



TOWN OF UNION, NEW YORK

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM • DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING • 3111 E. MAIN ST. ENDWELL, NY 13760

Find More Useful HUD Information at: <https://townofunion.com/departments/rental-assistance-hud.html>

Participant Newsletter

June 2019

Town Earns “High Performer” Section 8 Management Assessment Program Rating

For the ninth time in the past ten years, the town’s Housing Voucher program has achieved a “High Performer” rating under HUD’s management rating system. SEMAP measures the performance of the public housing agencies (PHAs) that administer the Housing Choice Voucher program in 14 key areas. SEMAP helps HUD target monitoring and assistance to PHA programs that need the most improvement. Thank you for your cooperation!

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program

FSS is a program that offers an opportunity to HUD-assisted families to potentially increase their earned income and reduce their dependency on welfare assistance and rental subsidies. Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) work in collaboration with a Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) to secure commitments of public and private resources for the operation of the FSS program, to develop the PHA’s FSS Action Plan (the FSS policy framework), and to implement the program. An individual training and services plan (ITSP) records the plan for the family outlining the series of intermediate and long-term goals and the steps the family needs to take – and the services and resources they may need to access – to achieve those goals. If you are interested in being contacted regarding potentially participating in the FSS program please send an email to hud@townofunion.com or call the office at 786-2985 by 4:00 pm on Friday, June 14th.

Section 8 Program Welcomes New Staff

2018 was a busy year for town’s Planning Department staff. Sara Zubalsky-Peer has been appointed to replace retired Planning Director Paul Nelson. Long time Section 8 caseworkers Linda Hrostowski and Michele Bennett left town employment in September and have been replaced by Mary Lou Fahs and Gina Suhadolnik. Thank you for your patience as these changes have been incorporated into the program’s day to day operations. **Please note that the Section 8 staff will be unavailable for appointments, walk-in meetings, or telephone consultations Tuesday, June 11th through Thursday, June 13th. The town will be converting to an updated case management and HUD reporting software program.**

Resident Advisory Board Information

HUD requires that every Public Housing Agency (PHA) establish a Resident Advisory Board (RAB). As a reminder, the Town of Union considers all active Housing Choice Voucher program participants to be members of the Resident Advisory Board. The main role of the RAB is to make recommendations in the development of the PHA Plan, if one is required to be submitted. The PHA Plan is a comprehensive guide to public housing agency (PHA) policies, programs, operations, and strategies for meeting local housing needs and goals. PHAs are also required to request input from the RAB for any significant amendment or modification to the PHA Plan. The Town of Union is not currently required to submit an annual PHA Plan. Should the town be required to submit an annual PHA Plan, notices will be published in the Press & Sun Bulletin and posted on the Town of Union web page (see web page information at the top of this newsletter) soliciting comments from participants, housing organizations serving very low income populations, and the general public in the development phase of the plan.

No Side Payments!

Voucher program participants are reminded that “side payment” agreements with a landlord that result in the payment of more than the town approved Contract Rent are prohibited and can lead to termination of assistance. If you have been asked to pay more than the amount listed in your “Tenant Portion” notice please contact your caseworker who will determine if such payments are permissible.

Report Fraud

If you know of anyone who provided false information on a HUD housing assistance application or recertification or if anyone tells you to provide false information, report that person to the HUD Office of Inspector General Hotline. You can call the Hotline toll-free Monday through Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Eastern Time, at 1-800-347-3735 or e-mail it to: hotline@hudoig.gov

Questions or comments about the Housing Choice Voucher Program?
Email the Section 8 staff at: hud@townofunion.com or call 607-786-2985

Housing Choice Voucher Program Responsibilities

What Does the Family Do?

The family has the following responsibilities:

- Provide the PHA (Town of Union) with complete and accurate information as determined by the PHA to be necessary for administration of the program;
- Make their best and most timely efforts to locate qualified and suitable housing;
- Attend all appointments scheduled by the PHA;
- Allow the PHA to inspect the unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice;
- Take responsibility for care of the housing unit, including any violations of housing quality standards caused by the family;
- Comply with the terms of the lease with the owner;
- Comply with the family obligations of the voucher;
- Not commit serious or repeated violations of the lease;
- Not engage in drug-related or violent criminal activity;
- Notify the PHA and the owner before moving or terminating the lease;
- Use the assisted unit only for residence and as the sole residence of the family. Not sublet the unit, assign the lease, or have any interest in the unit;
- Promptly notify the PHA of any changes in family composition;
- Not commit fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any housing programs.

What Does the Owner Do?

The owner has the following major responsibilities:

- Screen families who apply for tenancy, to determine suitability as renters.
 - The PHA can provide some information to the owner, but the primary responsibility for tenant screening rests with the owner.
 - The owner should consider family background factors such as rent and bill-paying history, history of caring for property, respecting the rights of others to peaceful enjoyment of the property, compliance with essential conditions of tenancy, whether the family is engaging in drug-related criminal activity or other criminal activity that might threaten others.
- Comply with the terms of the Housing Assistance Payments contract executed with the PHA;
- Comply with all applicable fair housing laws and do not discriminate against anyone;
- Maintain the housing unit in accordance with Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and make necessary repairs in a timely manner;
- Collect rent due from the assisted family and otherwise comply with and enforce provisions of the dwelling lease.

What Does the PHA (Town of Union) Do?

- The PHA administers the HCV program under contract with HUD and has the following major responsibilities:
- Establish local policies to administer the program;
- Review applications from interested applicants to determine whether they are eligible for the program;
- Maintain a waiting list and select families for admission;
- Issue vouchers to eligible families and provide information on how to lease a unit;
- Conduct outreach to owners, including to owners outside areas of poverty or minority concentration;
- Approve the rental unit (including assuring compliance with housing quality standards and rent reasonableness), the owner, and the tenancy;
- Make Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) to the owner in a timely manner;
- Recertify families for continued eligibility under the program;
- Ensure that owners and families comply with their contractual obligations;
- Provide families and owners with timely, professional service;
- Comply with all fair housing and equal opportunity requirements, HUD regulations and requirements, the Annual Contributions Contract, HUD-approved applications for funding, the PHA's administrative plan, and other applicable federal, state and local laws.