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Serving the Community by Making Safe Housing Affordable

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The Housing Choice Voucher Program and the Landlord



*"Serving the Community
by
Making Safe Housing Affordable"*

Our Mission...

The Grand Junction Housing Authority mission is to advocate for and to provide safe suitable housing to the residents of Mesa County whose annual income falls below the median income of Mesa County.

Housing Choice Voucher Program

The Housing Choice Voucher Program is a federally funded program designed to assist low-income families with their housing needs. Program participants pay approximately 30% of the adjusted monthly rent. The Grand Junction Housing Authority pays the balance directly to the landlord.

The Grand Junction area, as with many areas in Colorado, has a shortage of quality, affordable housing. The Housing Choice Voucher Program gives low-income families, disabled and elderly individuals the opportunity to choose safe sanitary housing that meets their individual needs.

We depend upon the support of Landlords for this program to be successful. Your continued support is appreciated. Please feel free to contact the Grand Junction Housing Authority (GJHA) at any time.



What happens if a Tenant does not pay their utility bill?

If a utility is shut off due to non-payment, that unit will not meet HQS and the GJHA may begin the termination process. The Tenant is then also in violation of your lease and you may need to enforce your lease.

I wish to sell my unit. What do I need to do?

Ideally, you will discuss your intent with the GJHA. The GJHA will provide a transfer form that must be signed by both the new owner and the previous owner. The GJHA will also require the new owner to fill out a W-9. If the new owner is agreeable, the GJHA can transfer the HAP Contract into the new owner's name.

What if the Tenant is violating the lease?

You have the right to enforce your lease. The GJHA will assist you within our authority. However, enforcement of the lease is ultimately the landlord's responsibility.

When do I need to contact the GJHA?

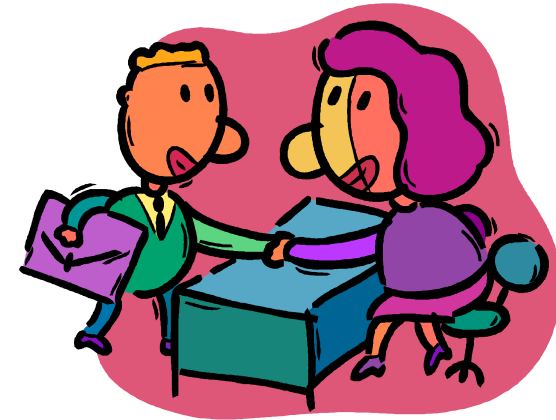
If anyone vacates the unit, if you do not receive your HAP, if you begin eviction, if the Tenant wishes to add someone else to the lease, if you intend to move the Tenant to a different unit, if you sell the property or if you wish to change the terms of the lease at renewal.

Resources

- Fair Housing Hotline (866) 231-6946
 - US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
(www.hud.gov) (800) 877-7353
 - City of Grand Junction (www.gjcity.org) (970) 244-1503
- For additional information and resources visit www.GJHA.org
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Definitions

- CDOH – Colorado Division of Housing.
- GJHA – Grand Junction Housing Authority.
- Gross Rent – Contract rent plus the utility allowance.
- HAP – Housing Assistance Payment.
- HCV – Housing Choice Voucher.
- HQS – Housing Quality Standards.
- HUD – Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- LL – Landlord. UA or U/A – Utility allowance.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Who is responsible for Tenant/Family selection?

The GJHA does not act as a Landlord in any way. You are completely responsible for screening your prospective Tenant. You may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, religion, disability, national origin or familial status. However you do not have to rent to a Tenant with bad references or who does not meet your guidelines.

What information can the GJHA provide to me about my prospective Tenant?

The GJHA will provide the Tenant's current address and current and prior Landlord's names and addresses if your request them.

What if I do not wish to provide my social security number or home address to a prospective Tenant on the Request for Tenancy Approval and W-9?

You may either fax that information directly to the GJHA or bring it to the main office.

How long does the whole process take?

