper ads placed to reach as broad an audience as possible, and set up a "Waiting List Hot Line" telephone number that led callers to a "Frequently Asked Questions" recording.

The sign-up form was posted on the SHA Web site for downloading and printing out. Printed lottery sign-up forms were made available at PorchLight, our service center in Ballard; at the SHA's main office near Seattle Center; and at most SHA facilities and offices across the city.

SHA's effort to reach a wide public was aided by the Seattle Public Library, which agreed to place the forms in all its branches, and by all the city's Neighborhood Centers and Community Service Centers. DSHS Service

Centers within Seattle city limits made the forms available to their clientele.

All entries received by the deadline are now being keyed into a computer. Once that's done, a program will select 4,000 names at random. Each will be ranked from 1 to 4,000.

SHA will officially announce the results of the lottery and send letters to the households that were selected to be on the new waiting list by July 26.

We expect the list to provide us Section 8 candidates for two or three years.

THANKS FOR GENEROUS HELP FOR EVACUEES

IN NOVEMBER of last year, when it looked as though FEMA was going to cancel its program in support of housing for people who'd been evacuated in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, I sent out a letter of appeal to our partner landlords.

We were overwhelmed with generous offers of rental housing. In the end, over 100 landlords helped house more than 150 families who had nowhere else to turn. The families expressed their gratitude many times over, and I'd like to pass along their heartfelt thanks and add my own. Thank you!

I ALWAYS APPRECIATE hearing your concerns and suggestions. As you know, we depend on your good will and support and we value your partnership. Please feel free to call me or write me at any time.

LISA CIPOLLONE
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING ADVOCACY
AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
206-239-1523



News you can use

List with us Our listings go out weekly to a wide audience

Did you know that you can list your rental properties with us for free?

Every Friday we prepare new lists of properties for rent, from studios and one-bedrooms to six-bedrooms and even more, from information landlords provide us. The list is posted on our Web site, and we send it via e-mail to agencies across the city. Printed copies of the listings are available here at PorchLight and at those agencies.

We also maintain a "standing provider" list of properties that have frequent vacancies of different sizes. It's an easy matter to add your properties to this list if you don't want to post individual units week by week.

How to list your units online...

- **Either** go to www.seattlehousing.org and click on "for landlords" under the "Housing" menu. Scroll down to the section called, "Free advertising for vacant units."
- **or call us** to list your unit: **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:

June 20 : Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Orientation

- How to participate, how to advertise your vacancies
- Requests for Tenancy Approval—can the tenant afford your rental?
- The Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection
- Introduction to the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract

July 18 : Special presentation! State Farm Agent Eli MacKey, Jr.

- Insurance risk assessment of rental property
- Protecting your investment

Outreach in action: Agency-based program helps hard-to-serve clients

To increase success in housing disabled individuals and families with language or other cultural barriers and homeless people, the Seattle Housing Authority allocates some vouchers for distribution to social service and other agencies throughout the city. In March, we awarded 246 new Agency-based vouchers. Once those vouchers have been issued and the participants who receive them have found rentals, we will have "leased up" 890 Agency-based vouchers by July 31.

Although it isn't well known, this program has been in place for many years. This year SHA is working with 24 agencies, all of which have participated in the program in years past.

Many of the people to whom these vouchers are issued are in need of caseworker assistance, and the agencies are well suited to providing such assistance.

To learn more about our Agency-based vouchers, please call Corinne McKisson, Occupancy Supervisor, at 206-239-1636 or e-mail her at cmckisson@seattlehousing.org.



Working together

Fair Housing basics

Examples of how to deal with some typical situations

Beacon Hill apartment manager Terry Simpson advises the Garcias that their family will be most comfortable in Building C, where there are many other families with children. Is this discriminatory?

Fair housing laws prohibit limiting **families to certain floors of buildings or to certain areas within housing complexes**. This type of separation of families with and without children into different buildings is known as “steering.” A manager who tells a family they *cannot* move into a “non-family” building unit would be denying the family a place to live. Prospective tenants should be given the choice of any available units at the complex. Let them decide where they would like to live, and don’t make assumptions. **Terry should not steer the Garcias towards Building C, but should allow them to select among any available units in the complex.**

The Seattle Clearview Apartments has a smoke-free policy. Tenant Chester complains that the neighbors below him smoke on their balcony and that the smoke enters his apartment. When manager Carl tells the neighbors that they must honor the no-smoking rule, they accuse him of discrimination. Are they right?

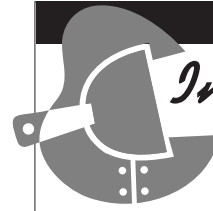
Being a smoker is not a protected class under fair housing laws. It is not illegal for Carl to enforce the no-smoking policy.

Tenant al-Bakar tells his Lake City apartment manager that the gardener from a hired company made unpleasant remarks to him because he wears a turban, and that the gardener made fun of his accent. The manager decides not to do anything because the gardener is not his employee. Did the manager do the right thing?

When any tenant complains about harassment by a staff member (or even an outside person hired by management), management should not ignore the situation. Management must act in situations such as this that appear to be motivated by a tenant’s race, creed, color, sex, national origin, familial status, marital status, disability, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. The manager should definitely check out al-Bakar’s harassment complaint.

The fair housing laws make it unlawful to coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any person’s rights. If a housing provider knows (or should know) of an intimidating or threatening situation that violates the fair housing laws and does nothing to stop the harassing behavior, the provider might be found in violation of the laws. Failure to investigate, to attempt resolution, or to take action to stop harassing behavior may leave a housing provider (and also the harassing gardener and his company) open to a fair housing complaint. The housing provider should make reasonable attempts to rectify the gardener’s harassing behavior toward al-Bakar.

Note: The names here are fictional. For more information about how to establish a nonharassment policy or what to do about tenant harassment, check out the “Tenant on Tenant Harassment Sample Policy” written by the Fair Housing Partnership of Washington (which provided these Q&As), available online at www.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/sample1.htm



Inspector's corner: Inspecting hot water tanks

Save time during the move-in process by preparing your unit to pass inspection the first time. From time to time in this space we'll review what an inspector looks for; this month, our topic is hot water tanks. More 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.

Section 8 Inspectors are required to inspect the hot water tank in a tenant's unit as well as tanks in common laundry rooms or areas to which the tenant has access.

These hot water tanks are inspected for presence of a pressure relief valve (usually located on the top or side of a tank) and a discharge line. The discharge line may be routed to the outside or may extend to approximately 6 inches from the floor. The

line may be made of copper, galvanized steel, or CPVC plastic, and it must be left open on the bottom.

The inspector will check to make sure that element covers are present and secured and that all wiring is properly encased, and will note any other safety concerns.

Finally, the inspector will check the unit's tanks' temperature, which must be set at the state law standard, 120 degrees Fahrenheit.



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 206-239-1770, 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-ins fax number 206-239-1760
Contracts and leases 206-239-1635

INSPECTIONS

Initial/annual inspections 206-239-1576
Re-inspections 206-239-1645
New move-in inspections 206-239-1626
Inspections supervisor 206-239-1621

INSPECTORS

Bill Francis 206-721-1457, ext. 10
Paul Gimmi 206-239-1632
Nancy Jones 206-239-1616
Sue Nigg 206-239-1639
Nancy Shutes 206-239-1646
Lora Wait-Hoy 206-721-1457, ext. 11
Mike Yost 206-770-6880

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.