



VSHA NEW OWNER FAQ'S SHEET

Welcome to Vermont State Housing Authority's rental assistance program. As a new owner, here's what you need to know:

What needs to be communicated to VSHA? As a property owner/manager, it is your responsibility to provide VSHA with copies of all correspondence you send to the tenant. This includes, but not limited to, lease violations, notice to quit, rent increases and changes in terms of the lease. It is also your responsibility to inform VSHA if someone moves out or passes away. If you sell a property or there is a change in property management, please let VSHA know.

How much may I charge a tenant for rent? The contract rent must be deemed reasonable, as determined by VSHA pursuant to federal regulations, and must not exceed rents charged for comparable, unsubsidized units in the area.

Can I collect a security deposit from my tenant? Yes. You have the right to collect a security deposit from a program participant. However, you must not collect a higher security deposit than is charged to tenants who are not participants receiving housing assistance. VSHA does not assist with security deposits.

Who makes the rental payment, and when may I expect to receive the payment? Both the program participant and VSHA make payments to you. The tenant will pay his/her portion of the rent, as determined by VSHA, directly to you. VSHA will pay the rent subsidy to you, as set forth in the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract between you and VSHA. The payment is typically sent via direct deposit to a checking account on the first business day of the month, however it could take between 3-5 business days for it to process.

Who is responsible for any unpaid tenant share of the rent and tenant-caused damage? The tenant is responsible for any unpaid tenant share of the rent and for tenant-

caused damage. To remain a participant in the housing assistance program, the family must meet its responsibilities and obligations. If the tenant does not pay their portion of the rent and/or repair any tenant-caused damages in the unit, you can proceed with legal action against the family and VSHA may terminate assistance.

What are NSPIRE housing standards? NSPIRE standards are minimum standards established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for all units receiving assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher Program. A checklist outlining the standards is attached to your new owner packet. If an inspection fails and the repairs are not made, Housing Assistance Payments may be abated. It is the responsibility of the owner to provide invoices, work orders or photo reinforcements to the Field Representative by the given deadline.

How often are units inspected? VSHA is required to conduct an NSPIRE inspection prior to the execution of a lease and HAP contract. VSHA also inspects units periodically during tenancy. They may be scheduled annually or biennially. VSHA may also conduct a quality control inspection at any time to ensure NSPIRE compliance. VSHA will notify both the owner and program participant in writing before conducting the inspection. We highly encourage owners to be present for all inspections.

How can I request a rent increase upon renewal of the lease? You may request a rent increase once the initial lease is fulfilled not less than 60 days prior to the effective date. You are required to provide the tenant and VSHA with a copy of the notice. Before VSHA may approve any rent increase, we must determine whether the proposed rent is reasonable when compared to the rent for similar unsubsidized units in the area. By accepting HAP from VSHA, you certify the rent is not more than the rent you charge for comparable unassisted units on the premises. VSHA uses a third-party vendor, GoSection8, for determining rent reasonableness. GoSection8 compiles data from real-time open market rental listings of more than 300 rental listing sources and identifies the nearest, most similar, and credible comparable units, considering critical market factors that impact rent such as location, condition of the property, unit size, unit type, and date of construction, as well as amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities to be provided by the owner in accordance with the lease. PLEASE NOTE: The tenant will be held responsible for any amount of gross rent (contract rent + utility allowance) above the Voucher Payment Standard. Please consider this before submitting rent increases.

What do I do if I want to change the utilities supplied to the tenant? You will be required to provide a 60-day notice of the change in utilities to the tenant and provide a copy to

VSHA. The local field representative will draw up the necessary paperwork to be executed as such changes will likely change tenant portions of rent and Housing Assistance Payment amounts. A new lease agreement will also be required.

Your Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract also outlines the obligations of the Vermont State Housing Authority and the owner.

If you should have further questions, please contact your Field Representative.