

FAIR HOUSING NEWSLETTER

The Bowling Green Human Rights Commission is a non-profit agency committed to serving the community through advocating for the rights of the protected classes which include: race, color, religion, national origin, age (over 40), disability and familiar status (in housing). Created by the City of B.G. ordinance in 1966, the commission also investigates allegations of discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation. The commission overall efforts focuses on education, assistance and promoting fair treatment and positive human relations within the community.

LANDLORDS AND VOUCHERS

Landlords: Critical Participants In the Housing Choice Voucher Program

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is a federal housing 2.2 million assistance program that helps house 2.2 million low-income households stably and affordably. The

HCV program depends on landlord participation to make privately owned units available to voucher holders; therefore, their participation determines the number of available units and their geographic distribution, which in turn affects tenant mobility, healthy housing, fair housing choice, and other HUD goals and strategies. Research shows that many landlords choose not to accept housing vouchers, threatening the purpose and objectives of the HCV program. Landlords decide whether to participate based on factors such as financial consideration, perceptions about voucher holders, and bureaucratic issues related to the program's administration.



State and local governments and public housing agencies (PHA's) have pursued several strategies to increase landlord participation in the HCV program, including local laws prohibiting discrimination based on source of income as well as various incentives, supports, and streamlined processes. HUD recently completed a seven-site listening tour to elicit feedback from landlords that a task force will consider in making policy recommendations.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program:

The HCV program began as the Sections 8 Existing Housing Program under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which issued participating households a rental certificate covering the difference between 25 percent of adjusted income (later changed to 30%) and the fair market rent. In 1983, an offshoot of the program called the Freestanding Voucher Program permitted housing agencies to determine a payment standard other than

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the Fair Market Rent (FMR) and allowed households to choose units that cost more than the payment standard if they could pay the amount exceeding 30 percent of income plus the certificate. The Section 8 Existing Housing certificate program and the Freestanding Voucher Program were merged under the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 and renamed the Housing Choice Voucher program. The HCV program is funded by HUD and administered by more than 2,000 local PHAs. Households apply for rental assistance through the PHA, which then determines eligibility and allocates vouchers. In general, an eligible household's income must not exceed 50 percent of the median income of the county or metropolitan area in which the household uses the voucher.

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