

Chapter 5

BRIEFING OF VOUCHER HOLDERS

SA. NOTICE OF BRIEFING SESSIONS

Eligible families will be sent a notice for an oral briefing session based on funding availability to enter HAP Contracts. The notice will contain the date, time and place of the briefing session.

The notice will state that the family must contact HACK to reschedule the briefing session if they are unable to attend. The family will be sent a second notice indicating the date, time and place of the rescheduled briefing. Failure to attend the second briefing will result in the automatic withdrawal of the family's application, unless the family has notified HACK of the inability to attend and arranged to attend a briefing session at a later date.

In such instances, the eligible family must have furnished HACK with a valid reason (acceptable to HACK) for requesting rescheduling for a second briefing. HACK may also call the family by telephone, and give the family the date, time, and place of the briefing. If HACK is unable to reach the family by phone, this will not be counted as a notice. Medical emergencies, or unforeseen emergencies will be considered valid reasons. The family will be requested to document the circumstances for verification purposes.

Individual briefings may be scheduled as a reasonable accommodation to disabled or elderly individuals with mobility impairments which prevent them from coming into the office for briefings. HACK reserves the right to require verification of mobility limitations before scheduling a home briefing.

SB. THE BRIEFING SESSION

During the briefing session, and before a family receives a voucher, a full explanation of the following terms will be provided to help the family in finding suitable housing and to inform the family of their responsibilities and the owner's responsibilities. Adequate opportunity will be provided for families to ask questions and to discuss the following:

1. How the program works
2. The type and extent of information on family tenant history which HACK will provide to prospective landlords
3. Family and owner responsibilities under the lease and contract (see Chapter 12).
4. How to find suitable housing including rent reasonableness and rent comparability requirements.
5. The general locations and characteristics of the full range of neighborhoods in which HACK can execute contracts.

6. Where housing of suitable price and quality may be found an explanation of the advantage of living in an area that does not have a high concentration of poor families:
 - a. non-impacted areas
 - b. areas outside HACK's jurisdiction where HACK can execute contracts
 - c. Explanation of how portability works (for additional information on this subject see Chapter 6).
7. Applicable HQS:
 - a. Housing inspection report
 - b. Procedures for inspecting housing by both the owner and the family;
 - (1) acceptability criteria
 - (2) lead-based paint warning
8. Significant aspects of applicable State and local laws.
9. Significant aspects of Federal, State and local fair housing laws.
10. Applicable Payment Standard
 - a. determination of Gross Family Contribution
 - b. establishing HAP
11. How to request copies of the following documents:
 - a. Listings of available housing
 - b. HQS
 - c. HAP
 - d. Other pertinent forms and documents
12. Encouraging families living in areas affected by poverty and/or race to consider the voucher as a means of finding housing in non- affected areas and of moving to an area with improved employment, educational opportunities and decreased school dropout rates.
13. Family and owner letters regarding fraud, including side payments.

14. Proper procedures for vacating housing.
 - a. Submission of Thirty-(30) Day Notice of Intent to Vacate: Three (3) copies should be made: one (1) copy for the owner, one (1) copy for HACK and one (1) copy should be retained by family.
 - b. Scheduling of a joint move-out inspection with the owner, the family and HACK.

15. Evictions:

- a. Required owner actions.
- b. Required HACK actions.
- c. Loss of eligibility.

16. Extension and suspension of vouchers

17. Transfers

All briefing sessions will be conducted by either the Section 8 Housing Coordinator or a Section 8 Housing Specialist.

Bilingual briefing sessions will be conducted as appropriate for non-English speaking applicants.

18. The Family Self-Sufficiency and Home Ownership Programs

SC. VOUCHER HOLDERS PACKET

Eligible applicants selected for participation shall be given a voucher signed by HACK. The voucher will be included in the information packet, which shall also include:

1. The term of the voucher, and HACK policy on any extensions or suspensions of the term. As HACK allows extensions, the packet includes an explanation of how the family can request an extension;
2. How HACK determines the HAP for a family;
 - a. Information on the payment standard and HACK's utility allowance schedule.
3. How HACK determines the maximum rent for assisted housing;
4. What the family should consider in deciding whether to lease housing, including:
 - a. the condition of the housing;
 - b. whether the rent is reasonable;

- c. the cost of any tenant-paid utilities and whether the housing is energy-efficient; and
 - d. the location of the housing, including proximity to public transportation, centers of employment, schools and shopping;
5. Where the family may lease housing. For a family that qualifies to lease housing outside HACK's jurisdiction under portability procedures, the information packet includes an explanation of how portability works;
6. The HUD-required "lease addendum". The lease addendum is the language that must be included in the lease;
7. The form of *Request for Approval of Tenancy*, and an explanation of how to request HA approval to lease housing;
8. A statement of HACK's policy on providing information about a family to prospective owners;
9. The HUD brochure on how to select housing;
10. The HUD lead-based paint (**LBP**) flyer;
11. Information on Federal, State and local equal opportunity laws, and a copy of the housing discrimination complaint form;
12. A list of landlords or other parties known to HACK who may be willing to lease housing to the family, or help the family find housing;
13. Notice that if the family includes a disabled person, the family may request a current listing of accessible housing known to HACK that may be available;
14. Family obligations under the program;
15. The grounds on which HACK may stop assistance for a participant family because of family action or failure to act; and
16. HA informal hearing procedures. The information describes when HACK is required to give a participating family the opportunity for an informal hearing.
17. Tenant Information
18. Owner Information
19. Information regarding the computation and determination of:
 - a. Total Tenant Payment
 - b. Bedroom size

- c. Applicable payment standards for the family size
- 20. Family record of housing search.
- 21. Contract. Sample.
- 22. A copy of HACK's policy that explains that HACK may provide the landlord with tenant information regarding the family's rental and tenancy history and/or drug trafficking history.
- 23. A copy of HACK's policy to provide the owner with information regarding:
 - a. The family's current address, as shown in HACK's records;
 - b. The names and addresses (if known to HACK) of the landlords at the family's current and prior addresses.

SD. DISCRIMINATION PROCEDURES

If a family encounters discrimination, HACK staff will follow the procedures described below:

1. HACK staff will screen the discrimination complaint and advise the family if it appears that they may have a valid discrimination complaint under applicable Federal, State or local law.
2. Advise the family of alternatives in seeking remedies for alleged discrimination.
3. Make them aware of the need to complete the Housing Discrimination Complaint form for submission to the HUD regional office, when appropriate.
4. HACK shall cooperate with HUD in conducting compliance reviews and complaint investigations per applicable civil rights statutes, Executive Orders, and rules and regulations.

Under no circumstances will any HACK employee attempt to discourage any client from filing a discrimination complaint even if they believe there is no legitimate basis for such complaint.