



The BULLETIN

Quarterly news about Section 8 in Seattle MARCH 2007 For landlords and service providers

1 Congress restores Section 8 funding; reminders on raising the rent

2 Staying clear of Fair Housing Issues: Know the law...

3 List of Section 8 case-workers—a resource for your tenants

4 Inspector's Corner: Be your own inspector—a checklist

Section 8 update

Congress restores Section 8 funding



Dear housing provider,

As you may have read, the U. S. Senate passed a Joint Resolution last month to provide \$464 billion in funding for federal agencies across the nation.

Thanks to a successful lobbying campaign in Congress by national housing organizations, along with leadership from Sen. Patty Murray, the FY 2007 appropriations bill for HUD greatly improves and restores funding for a number of critical housing programs, including an additional \$502 million for the Housing Choice Voucher program (Section 8).

This increase is necessary to prevent the loss of current vouchers. The bill adopts a voucher funding distribution system that more accurately and efficiently captures the needs of public housing agencies. The bill also puts money into a number of public housing and homeless programs and extends the authorization for the HOPE VI program.

As a result of this appropriations bill, elderly, disabled and low-income families will gain a reprieve. Families living in public housing won't see a reduction in services. Rent burdens on households in the Section 8 program won't increase, and regional efforts to end homelessness will move forward.

Raising the Rent: Reminders

Seattle Housing Authority understands that rents go up, and we do our best to work with you to keep subsidized rents in line with the market. To help us do this, please remember these requirements for your subsidized tenants:

- Rent increases must be sent to your tenant and to SHA at least 60 days before the effective date.
- Federal regulations only allow just one increase in a 12-month period on subsidized rentals, even on month-to-month tenancies.
- Units must be in compliance with the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) at the time SHA approves an increase.
- Rents may not be increased during the initial 12-month lease.

By keeping your requests in line with these requirements, you help streamline the review process.

ONCE AGAIN, PLEASE KNOW that I always appreciate hearing your concerns and suggestions. We depend on your goodwill and support and we value our partnership. Please feel free to call me or write me at any time.

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

Keeping clear of Fair Housing issues

Mr. Robertson is Deaf and uses a TTY to make phone calls. Using the relay service operator, he tried several times to call rental agent Ms. McDermott for information about an available apartment, but Ms. McDermott refused to accept the calls. Is this discriminatory?

Under fair housing laws, housing providers should provide similar rental information to all potential applicants, regardless of their disability. Relay service calls are free for both the caller and the person being called. The relay service operator explains how the system works, and relay calls are easy to use. Ms. McDermott should have accepted the calls and treated Mr. Robertson the same way she treats hearing applicants.

While checking references, apartment manager Mr. Nelson finds out that applicant Mr. Calley is a terrible housekeeper whose last apartment was always unkempt and unclean. If Mr. Nelson decides not to rent to Mr. Calley, is he discriminating?

Rental owners and managers can utilize a variety of legitimate business criteria to determine which applicants may make good residents. It's a smart practice to obtain references from previous landlords or managers, because this information can provide a good indication of what sort of tenant the applicant is.

Fair housing laws prohibit housing providers from taking into account a prospective resident's protected class (such as race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, family status, etc.). In this situation, it appears that Mr. Nelson has not considered Mr. Calley's protected class – instead, Nelson's decision is based on Mr. Calley's history of poor housekeeping. This is a reasonable basis on which to deny Mr. Calley rental.

Mr. Lester wants to rent from Mrs. Brooke, who calls for a rental history reference to Mr. Lester's former rental manager, Mr. Wallace. Although Mr. Lester was a model tenant, he had filed a civil rights complaint against Mr. Wallace, and Mr. Wallace tells Mrs. Brooke all about the "frivolous" complaint. Is this discrimination?

Nobody wants to be faced with an allegation of discrimination, and it can be difficult to undergo a civil rights investigation. Many investigations conclude with a "no-cause" result, meaning that there was no (or insufficient) evidence to support the claim that discrimination occurred. When a complaint ends with a no-cause finding, some housing providers decide that the complaint was frivolous. Despite Mr. Wallace's belief that this is so, it is inappropriate for him to tell Mrs. Brooke about the complaint. Instead, he should confine his comments to Mr. Lester's tenancy history (on-time payments, no rule violations, etc.).

Retaliation is defined in fair housing laws as "an act of harm by the housing provider against a resident or applicant because that resident or applicant has asserted fair housing rights." In sharing this information with Mrs. Brooke, Mr. Wallace would be retaliating against Mr. Lester – taking action that damages his chances of obtaining housing elsewhere – just because he exercised his civil rights. Because of this, Mr. Lester could file a second discrimination complaint against Mr. Wallace for retaliation.

