

# **Navigating the HCV Program and MHA Operations**

## **Marietta Housing Authority**

All housing authorities are charged with administering the HCV Program by HUD guidelines. However, each housing authority may accomplish this through different business practices and office procedures. Please take note of these MHA procedures in use at this time.

### **MHA Policies**

1. The Administrative Plan that dictates all policies and procedures is posted in its entirety on our website ([www.mariettahousingauthority.org](http://www.mariettahousingauthority.org)) This document lists a few of those policies and procedures for your easy use.
2. Any changes in household composition, income or assets must be reported within 14 days of the change occurrence. It must be reported to the office in writing on a Notice of Household Change form and submitted to the front desk, mailed, or faxed into our office. It is not necessary to see the caseworker to submit this paperwork.
3. MHA conducts a criminal background check on all adult members of the household.
4. A bad credit or rental history can seriously influence a Landlord's decision to approve an application for housing. MHA strongly supports both credit counseling and budgeting classes when credit and rental history are an issue.
5. MHA does not offer repayment agreements; should you be charged with a retroactive amount, this must be paid within thirty (30) days of the notification. Failure to pay this could result in termination from the program and the account being turned over for collection.

### **MHA Operations**

#### **Speaking with your caseworker or other questions you may have for MHA:**

6. Caseworkers make every effort to return all phone calls within 48 hours. Email is another means of contacting your caseworker. Caseloads change occasionally for various reasons; therefore, it is important to call our main line number (770-419-3200) and ask for your current caseworker's name and email address.
7. You may make an appointment to speak with your caseworker as their schedule permits.
8. You may utilize our Walk-in Wednesday policy. This day allows clients or landlords to come into our office who feel their question/issue has not been resolved. Our lobby hours are 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on a first-come, first-served basis. Caseworkers generally take a lunch break from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM which could impact your wait time.

#### **Group Briefing Sessions:**

9. We schedule Initial Program Certification, Annual Recertification, Transfer or Port-Out briefings, and Port-In briefings on Tuesdays and Thursdays at sessions scheduled at 9:00 AM, 10:30 AM, 1:00 PM and 2:30 PM. These are conducted in our lobby conference room in a group setting. Your appointment letter will identify the date and time.
10. Household members age 18 and older must attend the briefing session.
11. You should allow sufficient time to complete the briefing, the interview and any further actions deemed necessary. You should make special efforts to arrive on time or earlier than your scheduled appointment date/time. Late arrivals or no shows are rescheduled as additional briefing time slots allow.

### **Porting INTO our organization:**

- 13 If you are porting into our organization, your eligibility for rental assistance comes to us by virtue of your Initial Housing Authority (IHA); consequently, we cannot alter the effective date or expiration date of the voucher from your IHA. Generally, we require that you have a minimum of 30 days remaining on your voucher in order to port into MHA jurisdiction. Although, we will make every effort to serve you in a timely manner and clarify expiration date issues with your IHA.
- 14 The formula for calculation of total tenant payment and, ultimately, your rent portion is determined by HUD guidelines; however, you are subject to the bedroom allocations, payment standards, and utility allowances of MHA that are used in that formula.
- 15 The process for submitting the Checklist for Tenancy and RTA, for getting a unit inspected and for executing paperwork in order to pay your prospective landlord is the same for all program participants. Please see below where this is described in more detail.
- 16 Keep your voucher expiration date in mind when submitting the Checklist for Tenancy/RTA. We will accept the Checklist/RTA on or before the voucher expiration date and will honor our obligation to inspect the unit even if we are unable to schedule the inspection until after the voucher has expired. However, if the voucher has expired and the unit fails, no additional time remains on your voucher. We will then report to your IHA that you failed to submit an RTA for an eligible unit within the allotted time.
- 17 Port-in Specialist - Tabitha Devoe 770-419-5107 [tdevoe@mariettahousingauthority.org](mailto:tdevoe@mariettahousingauthority.org)

