

**CITY OF AMARILLO
HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

WHAT IS IT?

The City of Amarillo receives funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. This program assists very low-income families to rent decent and safe housing from the existing rental market. The City pays a portion of the family's rent to their landlord each month.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

The household's annual income must not exceed 50% of the median income for Amarillo. Effective December 11, 2012, the income limit set for each family size follows:

| FAMILY SIZE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| VERY LOW INCOME | 21,650 | 24,750 | 27,850 | 30,900 | 33,400 | 35,850 | 38,350 | 40,800 |
| EXTREMELY LOW INCOME | 13,000 | 14,850 | 16,700 | 18,550 | 20,050 | 21,550 | 23,050 | 24,500 |

HOW TO APPLY

After March 5, 2013, applications for rental assistance will only be accepted when made online at the Waitlist link on this website. Applications can be made 24 hours a day 365 days a year at this website. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for those persons who qualify. Please do not call or come into the City of Amarillo Housing Assistance Office for status updates.

Initial eligibility for the waiting list is determined using the income guidelines listed above.

WAITING LIST

- If the applicant appears eligible, he is placed on the waiting list by date and time of application. Applicants are notified on a first come first served basis.
- The applicant must report any change in mailing address while on the waiting list to City of Amarillo, Community Development Department, P.O. Box 1971, Amarillo, TX 79105.
- It is difficult to estimate the time that it will take for the applicant to reach the top of the waiting list. Currently, the waiting period is approximately three to four years.
- The applicant is notified by mail when he reaches the top of the waiting list.

WHEN AN APPLICANT IS AT THE TOP OF THE WAITING LIST

Once an applicant reaches the top of the waiting list the following occurs:

- All income of everyone in the household must be verified. Childcare and medical expenses are also verified. Social security cards must be shown for all members of the household and birth certificates are required for children under 18. Criminal history checks are made on each adult in the household. A recent history of illegal drug activity or violent criminal activity can result in the denial of assistance.
- Once all verifications are received, a voucher is issued giving the family 60 days to find a suitable unit and submit a Request for Lease Approval.

- An inspection of the unit is then scheduled. All utilities must be in service and the stove and refrigerator must be present. If necessary, the owner must complete all required repairs and a follow up inspection made to verify the repairs.

ELIGIBLE HOUSING

The applicant chooses his housing, which may be a house, an apartment, duplex, mobile home, etc. The unit must be located within the city limits of Amarillo and meet minimum standards for decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Compliance is determined by an inspection of the unit.

Listings of available units are kept in the reception area of the Housing Office. Things to consider before leasing a unit include:

- The condition of the unit - is it well maintained?
- Is the rent reasonable?
- What utilities will the tenant pay? The City does not help with security or utility deposits.
- Is it a good location? Is it close to work, schools, a bus route, grocery stores and shopping centers?

LEASE REQUIREMENTS

The applicant and the property owner must sign a lease. If the owner uses a standard lease form for rental to unassisted tenants, the owner must use this same lease form for assisted tenants. If the owner does not use a standard lease form, the City has a model lease form that may be used. The lease must specify the names of the owner and tenant, the address of the unit, the term of the lease and any provision for renewal, and must identify which party provides the appliances and utilities. The initial term of the lease must be for at least one year. During the term of the lease, the family is responsible for timely payment of its share of the rent to the owner. The family must also meet all other responsibilities specified in the lease.

The earliest the lease can take effect is the date the leases are signed by both the landlord and tenant after the unit passes inspection. The leases and contracts must be signed by both the family and the owner and returned to the Housing Office **before** the rental assistance can take effect. The family should not move into the unit until this process has been completed.

AMOUNT OF RENTAL ASSISTANCE

HUD determines a payment standard that is the amount generally needed to rent a moderately priced unit in Amarillo and that is used to calculate the amount of housing assistance a family will receive. However, the payment standard does not limit and does not affect the amount of rent a landlord may charge or the family may pay. A family can select a unit with a rent that is below or above the payment standard. The family must pay 30% of its monthly-adjusted gross income for rent and utilities, and if the unit rent is greater than the payment standard the family is required to pay the additional amount. By law, whenever a family initially leases a unit where the unit is greater than the payment standard the family may not pay more than 40% of its adjusted monthly income for rent. The City pays the difference between the family's share and the total rent directly to the owner each month. The amount of rental assistance will change if the family's income changes. Medical expenses and childcare expenses are also considered when determining the family's share of the rent.

PAYMENT STANDARDS (10/01/12)

| Efficiency | 1BR | 2BR | 3BR | 4BR | 5BR |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| \$470 | \$565 | \$730 | \$995 | \$1,060 | \$1,215 |

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT MUST BE COMPLETE, TRUE, AND CORRECT. IT IS A CRIME TO KNOWINGLY AND WILLINGLY MAKE A FALSE STATEMENT TO OBTAIN RENTAL ASSISTANCE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE HOUSING OFFICE AT 378-3098 (TDD 378-4229).