



Section 8 Leasing Process

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE SECTION 8 PROCESS IN CALIFORNIA

1 Understand the Basics

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program provides rental assistance to low-income tenants. The government subsidizes a portion of the rent, while tenants pay the rest. **Your Role as a Landlord:** *You must meet program requirements, pass inspections, and comply with state and federal fair housing laws.*

2 Prepare the Property for Leasing

The property must meet HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and California's state habitability laws.

- Common requirements:
- Proper heating and plumbing.
- Safe electrical systems.
- No pest infestations.
- Functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

3 Advertise the Property

Fair Housing Compliance:

- Include a statement like, "Section 8 Voucher Holders Welcome," in your advertising.
- Avoid discriminatory language (e.g., "no vouchers").

4 Screen Tenants

Tenant Application Process:

- Request rental applications from all potential tenants.
- Consider their ability to pay their portion of the rent, but do not use credit history as the sole determining factor (per SB 267).
- Permissible Screening Criteria:
- Verifiable income for the tenant's portion of rent.
- Past rental history and references.
- Background checks (with proper disclosures).

5 Work with the Housing Authority

Once you select a Section 8 tenant, they will provide an RFTA form from the Public Housing Authority (PHA). Complete and return this form promptly. **Prepare for Inspection:** The PHA will schedule an inspection to ensure the unit meets HUD standards. Address any issues found during the inspection to pass it successfully.

6 Execute the Lease

- The lease must comply with state laws and PHA guidelines.
- Specify the tenant's portion of the rent and the subsidy amount paid by the Housing Authority.
- **Include a Tenancy Addendum:**
- The PHA will provide this document. Attach it to the lease as required.

7 Collect Rent

- The Housing Authority pays its share directly to you, typically via electronic funds transfer.
- The tenant is responsible for paying their share of the rent on time.

Handling Late Payments:

- Treat Section 8 tenants the same as any other tenants under California law. You can enforce lease terms for late rent, but always comply with fair housing rules.

8 Ongoing Obligations

- Ensure the property remains in compliance with HQS.
- Discuss lease renewals with the tenant. Notify the PHA of any changes to the lease terms or rent amount.
- Notify the PHA if the tenant violates lease terms, including nonpayment of their portion of the rent.