

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY

12711 - 4th Avenue West • Everett, Washington 98204

(425) 290-8499 or (425) 743-4505

TDD (425) 290-5785 • FAX (425) 290-5618

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM OWNER INFORMATION SHEET

Thank you for participating in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program with Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO). Because your tenant is participating in a government program, and you are receiving funds from the federal government, there are rules you must follow to maintain your participation in the program. The following information helps explain some of these obligations. Please contact us if you have any questions on these policies.

About Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO)

- **Vision Statement:** We envision a future where all Snohomish County residents have safe and affordable housing. Where community becomes opportunity and where housing becomes a home.
- **Mission Statement:** Our mission is to meet the diverse needs of Snohomish County residents by expanding housing opportunities that promote stability, strengthen community and provide affordability.
- **HASCO provides families and individuals with affordable housing.**

HASCO was established in 1971 to provide affordable housing, enhance quality of life, and build safer and stronger communities. Guided by a six-member board of commissioners and staffed by 75, HASCO owns and manages more than 2000 units of subsidized and affordable housing. HASCO also directs dozens of innovative programs that enhance the quality of people's lives and creates a more strongly knit community.

Today state and local governments are taking the lead for meeting the housing needs of their communities. In recognition of declining federal funds and an affordable housing stock that is not growing fast enough to meet the needs of Snohomish County citizens, HASCO has moved beyond its original mission of serving very low income households to also assist working families who are affected by stagnant wages and increasing housing costs.
- **HASCO enhances quality of life.**

A roof and four walls is just one of the necessary elements toward nurturing healthy, self-sufficient families. Empowering people with the necessary skills to keep a roof over their heads is critically important, as well. HASCO partners with social service agencies throughout the county to offer skills families need to thrive.

Ongoing Landlord Responsibilities

- **Lease enforcement.** You are responsible for enforcing the terms of the lease, as you would with any other tenant. If the tenant is violating the terms of the lease you are encouraged to provide us with any copies of 3-day or 10-day notices. A violation of the lease is a violation of our program rules and may impact the tenant's access to assistance.
- **Notification of changes in rent or lease terms.** If you wish to increase the contract rent or change the responsibility for utilities, you must notify HASCO at least 60 days prior to the date you wish the change in rent or utilities to occur.
- **Notification if tenant vacates or is evicted.** You must notify HASCO if the tenant vacates or is evicted from the unit. HUD's [Tenancy Addendum](#) includes provisions related to termination of tenancy, so if you evict a tenant, or terminate the lease, we encourage you to seek legal counsel with any questions related to those provisions.
- **Notification of change of your address, phone number, or change of owner.** You must provide us with updated information if you change your mailing address or phone number. If you sell the property, you must notify us with the new owner's information.
- **Abide by Fair Housing Non-Discrimination Laws.** See section below, "Fair Housing: Landlord Responsibilities," to review non-discriminatory requirements for Washington State landlords under the Fair Housing Act and Washington State Law.

Foreclosure Provisions

In the event of foreclosure, we encourage you to seek legal counsel with any questions related to the protections of your tenant upon foreclosure. Please note there may be certain tenant protections that you are subject to.

VAWA Provisions

The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 was reauthorized and amended in 2013 (the legislation is known as "VAWA"). Title VI of VAWA applies to publicly assisted housing and provides protections to any household member (man or woman) who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (collectively referred to as "domestic violence" in this notice). As the Owner or Manager of a publicly assisted unit, you are required to abide by the provisions of VAWA as they relate to:

- Protections for victims, including restrictions against holding a victim responsible for domestic violence incidents committed against that victim
- Limitations on use of domestic violence incidents as a basis for evictions
- Alternative remedies such as lease bifurcation to allow the victim to remain in housing while excluding the perpetrator
- Confidentiality, including confidentiality of information submitted by victims of domestic violence seeking protection under VAWA

Please consult your attorney concerning the legal requirements of VAWA. HASCO is not allowed to provide you with legal advice. For more information, or for a copy of the general information on Landlord/Tenant Issues for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and/or Stalking provided by Northwest Justice Project, please visit www.hasco.org or contact your tenant's Housing Specialist at 425-290-8499.

Fraud Prevention

To provide assistance to as many eligible families as possible, all participants in the Program (including both tenants and owners) must properly utilize funds and meet Program requirements. Incidences of fraud, willful misrepresentation, or intent to deceive regarding the Program are criminal acts. If you are suspected of committing any fraudulent actions, we are required to refer the matter to the proper authorities for appropriate action. This could lead to an investigation of the allegation and could result in you being accused of a crime.

Some examples of fraud involving owner/managers identified by an Inspector General's investigation included:

1. Requiring extra "side" payments in excess of the family's share of the rent.
Any payment in excess of the rent must receive prior approval from HASCO.
2. Collecting assistance payments for units not occupied by tenants with HCV.
3. Bribing HASCO employees to certify substandard units as standard.
4. Charging families for utilities that are the responsibility of the landlord.

We also urge you to notify us of any violations of the HCV Program by other landlords, tenants or HASCO employees. These violations should be reported immediately rather than allowing a problem to continue in non-compliance with program requirements.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about the HCV program, working with HASCO, or locating forms, visit www.hasco.org. The Landlord Info menu at the top of the screen includes the following:

- **Section 8 Assistance** - A brief overview of the HCV program
- **Landlord Forms** – Links to the forms Landlords use
- **Prepping for an Inspection** – Information about the inspection process and links to related resources
- **Frequently Asked Questions** – Answers to questions frequently asked by landlords

Fair Housing: Landlord Responsibilities

As a Washington State landlord, you are prohibited from discriminating against tenants and prospective tenants that belong to any of the following categories (called “protected classes”).

The [Fair Housing Act](#) (federal law) prohibits discrimination in housing because of:

- Race or color
- National origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians; pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18)
- Disability

In addition, Washington State Law also prohibits discrimination in housing against the following additional protected classes:

- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Marital status
- Military/Veteran status (including any individual using a HUD-VASH voucher)
- Source of income (including Housing Choice Vouchers, Social Security, and veteran benefits)¹

The following are examples of actions that are discriminatory if they are based on a tenant or prospective tenant being a member of one of the protected classes listed above:

- Misrepresenting the availability of a unit
- Offering different lease terms and conditions
- Applying of lease enforcement or eviction policies differently
- Advertising a preference for certain kinds of tenants
- Applying more burdensome rental criteria
- Steering tenants towards certain kinds of housing
- Asking about physical disability and selecting unit type (however, accommodating someone’s request for an accessible unit is not discrimination)
- Failing to provide reasonable accommodations to a person with a disability, including:
 - Denying a request to make a reasonable modification to a unit
 - Denying a service animal
- Retaliating against a tenant who asserts their fair housing rights or makes a claim

Additional Resources:

- For more information about discriminatory practices, see “Understanding Fair Housing Laws:” <https://tenantsunion.org/en/rights/understanding-fair-housing-laws>
- For more information about the kinds of Reasonable Accommodations landlords should expect to make for disabled tenants, see HUD.gov’s information page: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/ReasonableAccommodations15

¹ Starting September 30, 2018, per House Bill 2578, landlords may not discriminate against a tenant based on their source of income.