

## **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS AND REFERENCE**



### **Navigating the HCV Program and MHA Operations** **Marietta Housing Authority (MHA)**

All housing authorities are charged with administering the HCV Program by HUD guidelines. However, each housing authority may accomplish this through different business practices and office procedures. Please take note of these MHA procedures in use at this time.

#### **MHA Policies**

1. The Administrative Plan that dictates all policies and procedures is posted in its entirety on our website ([www.mariettahousingauthority.org](http://www.mariettahousingauthority.org)) This document lists a few of those policies and procedures for your easy reference.
2. Any changes in household composition, income or assets must be reported **within 14 days of the change occurrence**. It must be reported to the office **in writing** on a **Notice of Household Change** form and submitted to the front desk, mailed, or faxed into our office. It is not necessary to see the housing specialist to submit this paperwork.
3. Any Notice of Household Change submitted to MHA must be submitted prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, in order for the change to be processed for the following month. Changes submitted after the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month may not be processed by the end of the month.
4. MHA conducts a criminal background check on all adult members of the household.
5. A bad credit or rental history can seriously influence a Landlord's decision to approve an application for housing. MHA strongly supports both credit counseling and budgeting classes when credit and rental history are an issue. Contact CredAbility @ 800-251-2227, CredAbility.org
6. MHA does not offer repayment agreements; should you be charged with a retroactive amount, this must be paid within thirty (30) days of the notification. Failure to pay this could result in termination from the program and the account being turned over for collection.

#### **MHA Operations**

##### **Speaking with your housing specialist or other questions you may have for MHA:**

7. Housing/Occupancy Specialist make every effort to return all phone calls within **48 hours**. Email is another means of contacting your housing/occupancy specialist. Caseloads change occasionally for various reasons; therefore, it is important to call our main number (770-419-3200) and ask for your current housing/occupancy specialist's name and email address.
8. You may make an appointment to speak with your housing specialist as their schedule permits.

##### **Group Briefing Sessions:**

9. MHA Briefing sessions include: Initial program applicants; participants wanting to move (Transfers); or Portability Participants. Briefings are conducted by utilizing teleconference and webinar software. Your Housing Specialist will notify you with the date and time. Your appointment letter will identify the date and time.
10. Household members age 18 and older must attend the briefing session.
11. If you are required to attend a briefing at our office, you should allow sufficient time to complete the briefing, the interview, and any further actions deemed necessary.

12. It is important to arrive on time or earlier than your scheduled appointment date/time.

#### **Porting INTO our organization:**

- 13 If you are porting into our organization, your eligibility for rental assistance comes to us by virtue of your Initial Housing Authority (IHA); consequently, we cannot alter the effective date or expiration date of the voucher from your IHA. It has been mandated that MHA gives a 30-day extension from your voucher expiration with your IHA; however, the extension is valid with MHA ONLY and does not mean that your voucher was extended with your IHA.
- 14 The formula for calculation of total tenant payment and, ultimately, your rent portion is determined by HUD guidelines; however, you are subject to the bedroom allocations, payment standards, and utility allowances of MHA that are used in that formula.
- 15 The process for submitting the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) for inspection and executing paperwork in order to pay your prospective landlord is the same for all program participants. Please see below where this is described in more detail.
- 16 Keep your voucher expiration date in mind when submitting the RTA. We will accept the RTA on or before the voucher expiration date and will honor our obligation to inspect the unit even if we are unable to schedule the inspection until after the voucher has expired. However, if the voucher has expired and the unit fails, no additional time remains on your voucher. We will then report to your IHA that you failed to submit an RTA for an eligible unit within the allotted time.
- 17 Port-in/Occupancy Specialist - Diana Camarena (770-419-5159)  
dcamarena@mariettahousingauthority.org

#### **Porting OUT of our organization:**

- 18 If your voucher is supported by an Initial Housing Authority (IHA), you must contact that housing authority to move to any other housing authority. If your voucher is supported by MHA's funding, you will be issued our voucher in order to port out to the new housing authority. In either case, you are responsible for providing MHA with all pertinent information regarding the new housing authority you wish to move. And just like any other transfer, recertification and voucher dates must be within HUD guidelines which may require you to attend a briefing session and re-verify family income and composition information. Contact your Housing Specialist if you wish to port out.

#### **Transferring within Cobb County:**

- 19 You MAY NOT move with continued rental assistance during the initial lease term [no less than 12 months], unless you and the landlord enter into a written mutual agreement.
- 20 For all participants, you must give written notice to your landlord and MHA should you decide to vacate the unit for any reason according to the terms of your Lease. If evicted, you must provide a copy of the eviction notice.
- 21 Before you can move to another unit, you must meet with your housing specialist, submit a Notice of Intent to Vacate (or any written intent to vacate that you have provided to your landlord), be issued a voucher, and receive an RTA.
- 22 Search for properties that fall within your affordability range. Once you find a unit, complete the RTA form with your landlord. It is important to remember you will only give one RTA packet at time. MHA recommends the following databases to search for an affordable unit:  
[www.georgiahousingsearch.org;](http://www.georgiahousingsearch.org;)  
[www.rent.com;](http://www.rent.com;)

[www.zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com);

[www.Trillow.com](http://www.Trillow.com).

