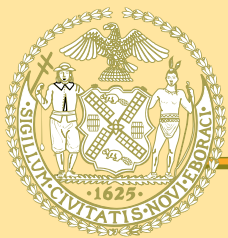


THE LEDGER

Section 8 Landlord Newsletter



*This newsletter is prepared
by the New York City
Housing Authority's Leased
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From The Desk of The Director:



U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C.

The Congressional appropriations process for federal funding of the Section 8 program during federal Fiscal Year 2004 has begun in Washington D.C. As part of the legislation initially proposed for this funding, the Bush Administration is urging Congress to enact a fundamental change affecting how Section 8 would work. The proposal would direct the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to allocate Section 8 funding by formula to each of the

States, and then the governors of the States would decide where funds would be assigned within the States. Currently and throughout the history of the program, HUD has always awarded funding directly to local housing agencies such as NYCHA. The proposal would also allow governors of the States to change many regulations regarding operation of the program within different States.

Both NYCHA and the City of New York oppose this proposal. First of all, we believe that the Section 8 program is working effectively now and therefore a fundamental change is not necessary. Local housing agencies such as NYCHA are utilizing Section 8 funding at high levels and could use further funding, given the long waiting lists these agencies have. NYCHA's Section 8 program is the largest and most successful in the nation, with over 86,000 apartments under lease and over 28,000 landlords participating. We achieved a net gain of 5,412 apartments under lease last year, and we expect a similar gain to reach about 89,000 apartments under lease by the end of this year. Our utilization rate for our HUD funding is now over 97% and will be over 98% by year-end. Yet we still have over 120,000 households on our Section 8 non-emergency waiting list, even though it has been closed since December, 1994.

The relative scarcity and high demand for affordable housing in New York City represents a compelling case for a strong and effective Section 8 program that both maintains existing vouchers and provides additional vouchers. The Mayor's housing initiative for development of 65,000 additional housing units during the next four years must be supported by the Section 8 program's role to help preserve existing

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housing stock. The proposed legislation, however, would risk disruption and create uncertainty regarding future Section 8 funding within the City. It would also impose a new administrative structure at the State level which would almost certainly consume more funds for such costs, which would leave less funding for subsidies to apartments. We also believe local housing agencies, rather than the States, can best provide the flexible operation needed to match local market conditions.

For these reasons, NYCHA urges Section 8 landlords to contact your Senators and Congressional representatives and express your opposition to this proposed legislation (HR 1841 and S 947). We recognize that the current program and NYCHA's operation of it are not perfect. Although we have made many improvements in recent years, many more remain to be put in place. But we believe that such changes can be made within the proven structure and the definite funding provided by the current program.

This issue of the Ledger is devoted to several of the program improvements we are talking about. Two specific areas are inspections and transfers. In many discussions between landlords, tenants, and staff, we have produced and are now implementing new policies and procedures involving these areas, which are described in more detail on these pages.

Gregory A. Kern
Director
Leased Housing Department

What The Housing Inspector Looks For

When your Section 8 apartment is scheduled for an annual inspection, please remember that the NYCHA inspector will be looking at not only the interior area of the apartment, but also the related exterior spaces as well. The exterior means the common areas of the building such as the hallway, staircase, elevator, lobby. The inspection report consists of nine questions for the street and exterior of the building and six questions regarding the interior of the building.

Here is a sample of some of the conditions that the inspector will look at:

STREET AND EXTERIOR OF BUILDING

- ~ Is site and immediate neighborhood free from conditions which endanger health and safety of tenants, including open vacant or fire gutted buildings?
- ~ Are all exterior surfaces accessible to children under 6 years old free of cracking, peeling and loose paint or adequately covered to prevent exposure to lead based paint?
- ~ Are exterior surfaces sound and hazard free?
- ~ Are the roof, gutters, and downspouts sound and free of hazards?
- ~ Are all exterior stairs, rails & porches sound & hazard free?