When a Request for Tenancy Approval is received, the GJHA tries to schedule an inspection within 10 days. If the unit passes inspection, it is up to the landlord and the tenant how soon the lease should begin. If the unit does not pass HQS inspection, we must schedule a re-inspection to verify the completion of required repairs. You may date your lease the same day the unit passes inspection, provided the Tenant moves in on that date.

How does rent get paid?

The Tenant is responsible for paying their portion of the rent directly to the landlord. The GJHA subsidizes the balance of the rent with a payment directly to the landlord. If the Tenant portion changes during the course of the year, the GJHA will advise the landlord with a copy of a lease addendum indicating the new Tenant rent and HAP amount.

When will I get my check?

All subsidy payments will be mailed from the GJHA main office on the first of every month. The first month a lease is started a short delay will occur while we process paperwork and enter information into the computer system. If you should lease to a family who has a voucher from the Colorado Division of Housing (CDOH), a longer delay may occur because the GJHA must forward all information to the CDOH Office in Denver, who will in turn send the check. If you would like your check sent to a different address than on the W-9, please specify in writing.

Eligibility & Income

◆ Waiting list

Initially, a family fills out the Housing Authority's pre-application. Their name is then added to the Waiting List.

◆ Eligibility

The Housing Authority's initial screening includes:

- 1) Total monthly income of the family
- 2) Family composition
- 3) Background screening for criminal activity through local law enforcement agencies

NOTE: We do not check prior Landlord references and strongly encourage Landlords to do their own screening of potential tenants or families.

◆ Income Limits

The family must meet federally established income limits.

◆ Family Rent

The family's portion of the rent is based on 30% of their adjusted monthly income. The family is responsible for paying their rent portion directly to the Landlord. The family receives an allowance for utilities not included in rent.

Payment Standards

- ◆ The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets annual rent standards for the Voucher Program. These amounts are called payment standards and are based on a family's household size. The payment standard includes contract rent plus an allowance for utilities not included in the rent.
- ◆ Families who select a unit with a rent higher than the payment standard are responsible to pay the difference in addition to their 30%. Under no circumstance can a family pay more than 40% of their monthly-adjusted income.
- ◆ As the Landlord, you are not required to pay all the utilities. However, if the Landlord pays all utilities, no utility allowance will be given to the family.

Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

- ◆ The GJHA must inspect the unit prior to assisting the family with their rent. We also inspect the unit annually.
- ◆ This inspection verifies that the unit meets HUD's minimum safety standards.
- ◆ Upon completion of the inspection, the GJHA will bring to your attention any repairs or safety issues that must be corrected.
- ◆ Only after the unit passes the inspection will a contract be executed between the Landlord and GJHA. The family may then sign the lease.
- ◆ Unless you are already renting to the family, the unit must be vacant, utilities on and ready to rent at the time of inspection.

For additional information regarding HQS, please contact the GJHA.

Repairs

- ◆ The Landlord is responsible to perform ongoing maintenance and repairs of the unit in order to comply with HQS throughout the term of the contract.
- ◆ If the unit is in violation of HQS due to "Tenant caused" damage, the Tenant is responsible for the repair(s) and the GJHA may terminate their assistance if they do not make the repair(s) in a timely manner.
- ◆ All units built prior to 1978, in which children under the age of six (6) pregnant females reside or may reside, that have chalking, cracking, chipping or peeling paint on any surface will require paint stabilization in accordance with federal regulations effective September 1, 2000. For specific information on lead-based paint, please contact the GJHA or visit www.GJHA.org.



Security Deposit

- ◆ The Tenant/Family may receive security deposit assistance from the GJHA Security Deposit Loan Program, if funds are available and they qualify.
- ◆ The Landlord cannot request a larger security deposit from a Section 8 HCV Participant than what is charged to all other Tenants/Families.
- ◆ The Landlord may use the deposit in accordance with their lease as reimbursement for unpaid rent, damages or other amounts owed (subject to state and local laws).
- ◆ The Landlord may not seek reimbursement from the GJHA for damages, unpaid rent, vacancy loss or any other amounts owed by the Tenant/Family.

