



The BULLETIN

News about the SHA Housing Choice Voucher program JUNE 2009 Published quarterly for landlords and service providers

- 1** The VASH program, a win-win twice over, still needs landlords
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Voucher program update

Honoring our veterans by providing safe, secure places to live



Dear housing provider,

ONE OF THE REWARDS those of us who work for Seattle Housing Authority enjoy is the knowledge, affirmed almost every day, that our programs make a real difference in so many people's lives. The difference we make is increasingly evident as economic difficulties affect more and more Seattle residents. The vouchers that we provide and that you accept stabilize many households, many families, at a time when stability itself seems at risk.

A program that makes a clear difference in people's lives, and a program I'm particularly proud to be associated with, is Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH, for short), which has awarded Seattle Housing Authority over 50 vouchers earmarked for eligible homeless veterans and their families. Our partnership with Veterans Affairs, and just as importantly with landlords who want to make a difference, has led to important life-changes for vets who had fallen on hard times and needed a boost (a place to live!) to help them stabilize and improve their situations—their lives.

I'm thinking of a landlord in Greenwood who, a few months ago, got in touch with Mike Jung, our landlord liaison, to inquire about any programs that might be tailored to supporting veterans. Mike told him about the VASH program and urged him to get in touch with Toni Manjarrez, an occupancy supervisor here at Porchlight. Toni, who is deeply committed to the program, in turn provided the landlord the names of Veterans Affairs social workers who help vets secure housing.

Thanks to VASH, a formerly homeless vet, a gentle man who is dealing well with health and personal challenges, is happily housed in Greenwood, and his landlord is very pleased indeed with his new tenant.

Veterans Affairs caseworkers, who know their clients well, work to ensure that any vet they're assisting will be a good fit for a given building. They coordinate closely with staff here at SHA to ease their clients' way into the program and into a suitable rental, and they check out possible rentals and meet prospective landlords. Both agencies, VA and SHA, expedite our procedures and work closely to minimize any waits qualified vets and their families may have to endure. Our experience so far, ours and participating landlords', is entirely positive.

The vets we help house are young and old, male and female, married and single. All of them avail themselves of service-connected medical and social service assistance from the VA, and all of them have agreed, as a condition of participation in the program, to continue being active in VA programs. With assistance from the VA, from SHA, and from landlords who wish to help better these vets' lives, all have a pretty good shot at stabilizing and improving their lives.

I hope you'll consider participating with us in VASH. The SHA staff member who knows most about the program, and who is experienced in guiding everybody through the process, is Toni Manjarrez. You can call her at **206-239-1619** or e-mail her at tmanjarrez@seattlehousing.org.

I TRUST YOU KNOW that I'm always happy to talk with you about any concerns, and that I am quite sincere in thanking you once again for participating in the Housing Choice Voucher program. We couldn't do it without you!

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

An informative daylong workshop returns to PorchLight

Seattle Neighborhood Group and Seattle Housing Authority invite you to this informative & popular workshop especially for landlords with Section 8 tenants

'Keep illegal activity out of your rental property'

Tuesday, September 15

8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

**PorchLight Community Room
907 NW Ballard Way, Suite 200**

Protect your investment by learning proven techniques and strategies of the Seattle Landlord Training Program to –

- Screen applicants effectively, fairly and legally
- Create strong rental agreements and enhance your ability to prevent illegal activity
- Identify & resolve problems before they escalate
 - Prevent illegal activity, including drugs
- Help build a strong community with residents
- Avoid situations that lead to expensive evictions

\$25 fee

includes manual, handouts and lunch

Pre-registration required

To register, go to
www.sngi.org/landlord.html

or call **206-323-9666**

**For more information,
contact Mike Jung
206-239-1672**

or **mjung@seattlehousing.org**

*Sponsored by
Seattle Neighborhood Group*

Workshop presenters:

National Association of Housing & Redevelopment director Ron Oldham; SPD narcotics detective Gary Kinner; attorney Chris Benis; and Seattle Neighborhood Group's Lois Grammon-Simpson, Kelly McKinney, Sita Degiulio Das and Jennifer Duong

More Landlord

Tuesday workshops

Every third Tuesday* from 5:30 until 7:00 p.m.
February through November,
in the Porchlight Community Room

Tuesday, June 16

Housing Quality Standards Inspections: An Overview

Introduction to the Housing Quality Standards

The timeline for inspections

Lead-based paint:
Why this is so important, what to look for, how to fix it.

*Landlords' and tenants' responsibility for repairing
HQS deficiencies*

***NO WORKSHOP THIS JULY**

Tuesday, August 18

The Housing Choice Voucher program (Section 8): An overview

LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED

How the voucher program works
& why it might be a good fit for your rental units

*What to do when a voucher-holder
wants to lease a unit*

How much rent can you charge?
The Voucher Payment Standards

*Lease renewal and enforcement issues:
How SHA can assist you*

Questions? Ideas for workshops?