INTERIOR OF BUILDING

- ~ Are interior stairs and halls hazard free?
- ~ Are elevators working and do they have current inspection certificates?
- ~ Unblocked fire exit from building?
- ~ Is there access to unit without going through another unit?
- ~ Building free of rats, mice and vermin?
- ~ Building free of garbage or debris?

Did you know that hazardous exterior conditions could cause suspension of subsidy not only for the individual apartment but for the entire building if not repaired within 30 days?

Of course you will be notified in accordance with the same procedures for hazardous conditions found within the apartment.

Since we send you a copy of our notice to your tenant scheduling the annual inspection, please make sure that the interior and exterior of the building are pre-inspected by yourself or support staff prior to our Inspector's visit.

PREVENTION PAYS!



Retroactive Payments To The “Old Owner” When Your Tenant Transfers

“SHORTCHANGED!”

Your Section 8 tenant is in the process of transferring and you are concerned that you are about to be “shortchanged” by the tenant and NYCHA. The subsidy payments have been suspended and you begin to realize that you will not receive any subsidy payments until the tenant transfers to the new apartment.

Does this sound familiar? Have you experienced such a scenario?

We want to assure you that we have a policy in place to address your concerns.

- ~ Rent is due the first of the month. Therefore, if the tenant is still occupying the old apartment, (even if it is for only one day), the “old owner” is entitled to receive the entire month’s rent.
- ~ Rather than suspend subsidy to the “old owner” upon receipt of documentation for the new apartment, staff shall only suspend subsidy when the new apartment passes a Housing Quality Standards Inspection.

However, there are some exceptions to the policy.

- ~ If the subsidy was already suspended because the previous apartment failed inspection and repairs were not completed on time, the suspension will remain.
- ~ If the tenant is moving outside the City of New York (portability), the suspension of subsidy will occur much earlier in the process, at the point when the tenant is actually issued the portability transfer voucher.

Renting To Mobility Impaired

If you have apartments now or in the future that are specifically constructed or retrofitted to be accessible to people with mobility impairments, or apartments in elevator buildings or on the first floor, please notify the Leased Housing Outreach Unit at 718-250-9891. These apartments will be included in the next listing of available apartments provided to Section 8 participants when they receive their vouchers and during their apartment search efforts. Participants with mobility impairments will contact you to express interest in these apartments.

There are advantages to renting apartments to Section 8 mobility impaired participants. When a participant needs a higher rent ceiling as a reasonable accommodation, NYCHA will request HUD's permission (where appropriate) for special rent ceilings of up to 10% above NYCHA's normal payment standard for suitable apartments.

You may also be entitled to tax credits, tax deductions, or loans for making apartments accessible. You may wish to consult with your legal or tax advisor regarding these incentives, and your eligibility for them. Following is a partial listing of sources to consult for more information on these incentives.

PARTIAL LIST OF SOURCES

- www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/taxpack.htm regarding an annual federal tax credit for qualified small businesses for "eligible access expenditures" under the American with Disabilities Act, and an annual \$15,000 tax deduction for removing architectural or transportation barriers.
- www.hud.gov regarding federally-insured loans, administered by HUD, to finance the light or moderate rehabilitation of multi-family properties.
- www.nyhomes.org/hfa/prog8020 regarding a New York State Housing Finance Agency financing program for multi-family projects, in which 20% of the apartments are set aside for low income households.
- www.dhcr.state.ny.us/ocd/progs/lihc/ocdprgli regarding a New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal low-income housing credit program, providing a reduction in federal income tax liability for developing, rehabilitating and acquiring rental housing for low-income households.
- www.npcnys.org/publicsources2002.html for information about many other government programs providing incentives for low-income housing.



Wednesday Service Policy

January
22nd
2003

On January 22, 2003, the Leased Housing Department implemented the new Wednesday customer service policy for visitors and callers at the Section 8 borough offices (except Staten Island). With our ever-increasing paper-work and requisite computer data entry occupying an inordinate amount of time by staff, our quest for greater efficiency dictated an adjustment.

Routine matters from callers and visitors are now addressed on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Wednesdays are put aside for staff to complete these other duties. For special situations only, a limited staff is available on Wednesdays.