- 23 MHA may provide a prospective landlord with information on your past rental history while on the housing choice voucher program.

### Rent Portion Calculations, Payment Standards, and Subsidy Standards

- 24 Calculations for the HCV Program are all mandated by HUD. The payment standard used in the calculation of total tenant payment includes the lesser of the payment standard for the bedroom size for which you are certified and the actual number of bedrooms of the unit you occupy.
- 25 You are subject to the bedroom allocations, payment standards, and utility allowance of MHA that are used in that formula.
- 26 MHA payment standards are set by each bedroom size and Zip Code in Cobb County. (small area fair market rent or SAFMRs).
- 27 Utility Allowances are assigned to each utility the tenant pays.
- 28 Rent+ Utilities cannot exceed the payment standard.
- 29 MHA subsidy standards allocate one bedroom for every two household members.
- 30 MHA does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room.
- 31 Voucher sizes are issued based on household size. (Three members in the household=two-bedroom voucher)

### Unit Approval Process and Initial Inspections/Transfer Inspections at MHA

- 32 No otherwise acceptable unit may be disapproved on the grounds that it is too large for a family, provided that the family share (the portion of rent plus utilities paid by the family) does not exceed 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income, on in cases of Initial lease-up.
- 33 You **MAY NOT** occupy a unit prior to a passed unit inspection and lease signing, and that to do so will result in your being responsible for the **total contract rent** until you are authorized to move in by MHA and your landlord;
- 34 You may not rent from a relative unless it can be documented that a member of the assisted family has a bona-fide disability and a reasonable accommodation is approved.
- 35 Your prospective landlord will be notified that the RTA you submitted has been accepted and the inspector has been notified of a pending inspection. He/ She will also be advised of the proposed rent portions at the time you submitted the RTA.
- 36 Inspection of units are schedule as quickly as possible after the RTA have been received and processed. MHA could take up to **15 days to get the unit scheduled for inspection**. Inspectors contact the owner/landlord/manager to gain access for the Initial inspection. Clients are urged to contact the landlord if they wish to be present for this Initial inspection.
- 37 At the time of the initial inspection, the utilities must be in service and the stove and refrigerator in place (and in proper working order) in order to pass housing quality standards (HQS).

- 38 At the time of the initial inspection, the landlord will be notified of any HQS deficiencies. The time frame for correcting these deficiencies may be no greater than 30 days. The landlord may request a re-inspection within this time frame and MHA will reinspect within 10 business days.
- 39 Regarding an Initial inspection, if the 30-day time frame has lapsed or the unit fails HQS at the re-inspection, MHA will notify the landlord and client that the unit has been rejected and the family must search for another unit. You must obtain a second RTA from the housing specialist in order to begin the process for another unit. MHA may agree to conduct a second re-inspection, for good cause, at the request of you and landlord.
- 40 Following a failed re-inspection for an Initial inspection, you may submit a new RTA for the failed unit if you have not found another unit by the time the owner corrects all the deficiencies and you still wish to live in that unit.
- 41 Regarding an Initial inspection, although the landlord has 30 days in which to correct any deficiencies, the landlord should consider making corrections as quickly as possible, since the pass date directly impacts the date, we can begin assistance.
- 42 You will only be given one (1) RTA at a time. You will not be given an additional RTA until the original one has been returned or the previous unit rejected.
- 43 If the unit passes initial inspection, your prospective landlord will be notified by email that the unit passed, that you and the landlord may enter into a lease, and that Contract is being prepared for your landlords to execute.
- 44 You may not pay any amount that differs from the Contract unless notified by MHA; doing so is considered a side payment which is illegal.

#### **Continued Program Participation at MHA, Biennial Inspection Process**

- 45 The annual recertification process begins approximately three (3) months prior to the recertification date. HUD requires recertification at least annually.
- 46 Much of the annual recertification process is done via regular mail and email; however, some circumstances may require the adult household members to attend a briefing session in our office.
- 47 An annual inspection is conducted every 18 months; therefore, it does not align within the same time frame as the annual recertification process. Complaint or special inspections are conducted as quickly as possible after **MHA is notified in writing of the request**. This inspection is conducted after mail and email notice of an appointment date/time is sent to the landlord and client. A request for the re-inspection of an abated unit is also completed after written request and appropriate notices.
- 48 MHA must meet strict HUD guidelines regarding inspections and re-inspections of assisted units. You could be terminated for failing to allow access to the unit for HQS inspections.

#### ***PLEASE READ AND KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS AND REFERENCE***

Thank you

MHA