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

Keeping clear of Fair Housing issues

Landlord-Tenant law vs. Fair Housing law

What's the difference between landlord-tenant law and Fair Housing laws?

Landlord-Tenant

The Washington Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18) details the duties of a landlord to maintain the premises of a rental and to provide proper notice. This law also spells out the responsibilities of tenants, such as paying rent, maintaining their dwelling, and giving proper notice. The act includes guidelines for dealing with domestic violence situations, and prohibits retaliatory action against a tenant who has reported health or safety violations or who has asserted his or her rights under the act.

The Washington State Office of the Attorney General website explains these laws well at www.atg.wa.gov/Landlord-Tenant.aspx.

Another useful site is Washington Law Help, at www.washingtonlawhelp.org/WA (click on "housing").

Guidance and rental forms are available from rental management organizations such as the National Association of Residential Property Managers, the Rental Housing Association of Puget Sound, and the Washington Apartment Association.

'Seattle Office for Civil Rights handles complaints within the Seattle city, and deals with most types of housing: leased and rented apartments, and leased and sold houses and condominiums.'

Fair Housing

Civil rights agencies, by contrast, handle Fair Housing cases—as a rule, they do not enforce the landlord-tenant laws. However, in certain cases, a landlord-tenant issue may also be a Fair Housing issue.

For example, if a landlord runs credit checks on male applicants but not on female applicants, this may be discriminatory. Or if a rental manager provides prompt repairs for most residents, but not for those who are Hispanic, this may be a Fair Housing issue.

When in doubt, check with a civil rights agency, which can assist you in interpreting the Fair Housing laws.

For a list of such agencies in Washington, see www.cityofseattle.net/civilrights/documents/jurisdiction%20sheet-housing.pdf.

Which Fair Housing laws apply to our property, which is in North Seattle?

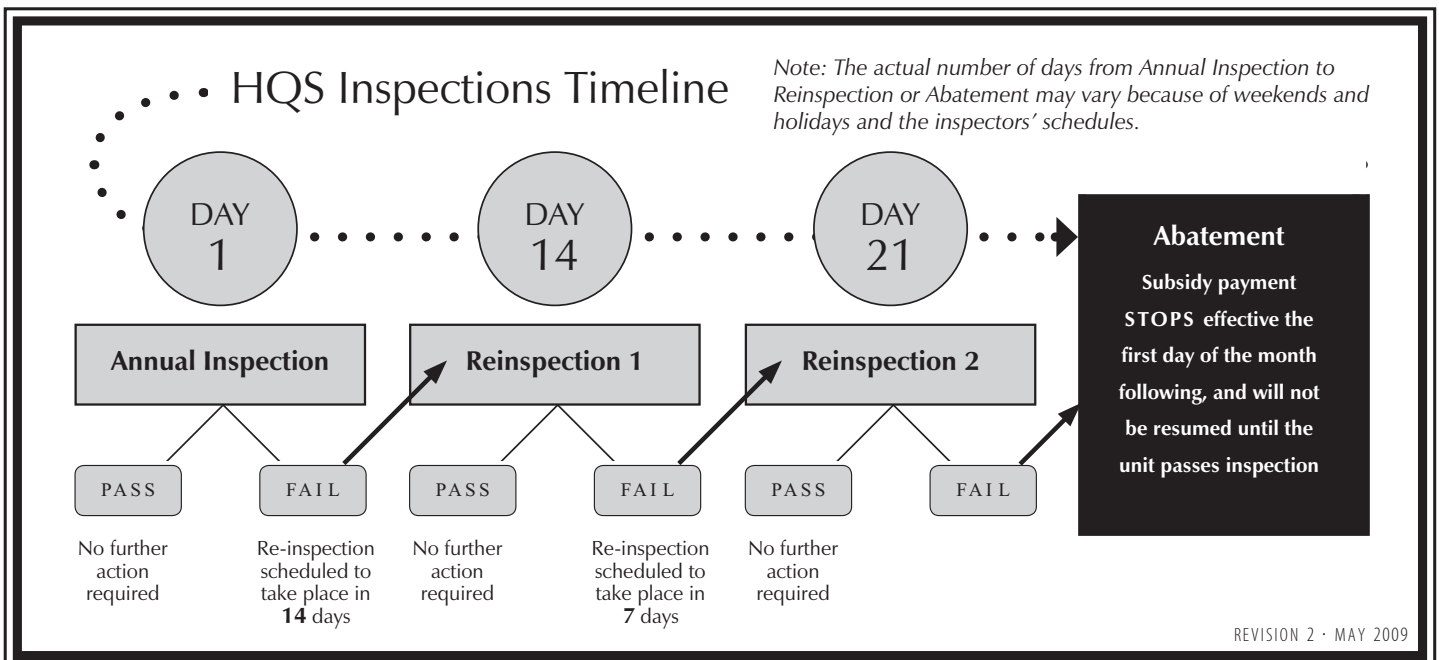
The Fair Housing Act and the state Fair Housing law cover most housing rental properties.

