

Frequently Asked Questions

How does this Program work?

- Under the Section 8 Program, the JHA makes monthly payments directly to the landlord on behalf of the family. The family pays to the landlord their portion of the contract rent.
- Once the family has identified an acceptable unit, the family and landlord complete the Request for Tenancy Approval (R4TA) form & package. Once that document is received in our office, a Housing Inspector will contact the landlord to schedule an inspection of the unit. The lease may begin once the inspection is completed with a “passed” status.
- If the unit is approved as decent, safe and sanitary, and the rent amount is within the fair market rent guidelines, a lease agreement will be executed between the Landlord and the family. Upon receiving the executed lease agreement, the Housing Counselor will send a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract to the landlord. The HAP contract will be executed between the landlord and the JHA.

What is the application process for Section 8 Families?

The demand for low-income housing in Jacksonville, Florida, far exceeds available units. The need is so great that a waiting list has been established. Interested individuals can pick up and submit an application on Fridays From 8 – 2 p.m. only. If submitting the application in person, it can only be returned on any Friday from 8 – 2 p.m, and you will be given a receipt. If it is mailed, a receipt will not be given. The average wait time to receive a voucher is approximately 2 years.

What do I do after I have the Section 8 Voucher?

Answer:

- The Voucher is good for 60 days, unless an approved extension has been granted.
- Once you find a unit you would like to rent and the owner is willing to rent the unit, have the owner complete a Request for Tenancy Approval (R4TA) package. Both you and the owner must sign the R4TA. Make sure the owner intends to rent to you before asking the owner to complete the R4TA.
- After the owner completes the R4TA, turn it in to the JHA. Remember that you can only turn in one R4TA at a time.

- The R4TA will be sent to the Section 8 Office to be processed by your Housing Counselor. The unit you have chosen will then be inspected by an Inspector.
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- The inspector will contact the owner to schedule an inspection of the unit. The inspection is to insure that the unit meets Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and that the contract rent is reasonable.
- After the unit passes inspection, you and the landlord will execute a lease of the unit. Once the Housing Counselor has received a copy of the executed lease, the JHA will enter into the Housing Assistance Payment Contract (HAP) with your landlord.
- Once the HAP Contract is complete, the JHA will process the contract for payment.
- You are responsible for paying the entire deposit requested by the owner. The JHA does not get involved in security deposit issues.
- The family will pay the portion of the rent directly to the owner/landlord. Likewise, the JHA sends their portion directly to the landlord.

The family must abide by the following rules:

1. Supply all information and documentation as requested by JHA;
2. Allow the JHA to inspect the dwelling unit at reasonable times and after reasonable notice;
3. Notify the JHA and the landlord before vacating a unit;
4. Use the unit for residence of the family, i.e., those family members authorized by JHA to occupy the rental unit;
5. Pay the tenant's portion of rent on a timely basis;
6. Report any changes in family income or family size immediately;
7. Comply with all terms and conditions of the lease; and
8. The family must not participate in drug or criminal activity.

What are the Payment Standards (PS) for existing housing in Jacksonville, Florida?

Answer: The Fair Market Rents for the City of Jacksonville and surrounding counties are the following:

Size of Unit	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms
PS	\$599	\$680	\$792	\$995	\$1,139

(**This amount changes once per year)

How many people can I have in one bedroom?

Answer: According to JHA standards, the maximum occupancy per bedroom is 2 persons. Same sex children will occupy the same room. As soon as a child of different sex turns two (2) years old, the family qualifies for another bedroom.

Can a landlord collect a security deposit from a Section 8 tenant? What about last month's rent?

Answer: Yes, the tenant is responsible for the entire deposit. The last month's rent is required to be paid, before the client leaves the unit.

Who pays the rent?

Answer: Under the Section 8 Program, the tenant pays a portion of the rent based on 30% of their income and the JHA pays the remaining portion of the rent directly to the owner. If the tenant has a rental payment, he/she must pay rent through the end of the lease, as long as they are still occupying the unit.

Does the JHA choose the tenant?

Answer: No, the screening and selection of tenants is the sole responsibility of the landlord. Any Voucher client has met the criteria for participating in the Section 8 Program.

What about the lease?

Answer: The landlord and the tenant enter into a lease agreement. The JHA is not a party to the lease agreement. The owner can use their own lease which would be required to have the HUD Lease Addendum attached to it. The JHA signs a Housing Assistance Payments Contract with the owner to ensure owner compliance with the Program regulations.

Can a landlord break a lease?

Answer: Yes, however, there are certain requirements, especially if it is the initial term of the lease.

Who decides the rent amounts a landlord can charge?

Answer: Rent requested by the landlord is negotiable. However, HUD guidelines establish the maximum rent the JHA can pay for a specific unit based on the Voucher Payment Standard. All rents are subject to a rent-reasonableness test

Does the landlord have to pay all utilities?