Rents

- ◆ The rent amount for a unit must be “reasonable”, meet HQS and be within the Family’s or Tenant’s financial limits.
- ◆ The Landlord cannot charge a higher rent amount to a Section 8 HCV Participant than to a Family/Tenant that does not receive rental assistance.
- ◆ The GJHA determines whether a rent amount is reasonable by using a point system based on:
 - 1) Unit size
 - 2) Location of unit
 - 3) Amenities
 - 4) Facilities
 - 5) Year Built
 - 6) Management services
- ◆ All rent increase requests must be submitted in writing to the GJHA and the Family/Tenant 60 days before the date of the increase or prior to the anniversary date of the contract.
- ◆ When the GJHA receives a request for a rent increase from the Landlord, the request is subject to a “rent reasonable” assessment as described above.
- ◆ The Landlord is only entitled to HAPs if the Family/Tenant is residing in the unit.



Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract

The HAP Contract is between the Landlord and the GJHA. **Please read this document carefully.**

The title pages of the document contain the following:

- ◆ Name of the family and family members
- ◆ Unit address
- ◆ Effective dates of the contract
- ◆ Rent amount
- ◆ Amount paid by the GJHA
- ◆ Utilities paid by the family and Landlord
- ◆ Signatures of the Landlord and GJHA Staff

Part B of the document details the rights and responsibilities of the Landlord while their unit is receiving payment under the Housing Choice Voucher Program.



Request for Tenancy Approval, W-9 & Lead-Based Paint Disclosure

- ◆ The Request for Tenancy Approval begins the leasing/contract process.
- ◆ Your prospective Tenant/Family must provide these three documents to the Landlord:
 - 1) Two-sided request for tenancy approval
 - 2) W-9
 - 3) Two-sided Lead-Based Paint Disclosure Form
- ◆ All documents must be filled out completely and returned to the GJHA office before the HQS Inspection can be scheduled.
- ◆ The utility section of this document is used to compute the utility allowance. Therefore, it is imperative to indicate which utilities the Landlord and family pay and whether they are gas or electric.
- ◆ The Lead-Based Paint Disclosure is required to be in each unit file, no matter the unit's age, condition or when it was last painted. It is important that this form is reviewed and signed by the Landlord and the family.
- ◆ The W-9 is used for purposes of reporting the rental income to the IRS. Please print your name, address and social security number or TIN clearly, the way you want it reported to the IRS. A signature and date are required on the W-9.
- ◆ Upon receiving the completed documents, a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Staff member will contact you to schedule the inspection of your unit.

The Lease

- ◆ Landlords may use the same standard lease used for all Tenants/Families.
- ◆ The lease term must match the dates on the HAP Contract.
- ◆ The initial lease term must be for one year. After the first year, the lease can be reviewed month-to-month, for six months or for another year.
- ◆ The Landlord can evict or terminate a family as long as they follow the lease and Colorado Law. The GJHA has no role in the eviction process. The lease is an agreement between the Landlord and the family.
- ◆ Landlords have complete control of the lease. Their rights and responsibilities are not affected by participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. However, HUD requires that the Tenancy Addendum be attached to the lease.
- ◆ A Landlord may not rent a unit to a Section 8 HCV Participant who is a relative. With prior approval from the GJHA, an exception may be made for those families with a disabled family member.
- ◆ The rent amount cannot be increased during the initial term of the lease.
- ◆ If a family requests that another adult (who is not on the initial lease) be allowed to move into the unit, the Landlord must first contact the GJHA.
- ◆ The lease or contract cannot be transferred without notifying the GJHA in writing.
- ◆ A Section 8 HCV Participant cannot move from one unit to another without prior notification and approval from the GJHA.
- ◆ The lease cannot be amended in any way until renewal.
- ◆ At the annual lease renewal the Landlord can choose not to renew the contract or lease, but the Family/Tenant must receive proper notice as specified in the lease.