### **Porting OUT of our organization:**

- 18 If your voucher is supported by an Initial Housing Authority (IHA), you must contact that housing authority to move to any other housing authority. If your voucher is supported by MHA's funding, you will be issued our voucher in order to port out to the new housing authority. In either case, you are responsible for providing MHA with all pertinent information regarding the new housing authority you wish to move. And just like any other transfer, recertification and voucher dates must be within HUD guidelines which may require you to attend a briefing session and re-verify family income and composition information.
- 19 Port-out specialist - Sauncerae Cameron 770-419-5153 [scameron@mariettahousingauthority.org](mailto:scameron@mariettahousingauthority.org)

### **Transferring within Cobb County:**

- 20 You MAY NOT move with continued rental assistance during the initial lease term [no less than 12 months], unless you and the landlord enter into a written mutual agreement.
- 21 For all participants, you must give written notice to your landlord and MHA should you decide to vacate the unit for any reason according to the terms of your Lease. If evicted, you must provide a copy of the eviction notice.
- 22 Before you can move to another unit, you must meet with your caseworker, submit a Notice of Intent to Vacate, be issued a voucher, and receive Checklist/RTA documents. The Checklist for Tenancy packet (which includes the RTA) is accepted on Mondays from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM and on Walk-In Wednesdays (9:00 AM to 4:00 PM) and must be submitted by you or the prospective landlord, in person.
- 23 MHA recommends [www.GoSection8.com](http://www.GoSection8.com) as the data base that you and prospective landlords use to search for acceptable housing; MHA may provide a prospective landlord with information on your past rental history while on the housing choice voucher program.

## Rent Portion Calculations

- 24 Calculations for the HCV Program are all mandated by HUD. The payment standard used in the calculation of total tenant payment includes the lesser of the payment standard for the bedroom size for which you are certified and the actual number of bedrooms of the unit you occupy.
- 25 The Confirmation of Move-In document which is provided to the landlord at the initial inspection summarizes the rent portions for each party. You may not pay any amount that differs from this document unless notified by MHA; to do so is considered a side payment which is illegal.

## Initial Inspections/Transfer Inspections at MHA

- 26 No otherwise acceptable unit may be disapproved on the grounds that it is too large for a family, provided that the family share (the portion of rent plus utilities paid by the family) does not exceed 40% of the family's monthly adjusted income, on in cases of Initial lease-up.
- 27 You MAY NOT occupy a unit prior to a passed unit inspection and lease signing, and that to do so will result in your being responsible for the **total contract rent** until you are authorized to move in by MHA and your landlord;
- 28 You may not rent from a relative unless it can be documented that a member of the assisted family has a bona-fide disability under reasonable accommodation.
- 29 Inspectors schedule to inspect units as quickly as possible after the Checklist/RTA documents have been received and processed into the Inspections Department; MHA could take up to 15 days to get the unit scheduled for inspection.
- 30 At the time of the initial inspection, the utilities must be in service and the stove and refrigerator in place (and in proper working order) in order to pass housing quality standards (HQS).
- 31 At the time of the initial inspection, the landlord will be notified of any HQS deficiencies. The time frame for correcting these deficiencies may be no greater than 30 days. The landlord may request a reinspection within this time frame and MHA will reinspect within 5 business days.
- 32 If the 30-day time frame has lapsed or the unit fails HQS at the reinspection, MHA will notify the landlord and client that the unit has been rejected and the family must search for another unit. You must obtain a second Checklist/RTA document from the caseworker in order to begin the process for another unit. MHA may agree to conduct a second reinspection, for good cause, at the request of you and landlord.
- 33 Following a failed reinspection, you may submit a new Checklist/RTA for the failed unit if you have not found another unit by the time the owner corrects all the deficiencies and you still wish to live in that unit.
- 34 Although the landlord has 30 days in which to correct any deficiencies, the landlord should consider making corrections as quickly as possible, since the pass date directly impacts the date we can begin assistance.
- 35 You will only be given one Checklist/RTA document at a time. You will not be given an additional RTA until the original one has been returned.

## Continued Program participation at MHA

- 36 Annual, complaint and special inspections are scheduled by the Inspectors and do not necessarily align with the same time frame as the annual recertification process.
- 37 MHA must meet strict HUD guidelines regarding inspections and reinspections of assisted units. You could be terminated for failing to allow access to the unit for HQS inspections.