



TOWN OF UNION, NEW YORK

Department Of Planning 3111 E. Main St. Endwell, NY 13760

Find More Useful HUD Information at: <https://townofunion.com/departments/rental-assistance-hud.html>

Landlord Newsletter

Town Section 8 Program Welcomes New Staff

2018 was a busy year for Section 8 staff. Sara Zubalsky-Peer has been appointed to replace retired Planning Director Paul Nelson. Long time caseworkers Linda Hrostowski and Michele Bennett left town employment in September and have been replaced by Mary Lou Fahs and Gina Suhadolnik. Thank you for your patience as these changes have been incorporated into the program's day to day operations.

Have A Unit To List?

Thank you for your participation in the Town of Union's Housing Choice Voucher program. In order to assist voucher holders in their search for housing, HUD requires Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to conduct outreach to landlords periodically, particularly in areas that are not considered to be minority or poverty impacted areas so that program participants have a wide selection of housing choice in a variety of neighborhoods. While the Town of Union as a whole has relatively small percentages of both minorities (12.7%) and persons below the poverty level (11.1%), there are Census Tracts where those percentages exceed the townwide percentages. For the purposes of HUD's de-concentration goals, these Census Tracts are therefore considered to be minority and poverty impacted. Maps detailing these concentrations, and other landlord information, is available on the Town of Union web page at:

<https://townofunion.com/departments/rental-assistance-hud/landlord-faq.html>

If you have any rental units available for lease, please complete the online Rental Unit Availability form, print it out, and return it to the address listed above or fax to (607)748-0041. A listing of available units is provided to voucher holders and may help you to fill a vacancy.

How Much Can A Landlord Charge For Rent?

The town's responsibility is to ensure that rents charged by owners are reasonable in relation to rents currently being charged for comparable units in the private unassisted market. The location, quality, size, unit type, and age of the contract unit as well as any amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities that are provided by the owner in accordance with the lease are considered. Reasonable rent is a rental amount that is not greater than the rent that is charged for a unit with the same size and amenities in the private market. The town utilizes a point system to rank the quality of a unit during the initial Housing Quality Standards inspection.

February 2019

Federal Funding Update

The Town of Union has been notified that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is under a continuing resolution and can provide sufficient funding to Housing Authorities through April 2019. Visit the town web page for future updates.

No Side Payments!

Landlords are reminded that side payment agreements that result in Voucher participants paying more than the approved Contract Rent are prohibited.

2018 HQS Quality Control Inspections Have Been Completed

The HUD required randomly selected annual Quality Control Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections for 2018 were completed in October. The town appreciates the cooperation it receives from owners and tenants to ensure that this process goes smoothly.

Questions or comments about the Housing Choice Voucher Program?

Email us at hud@townofunion.com or call 607-786-2985

HUD Seeks To Control Program Abuse

The Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) has conveyed to the Town of Union and other housing agencies its serious concern over violations of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program requirements across the nation. The HUD Office of Inspector General has identified cases of fraud by employees of public housing agencies, landlords, and tenants participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program in other states.

In order that the Town of Union may provide assistance to as many needy families as possible, all participants in this HUD-sponsored program must properly utilize government funds and follow policy requirements. Incidences of fraud, willful misrepresentation, or intent to deceive with regard to the Housing Choice Voucher Program are criminal acts. If participating landlords or tenants are suspected of committing any fraudulent action, the Town of Union is required to refer such matters to the proper officials for appropriate action. This could lead to an investigation of the allegation and could result in landlords or tenants being accused of a federal crime, as well as termination of participation in the program.

Some examples of fraud involving landlords identified by the OIG investigation included:

1. Requiring cash side payments in excess of family share of the rent;
2. Collecting assistance payments for units not occupied by Section 8 tenants;
3. Bribing Section 8 program employees to certify substandard units as standard.

Tenants are reminded that from time to time, the Town of Union may ask for information about family income and composition in order to make sure that families are paying the correct rent to the landlord and that the house or apartment is the right size for the family. When asked for this information, tenants must be sure to:

1. Disclose all income received by members of the household and income that is expected to be received in the next year. Many people forget income from second jobs, overtime, part-time jobs, and income received for child support.
2. Disclose the name of everyone expected to live in the household in the next year. If the family size changes, tenants should notify the town, so that the file information can be changed to reflect changes in the family's composition.

The payment to the landlord by the tenant must not be more than the amount in the lease that was calculated at the time of the initial, annual, or interim reviews. Tenants that are now paying (or if your landlord asks for) any money in addition to this payment, please report this situation at once. The town will determine if these extra payments are legal. Most such payments are illegal and appropriate action will be taken against the landlord. If necessary, the town will issue a new voucher and help tenants find another place to live.

HUD's review of other agencies also found instances of HA employee abuses such as willful acceptance of units not meeting Housing Quality Standards, accepting kickbacks from owners, agents, or tenants to permit participation or to allow rents in excess of the rent reasonable limitation, and intentional violations such as incorrect calculations of tenant payment or Housing Assistance Payment levels and incorrect determinations of family eligibility.

To report suspected fraud in HUD housing programs contact the Office of Inspector General, Department of Housing and Urban Development send an email to: hotline@hudoig.gov

Does The Town Of Union Screen Tenants?

The Town of Union verifies income, assets, and completes a local criminal background check for the purpose of eligibility for the program. Screening for tenant suitability remains the landlord's responsibility. Please be aware that owners are responsible for screening and selecting tenants the same way that they would in the unassisted rental market. The Town of Union only determines that the tenant is income-eligible for the program. The town does not screen program participants to look for "good tenants".

Due to confidentiality restrictions, the town can tell you very little about prospective tenants. However, federal regulations require that the tenant's current address and the name and address of the tenant's current and prior landlord be released if requested by prospective landlords.