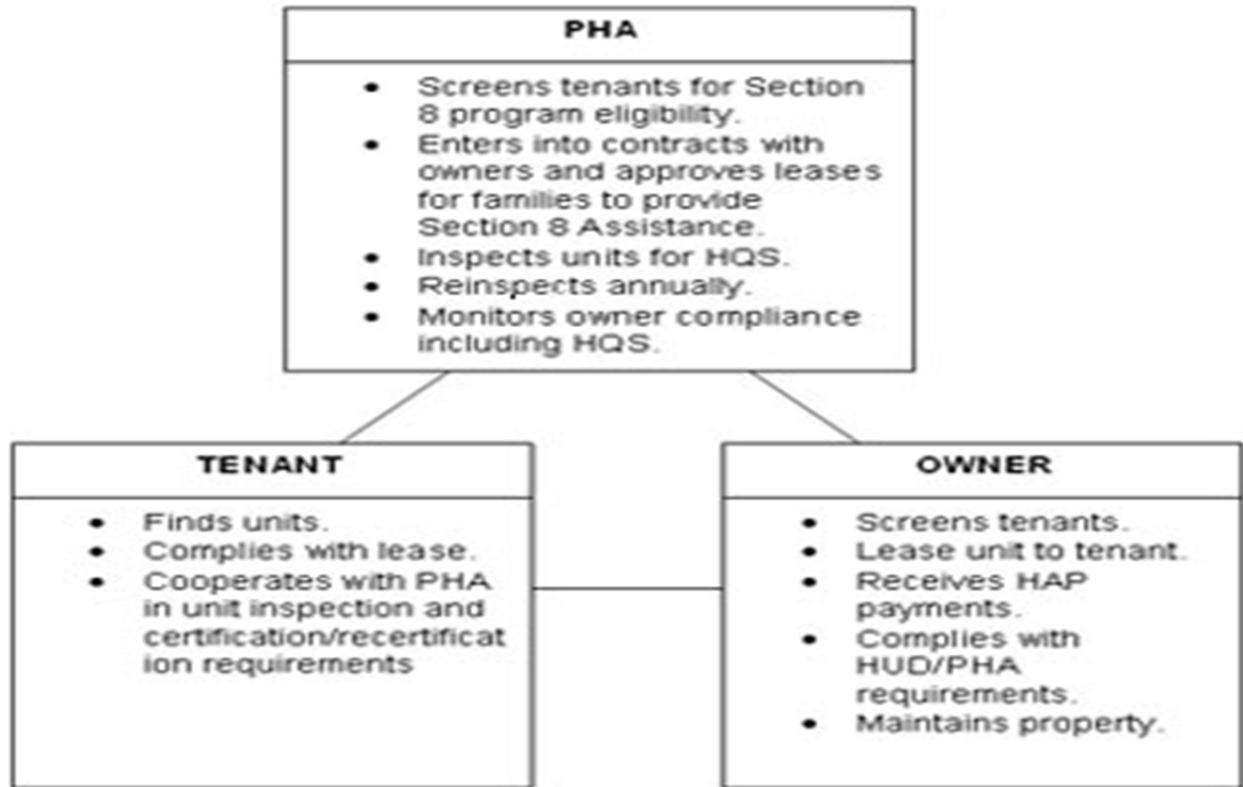


Landlord Key To Bristol Housing

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program



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The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to rent decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since the rental assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find and lease privately owned housing, including single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments. The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

How Does The Section 8 Program Work?

1. An applicant must be a U.S. citizen or non-citizen with eligible immigration status, low income. The applicant completes an application and is placed on a waiting list. The wait can vary from several months to a year or more.

2. When the applicant's name comes to the top of the waiting list, Bristol Housing contacts the applicant to verify continued interest in the program and conducts a criminal background investigation to determine adult applicant's eligibility. If an applicant has a history of illegal drug activity and/or violent criminal behavior with the past three years, he/she is denied Section 8 assistance.
3. Next, the family meets with an Eligibility Specialist, who verifies their eligibility for the program based on family composition and income. If the applicant is approved, he/she is invited to an orientation to learn the rules of the Section 8 program. They are then issued a voucher and they can begin shopping for an apartment.
4. Landlords **must** screen Section 8 applicants the same way they screen other applicants. Federal law does not allow the Housing Authority to do this. If a family has a Section 8 voucher, that only means they qualify for financial assistance. To use the assistance, they must pass a landlord's screening process.
5. HUD sets Payment Standards for the bedroom size (number of bedrooms) a family is certified for. The Payment Standard represents the rent amount plus the utilities the tenant is responsible for based on the Housing Authority's Utility Allowances. If a family rents a unit within the Payment Standard, their share of the rent will be 30% of their monthly adjusted income. The Housing Choice Voucher Program does allow flexibility for the family to rent above the Payment Standard as long as their share of the rent doesn't exceed 40% of their monthly adjusted income. The family's rent share also changes when its income or family circumstances change.
6. Once the landlord approves the family to rent an available unit, the family and the landlord complete a Request For Tenancy Approval form (RFTA) and submit it along with a copy of the completed, unsigned lease and all addenda to Bristol Housing. Bristol Housing must pre-approve the lease and all addenda. **The unit rent must be comparable to rents charge for similar units in the area.** The landlord and the tenant must not sign the lease until the Housing Authority gives approval. **The initial lease term must be for at least one year.** Bristol Housing needs the completed RFTA by the 20th of the **month** in order for assistance to begin the following month. Exceptions are possible. Please contact our office if you have any questions regarding this issue. We will work closely with you to meet the lease-up date.
7. If the rent is approved, Bristol Housing will schedule an inspection of the unit to determine if the unit meets HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS), assuring that the unit is a decent, safe, and sanitary place to live.
8. Finally, the landlord, tenant and all of the tenant's adult household members must meet with a Housing Specialist to sign all documents. Bristol Housing only makes landlord payments by direct deposit. Every effort is made to make direct deposits of housing assistance payments (HAP's) by the 5th of each month.
9. Bristol Housing does not determine the amount of **security deposit** the landlord may collect. The tenant is responsible for payment of a security deposit. Bristol Housing is not responsible for unpaid rent, damages, or other amounts owed by the tenant under the lease.
10. The landlord may request a **rent increase** to take effect on or after the anniversary date of the contract. Increases may occur only once in a 12 month period.
11. Landlords may **terminate** leases for the following reasons:
 1. Serious or repeated violation of the terms and conditions of the lease.

2. Violation of federal, state, or local laws that impose obligations on the tenant in connection with the unit.
3. Other good cause.

A copy of all termination notices should be sent to Bristol Housing. The landlord must notify Bristol Housing in writing that he/she is seeking to terminate the tenancy at the same time the tenant is notified.

The tenant may terminate the lease as allowed by the Lease Addendum or by Mutual Agreement with the landlord during the term of the lease.

Bristol Housing staff look forward to working with you—call 423-274-8150 with any questions you may have!