



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

The Town of Union has released a proposed Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan update on December 16th, 2021. The update includes regulatory changes, police and procedure updates, and changes to the program related to the implementation of new software.

In accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, the Town of Union Housing Authority is offering the opportunity for resident and public comment on proposed changes to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan. The proposed Administrative Plan can be viewed on the HUD/Rental Assistance section of the town's web page at www.townofunion.com. Persons wishing to comment on the content of the proposed Administrative Plan may submit written comments to: **Town of Union Planning Department , 3111 East Main Street Endwell, New York 13760**

Written comments will be accepted until 4:00 P.M., Wednesday January 19th, 2022. Comments may also be submitted via electronic mail to hud@townofunion.com. All comments will be reviewed and a summary of comments received will be included in the submission to HUD. Persons with disabilities needing a special format for the proposed Administrative Plan should contact the Town of Union Planning Department at (607) 786-2985. This notice constitutes the initiation of the 30-day public review period.

The Town Board will allow for additional comment on the proposed Administrative Plan during a public hearing scheduled for Wednesday January 19th, 2022 at 7:00 P.M. in the second floor Town Board meeting room located at 3111 East Main Street, Endwell, New York 13760. After the public hearing has closed, the Town Board will vote on the proposed plan.

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. Please contact the Department of Planning & Community Development at (607) 786-2985 if you have a unit you would like to list for rent.

December 2021

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.

No Side Payments!

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

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.