— COURTESY KING COUNTY OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Landlord *workshops*

from 5:30 until 7:00 pm

Tuesday, March 20

and again **Tuesday, April 17**

Housing Choice Voucher Orientations

Topics:

- First time working with the Seattle Housing Authority?
- What to expect: From advertising a vacancy to move-out
- Rent increases for your existing tenants

at the

Seattle Housing Authority

PorchLight Community Room

907 NW Ballard Way Suite 200 :: Seattle, WA 98107

Every third Tuesday,
February through November,
from 5:30 until 7:00 pm

Check our Web site for information about
the workshops:

www.seattlehousing.org and click
on "**Section 8 landlords**" under
"**housing**"

Questions? Ideas for workshops?

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

Working together

New caseworker assignments

To provide better service to the tenants in the Section 8 program, we are changing caseloads as of March 1. Tenant files will be distributed among our Certification Specialists alphabetically by the tenant's last name, as shown in the table below. Should a tenant ask you whom to call about tenancy issues, please refer them to the appropriate caseworker using this table.

Whom to call

There are two kinds of Certification Specialists, I and II.

- *Certification Specialist II's* are responsible for annual reviews, compliance matters, and terminations of participation.

- *Certification Specialist I's* are responsible for Special Reviews. Special Reviews are initiated when a tenant's income increases or decreases) and after any change in

family composition. All such changes must be reported by your tenant in writing on a Special Review packet.

Please ask your tenant to call the Special Review request line at (206) 239-1738 should his or her income or family composition change.

All tenants are notified of this requirement when they sign up for the program and at other times.

Section 8 Caseload

as of March 1, 2007

<i>Tenant's last name begins with...</i>	<i>Certification Specialist II</i>	<i>Telephone 206-</i>
AA – Bonds	Deanna Montgomery-Owens, CSII	239-1634
Bone – Damza	Linda Sorensen, CSII	239-1626
Dan – Garcia	Mary Armstrong, CSII	239-1617
Garda – Horner	Vladimir Kapustin, CSII	239-1638
Hornes – Lara	Vickie Seeber, CSII	239-1622
Larb – Mohammed	Deborah Blake, CSII	239-1652
Mohamoud – Phan	Karmin Hallberg, CSII	239-1580
Phap – Sell	Linda Vonheim, CSII	239-1675
Sem – Tra	Marsha Houk, CSII	239-1644
Tre – Zz	Peggy Quade, CSII	239-1534

<i>Tenant's last name begins with...</i>	<i>Certification Specialist I</i>	<i>Telephone 206-</i>
Aa – Green	Kiki Bridges, CSI	239-1673
Greenblatt – Oka	Chris Hilton, CSI	239-1692
Oke – ZZ	Tier White, CSI	239-1535

Inspector's corner

Be your own inspector—a checklist

AS SPRING DRAWS CLOSER, it's a good time to inspect the entire exterior of your building. Here's a checklist of things that typically need attention.

- ❑ On wood siding and trim, look for paint that is lifting or peeling and for splitting wood or areas where the wood grain is separating ("checking") from water's getting into the wood. Hiring a professional painter now to waterproof and paint your building will fill gaps and help your wood siding and trim last longer, saving you money in the long run.

- ❑ On stucco, if you can rub a chalky residue onto your hand, oxidation of the paint or color coat is reducing the stucco's insulating value.

CAUTION! Was your building built before 1978? If so, there's a chance that lead-based paint was used. Be sure to practice best safety practices for dealing with or removing lead paint. A good free document about such safe practices may be downloaded from the EPA Web site, www.epa.gov. (It's at www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadsafetybk.pdf)

- ❑ Remove storm windows and storm doors, and replace with clean screens.

- ❑ Power-wash, sand and reseal decks before they are exposed to the heat.

- ❑ Replace splintered or worn deck boards.

- ❑ Remove debris that may have settled in gutters over the winter.

- ❑ Ensure that the downspouts are directing water away from the foundation of the building.

- ❑ Inspect the roof for loose or damaged shingles and contact a roofing contractor for repairs.

- ❑ If you experienced ice dams on your roof this cold winter, call a roofing contractor to install new roof vents.



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 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

New move-in team supervisor 206-239-1621

INSPECTIONS

Annual inspections 206-239-1645

Reinspections 206-239-1645

New move-in inspections 206-239-1676

Inspections supervisor 206-239-1621

INSPECTORS

Bill Francis 206-721-1457, ext. 10

Paul Gimmi 206-239-1632

Sue Nigg 206-239-1639

Jonathan Shibuya 206-239-1616

Jason Shirley 206-239-1646

Nancy Shutes 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 206-239-1672 or visit us at www.seattlehousing.org (click on "Housing," then "PorchLight") or come to our landlord workshops every third Tuesday of the month, February through November, 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 to help solve for your deteriorated paint problems. We have a high level of expertise from years of experience, and we 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 information and resources.

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