The Washington State Human Rights Commission has jurisdiction over housing everywhere in the state of Washington.

Seattle Office for Civil Rights handles complaints within the city, and deals with most types of housing: not only leased and rented apartments, but leased and sold houses and condominiums as well.

—Courtesy King County Office of Civil Rights

The chart below was printed in the March issue of the Bulletin with an error. As shown here, abatement begins effective the first day of the month following a second failed reinspection, not the month of that reinspection. We regret the error. —Ed.



Inspector's corner

The importance of inspecting furnaces, part 2 : Furnaces

A heating system that is not maintained is a problem waiting to happen. At the very least, operating costs can escalate owing to inefficient use of fuel and the eventual need for repairs. In the worst case, improperly maintained equipment may compromise safety by causing dangerously high levels of carbon monoxide, resulting in tenants' death or injury.

As we pointed out in our last issue (March 2009), carbon monoxide is an invisible gas produced by burning fuels such as natural gas, oil, wood, and kerosene. You cannot smell or taste carbon monoxide. The most deadly gas you may ever come in contact with, it can cause illness or even death within minutes to people exposed to high levels. Elderly people, babies and those with chronic medical conditions—diabetes, anemia, heart or respiratory conditions—are most susceptible. Symptoms of exposure include shortness of breath, dizziness, headache, nausea, disorientation, and suddenly feeling sleepy.

There is some furnace maintenance that landlords or building managers can undertake themselves, such as cleaning and replacing filters. Although Seattle Housing Authority requires inspections just once every other year, to ensure safe

and efficient operation of a heating system owners should have furnaces inspected and cleaned annually by a certified service technician.

An inspection by a certified technician will at a minimum include the following:

- Safety test for carbon monoxide
- Check for hazardous debris in chimney and flue
- Check and clean, reinstall or replace air filters
- Check operation of thermostat and safety controls
- Check gas pilot safety system and clean as required
- Clean motor and fan
- Check blower operation
- Check condition, tension and alignment of fan belt, and perform required adjustments
- Clean burners and set for proper combustion & ignition
- Check gas piping to furnace

Investing in the proper maintenance of a heating system is essential to ensure that it provides your tenants, safe, reliable and efficient indoor comfort when the outdoor temperature drops—and keeps tenants warm and happy.



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

GENERAL QUESTIONS

To speak with a customer service agent about any Housing Choice Voucher program issue, call 206-239-1728 and press '0'

TO LIST AVAILABLE UNITS

Call 206-239-1663 or go to www.seattlehousing.org and click on "Rental Listings" under the 'Landlords' menu

OWNER INFORMATION

NOTE: Changes must be submitted in writing
Fax 206-239-1770, attention Mike Jung.
Questions? Call Mike at 206-239-1672

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

MANAGER Barbara Strayer 206-239-1620

OWNER LIAISON

Mike Jung 206-239-1672

OCCUPANCY SUPERVISORS

Tenant-based—
"Aa" through "Lara" 206-239-1619
"Larb" through "Zz" 206-239-1636
Mod. Rehab. & Project-based 206-239-1649

NEW MOVE-IN TEAM

Status of tenancy approvals—
contracts and leases
"Aa" through "Lara" 206-239-1676
"Larb" through "Zz" 206-239-1635
New move-ins fax number 206-239-1760
New move-in team supervisor 206-239-1621

INSPECTIONS

Annual inspections & reinspections 206-239-1645
New move-in inspections—
"Aa" through "Lara" 206-239-1676
"Larb" through "Zz" 206-239-1635
Judy Huertas, HQS supervisor 206-239-1621

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS 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
Lora Wait-Hoy 206-721-1457, ext. 11

What is PorchLight?

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 Housing Choice Voucher program and applications for public housing.

Did you know...

...that owners can find support on our website? Visit www.seattlehousing.org today and click on "Landlords" for helpful information and resources.

...that SHA's Impact Property Services provides lead-based paint abatement services? Impact Property Services offers affordable, efficient service to help solve your deteriorated paint problems. We can provide both EPA-certified lead-based paint risk assessors and EPA-certified lead-safe workers, including painters and carpenters. Call Impact Property Services at **206-722-2548**.

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