Answer: No. The payment of utilities is an item that is mutually agreed upon between the tenant and the landlord. Tenants who pay their own utilities are credited with a utility allowance. If a landlord opts to pay for all of the utilities, they are responsible for the entire year, regardless of how much the utility bill is.

Must all the units be inspected?

Answer: Yes, the units must be inspected. The purpose of the inspection is to insure the unit is decent, safe and sanitary and meets the needs of the family.

What happens when the tenant does not pay the rent?

Answer: Section 8 tenants who do not pay their rent are handled in the same manner as the tenants in the open market - with notices, and eviction processes.

Can I Move?

Answer: Yes. After the initial term of the lease (one year) and provided you do not owe the landlord for any damages to the unit..

Can I take the Section 8 Voucher to Other Cities?

Answer: Yes. The Voucher is portable to any city in the United States that has a Housing Agency willing and able to administer the Section 8 subsidy.

Can I move into the unit now that I have passed the inspection?

Answer: You should speak with your Housing Counselor before moving into the unit. I, (Inspector) do not have the authority to authorize you to move in. The Inspector cannot give you the go ahead to move in, because if the approved rental amount is less than the landlord requested, the landlord can decide not to lease the unit to you.

What is my portion of the rent going to be?

Answer: You will receive your rental amount on an Initial payment letter from your Housing Counselor.

When is my rent considered late?

Answer: This is determined by your lease. Fees must be paid to the landlord, not the JHA.

My landlord wants more money than; can I pay the extra out of my pocket?

Answer: No, it is illegal and you will be terminated from the program if you do. The Landlord will also be terminated from participating in the program.

Will the JHA help pay for my security deposit?

Answer: No, and we do not get involved in security deposit issues, because we cannot request them. A landlord can charge you what he/she would charge any client on the open market, as long as the amount is not excessive.

Do I have to sign a lease with the Landlord?

Answer: Yes, a 12 month lease must be signed and it must be supplied by your Landlord. He/she must return a copy to the JHA. The JHA does not provide leases.

Am I eligible for a utility check?

Answer: I don't know because I don't calculate the income in your file, you must speak with your Housing Counselor to determine this.

Can I get another inspection if my unit fails twice?

Answer: Yes, it must be requested in writing. If it is not requested in the proper time, the unit will go into abatement the first of the next month.

If the violations are Tenant caused, the request for re-inspection must be submitted in writing by the Tenant. If they are Landlord caused, the Landlord must make the request in writing to the Housing Counselor.

How long will I be given to get my repairs fixed?

Answer: The date varies dependent upon the actual repair(s) needed. It must however be re-inspected within 30 days, as required by the Code of Federal Regulations.

If I want to move, do I have to give notice?

Answer: Yes, notice must be given to your Landlord and your Housing Counselor and the amount of advance notice depends on your lease. If unsure, please contact your Housing Counselor. A minimum of 30 days notice is required under most leases; however some require 60 – 90 days advance notice.

If I decide that I am moving, and I sign another lease, can I still move?

Answer: Please contact your Housing Counselor. If you sign another lease, you are bound by the terms of the contract, and you will not be able to move.

Can my baby's father move into the unit with me?

Answer: Yes, as long as he has been approved by the JHA and the complex.

His name must appear on the lease. Without approval, he may **not** live in the unit.

Documentation of paternity will be required by your Housing Counselor. Any person who has not been approved is considered an unauthorized person, and will cause you to be terminated from the Jacksonville Housing Authority.

If I have a guest, how long can they visit before they are considered to be living in the unit?

Answer: 14 calendar days in a 6 month period. Anything above this requires approval from the JHA and the Complex/Landlord.

How many people are on the waiting list? And what is the average time a client remains on the waiting list?

Answer: Over 3,000, and the average wait time is 2 – 3 years. Preferences are given to families, disabled, and elderly clients (62 years and older). Single applicants are at the bottom of the waiting list.

Is Section 8 still accepting applications?

Answer: No, the Waiting List officially closed on December 4, 2009, which means we cannot accept applications until the list re-opens.

If I applied before the waiting list closed, am I still on the Waiting List?

Answer: You can check on the JHA website at www.jaxha.org. Go to the S8 waiting list tab, and key in your information, it will automatically tell you whether you are on the waiting list or not. It **will not** give you your position number on the waiting list. If you have and further questions regarding the Section 8 Waiting List, please contact the JHA at 630-3820, they will direct you to the right department. The Front Desk **will not** give you a position number on the waiting list, so please do not ask.

If you are removed from the waiting list for any reason, you will receive a letter in the mail at your last known address. You must respond within the time-frame listed, or a re-instatement cannot be considered even if you are eligible

Do I have to pass a Criminal Background check to get on Section 8?

Answer: Yes, this is part of the applications process.

If I get terminated from Housing, how soon can I re-apply?