Exceptions to the reduced staffing schedule for Wednesdays are:

- The entire Staten Island Section 8 borough office
- Visits or calls to Inspection staff at all Section 8 borough offices, as well as field inspections at tenant apartments
- Briefings for applicants or transferring tenants at all Section 8 borough offices
- Appointments made by Section 8 staff

Tenants Who Deny Access For Repair and Plan To Transfer

Your tenant's apartment fails a Housing Quality Standards Inspection and you are put on notice by NYCHA that the repairs need to be corrected within 30 days, or risk having Section 8 subsidy suspended. Your tenant then requests an emergency transfer if repairs are not done. However, the tenant assumes that if she gives you access for the repairs she risks losing her emergency transfer status. As a result, the tenant decides to deny you access that would otherwise allow subsidy payments to continue uninterrupted or to be reinstated.

Since these situations do occasionally occur and subsidy payments do get suspended in compliance with federal housing regulations, we have adopted a policy to address this issue:

- First notify our Inspection Unit staff at the Borough office, whenever you are denied access by your tenant for repairs. Your complaint will be recorded in the tenant's file.

- Submit documentation or any evidence that supports your claim against the tenant to the Inspection Supervisor.
- After your submission of supporting evidence, your tenant will receive written notification of possible termination of Section 8 subsidy and denial of transfer voucher.
- Once you have successfully completed all repairs, and have all supporting documentation submitted, the Inspection Manager will review the case for reinstatement of subsidy, retroactive to when the repairs would have been done without the denial of access.

Visit Us On the Internet

Soon, the Leased Housing Department will only be a click away from the Housing Authority's web site, www.nyc.gov/nycha. We want to put a number of things on-line for easy access by the public and will start with the following:



- **The Available Apartment List**
will provide easy apartment searches for our tenants and applicants while providing our building owners with shorter turnarounds on vacant units.
- **The Available Apartment Questionnaire**
will provide the speed and ease for building owners to list their vacant units.
- **Department Policy Information**
will be posted on the site. This will include both existing policy as well as new policy as it is implemented.

How To:

Listed below are some tips that should help prevent subsidy suspension and improve tenant relations.

Remember an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

1. Exterminate apartments on a regular schedule.
2. Repair minor leaks and slow drains to prevent floods and stoppages.
3. Check condition of windows and install window guards where needed.
4. Routinely check stove burners and refrigerator thermostat.
5. Check smoke detector periodically.
6. Prevent deteriorated paint conditions by repairing cracks and small holes.
7. Check electrical outlets for cracked or missing plates.
8. Inspect elevators periodically.
9. Routinely check building lobby doors and locks.
10. Test the heating system and apartment radiators prior to the winter season.

New York City Housing Authority
Leased Housing Department
250 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

Owners' Forum & Comments

If you are interested in attending a forum to hear more about what we are doing & how you can benefit more from the Section 8 program, please call the Leased Housing Outreach hotline number 718-250-9891.

We would also like to hear from you. Please send us a note indicating what issues you would like addressed in future newsletters. Your comments are important to us.

You can send the note to NYCHA Leased Housing Department's Outreach Landlord & Tenant Relations Unit at 350 Livingston Street, 4th floor, Brooklyn, NY 11217

Leased Housing Department

BOROUGH OFFICE INFORMATION

- ~ **BROOKLYN**
350 Livingston Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217
718-250-9778 or 250-9700
Diane Figueroa, Borough Director
- ~ **BRONX**
1 Fordham Plaza, 3rd floor
Bronx, NY 10458
718-329-7701
Edwin Robles, Borough Director
- ~ **MANHATTAN**
55 West 125th Street, 8th floor
New York, NY 10027
917-492-8900
Sonia Thompson, Borough Director
- ~ **QUEENS**
59-17 Junction Blvd, 2nd floor
Corona, NY 11368
718-393-7400
Tempest Sanders, Borough Director
- ~ **STATEN ISLAND**
120 Stuyvesant Place
Staten Island, NY 10301
718-556-2682
Sonia Thompson, Borough Director