Answer: It depends upon the reason you were terminated. Your penalty may be from 2 – 5 years before you can reapply. Voluntary withdrawal will allow you to put in an application as soon as the waiting list is opened, and you don't have to wait for any number of years. You may however only apply for Section 8 when the waiting list is opened; it is against the law to accept applications during a period when the list is closed.

If I get terminated, do I get a Hearing?

Answer: Yes, if it is requested in writing within 10 days from the date at the top of your termination letter. Please contact your Housing Counselor with any further questions. Failure to request a hearing in writing within the allotted time-frame, means you will be terminated, and will have to re-apply for housing.

Is there anything that will prevent a person from participating in the Section 8 Program for life?

Answer: Yes, if you are a Registered Sex Offender, and/or you have been convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine (speed) on the premises of an assisted unit in violation of federal or state law.

If I want to speak to my Housing Counselor, do I have to go through the front desk?

Answer: No you do not, if you have your Housing Counselor's phone number. If you

need their number, please contact the front desk at 630-3820. After you are given the phone number, please call your Housing Counselor directly, not through the front desk.

Can the front desk give me information out of my file?

Answer: Absolutely not, you should contact your Housing Counselor for specific questions about your case file.

If I damage the unit, does the JHA pay for the damages?

Answer: No, the JHA does not pay for any damages, they are your responsibility, and your failure to pay them may keep you from moving into another unit under the S8 Program and possibly losing your voucher.

Do I have to get a favorable Moving in Compliance form completed before I can move?

Answer: Yes, it must be favorable before you can move out. If you damage the unit prior to move-out after this form is completed, you may have your voucher rescinded (taken back). You will also be responsible for any damages to the unit. Your landlord must immediately contact the Housing Counselor if there are any issues after the form has been completed.

What rental amount am I supposed to pay when I move into the unit?

Answer: You are supposed to pay the amount listed on your voucher, where it says maximum tenant rent portion. You will not know the exact amount, until the Housing Counselor sends you a letter with the amounts on it. You and your landlord will have to agree on how the difference will be handled, if you have paid too much.

Does Section 8 have term limits on staying in housing?

Answer: No, you can remain under the S8 Program until you either violate the rules of the program or your income makes you ineligible.

Can I move every year?

Answer: Yes, as long as you have not violated any rules which cause you to be terminated. If you have damaged a unit, you must pay for all damages prior to leaving the unit.

Can I move to another state?

Answer: Yes, it is called Portability, and it allows you to move anywhere in the United States which has a tenant based rental program. You may use this feature once a year.

Can a landlord come into the unit without notice?

Answer: No, he or she should not come in without notice. If it is an emergency, such as a plumbing back-up or something, they would need to get into the unit as soon as possible.

Can I submit more than one Request for Tenancy Approval?

Answer: No, you may only submit **one R4TA** at a time, because by submitting this form, this unit is now being held off the market for you. You may not keep multiple units off the market at the same time.

Can a landlord accept more than one Request for Tenancy Approval at the same time?

Answer: No, the landlord should only submit **one at a time**, because if the landlord wants another tenant, we have to inform you so you may continue your search, if you have time left on your voucher.

Can the landlord lease to relatives?

Answer: Under normal circumstances, you **may not** lease to relatives, which is stated on the R4TA. You may only lease to relatives when the tenancy has been approved as a **reasonable accommodation**. This approval must come from the JHA, NO EXCEPTIONS!

When are inspections done on an initial unit?

Answer: 7 – 10 business days from the unit ready date on the Request for Tenancy Approval. The Inspections department will call the owner and set up the time for the inspection, and the owner will contact the client.

Will I receive an Appointment letter for Annual inspections?

Answer: Yes, and you will receive the result letter in the mail, and you will get a phone call 2 – 3 days ahead of the appointment from a clerk in the Inspections Department. **Only landlords** may cancel inspections.

If I have given notice to move, when do I have to be out of the unit?

Answer: You must be out of the unit, by the date you agreed to be out. If you change your mind about moving, your landlord will have to approve it in writing and submit it to the Housing Counselor, so we can get the unit inspected.

How long is the voucher valid?

Answer: The voucher is issued for either 60 days or 120 days. 120 days is reserved for a disabled client. Once the voucher is used and you secure a unit, the voucher is no longer valid. Each time you move, you must be issued another voucher.

Can I get an extension on my voucher?

Answer: Yes we do grant extensions, but they are granted only under extenuating circumstances, such as hospitalization... The supervisor must sign off on the extension.

Can I move into the unit before the unit passes inspection?

Answer: No, the JHA will not approve you to move into the unit before it passes, because it is against the rules.

How soon can I get an initial inspection done on my unit?

Answer: All inspections are completed within 7 – 10 business days from the unit ready date listed on the **Request for Tenancy Approval** document.

Do my utilities have to be on in order to get the unit inspected?

Answer: All utilities must be on before a unit can be inspected, regardless of whose name they are in.