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Community Development
Agency

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Housing Choice Voucher Program Participant Handbook

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Introduction

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (also known as Section 8) utilizes the existing private rental market in Dakota County to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing opportunities for low-income families, elderly, handicapped and disabled persons at an affordable cost. The CDA administers this Federal program for all of Dakota County. The CDA assists over 2,700 families and individuals through this program.

Program participants pay a minimum of 30% of their monthly adjusted income towards rent (and may not pay more than 40% of their monthly adjusted income when initially leasing a unit or moving with voucher assistance). The program provides rental assistance which is the difference between the participants rent portion and the contract rent. The maximum payment the housing authority would make is the difference between the payment standard and the participants 30% of monthly adjusted income. The rent assistance is paid directly to the property owner on the first of each month once the unit passes a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection and a HAP contract and leasing paperwork is in place.

Program participants choose a rental unit from the private rental market and the property owner must be willing to accept voucher assisted tenants. All assisted rental units must pass an inspection biennially based on federally established Housing Quality Standards. If you are working with a landlord who has never worked with the program before and they have questions about the program, they can contact the CDA at 61-675-4400. They can also find the program information and commonly asked questions on the CDA website www.dakotacda.org.

It is important that you understand the information in this handbook. If you have any questions, contact your housing representative. If you need an interpreter to have this information translated to you, contact the CDA and interpreter services will be provided. For the Housing Choice Voucher Program to be successful it takes cooperation from you, the property owner/landlord, and the CDA staff.

Dakota County CDA and the County

Although the agency name is the Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA), it is a separate entity from the County system. There is no connection with the Dakota County offices in Mendota Heights, Apple Valley, or Hastings. Information can only be shared with the county programs with written permission from you. To provide any person or agency with information from your file or your status on any CDA program you would have to provide written authorization to do so.

All changes to your income, assets, expenses, and household composition must be reported to the CDA in writing. You would also need to report any changes to all programs that you work with or receive benefits from according to program rules. You are responsible for reporting all changes to your household to the CDA in writing. Failure or refusal to do so could result in termination of housing benefits and require repayment of any benefits that were overpaid on your behalf.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) has different rules from the Dakota County programs regarding income and assets. CDA programs do not have limits regarding the value of your car and/or cash resources in your bank accounts. However, you must tell the CDA about all assets and income. Failure to do so is fraud and will result in termination of benefits or ineligibility for the program. If the CDA determines that you failed to disclose all income, assets, expenses, and household composition accurately it can be determined that you must repay benefits paid on your behalf, terminate your housing benefits, and you could also be charged criminally.

CDA Owned Housing

The CDA owns several senior buildings, is a partner in, and owns, several workforce housing developments throughout Dakota County. You can use your voucher in a CDA owned property or in other rental units throughout the county. You can select any unit that qualifies for the program. You are not required to live in CDA owned housing.

Additional information is Available

If you would like further information not provided in this handbook such as Housing Quality Standards, Housing Assistance Payment Contract or other forms used by the CDA, please call your Housing Representative and request copies to be sent to you.

USING THE RTA TO LEASE A UNIT WITH THE VOUCHER

The Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) form must be completed by the Property Manager or owner of the property you want to rent. The RTA form must be completed and returned to the Dakota County CDA office by the 15th of the month prior to the month you want your assistance to begin.

For example: If you turn your RTA form in on September 15 your housing assistance would begin on October 1. This form must be turned in so the CDA can process your paperwork. This form will tell the CDA the address of the unit, the rent amount, landlord and other required information.

If the 15th of the month falls on a holiday or a weekend the deadline will be the next business day. If the landlord does not know their Tax ID number or are not comfortable putting that information on the RTA form the CDA will contact the landlord directly to get the information. (For small landlords this may be their social security number). You are responsible for getting the RTA to the CDA by the deadline. The landlord may offer to fax or mail the RTA form for you but getting the form to the CDA by the deadline is your responsibility.

Eligible Housing

The voucher program is flexible and can work with many different types of housing if the rent the landlord is asking is reasonable, it is affordable for the voucher holder and the unit passes a HQS inspection. The voucher program can work with:

- Apartment buildings
- Duplexes or Twin homes
- Townhomes
- Single Family Homes
- Manufactured Homes (lot rent)

The landlords can choose to participate with the HVC program or not to participate at their discretion. If you find a landlord that is interested in working with the program, you can refer them to the CDA's website for more information or they can call the CDA at 651-675-4400.

Rent from a Relative

You can not rent from a relative. A relative is considered to be a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother. You cannot own or have any ownership in the unit which you are being assisted. If you own a mobile home the housing assistance will be based on the lot rent for the property, it will not include your mortgage.

Once the CDA receives your RTA we will:

- Determine that the rent and utility costs meet your 40% affordability criteria.
- Determine that the rent amount the landlord is requesting is reasonable based on other similar units in the area.
- Prepare the necessary leasing and contract paperwork to be sent directly to the landlord. (This paperwork must be returned for the CDA to make payment).
- Submit an inspection request for the unit you have selected to the inspection staff. You do not need to contact the CDA to request an inspection.

Voucher

Your voucher will expire in 120 days. This is your searching period to locate a rental unit that meets the terms of the HCV program.

When issuing this voucher, the CDA expects that if the family finds an approvable unit, the CDA will have the money available to enter into a HAP (Housing Assistance Payment) contract with the owner. However, the CDA is under no obligation to the family, to any owner, or to any other person, to approve a tenancy. The CDA does not have any liability to any party by the issuance of this voucher.

If there are not funds available to assist someone who has been issued a voucher the CDA may need to suspend the issued voucher. You would be contacted, in writing, and informed that the voucher has been suspended. When funds become available the CDA will contact you, in writing, that funds are available, and you can continue to search for appropriate rental housing.

During your search for a unit, changes in your household composition, income, assets, and expenses must be reported to the CDA immediately because it may affect the voucher size that you were issued, and it may affect your 30% and 40% search criteria. You must also keep the CDA notified of your address. You will be contacted, in writing, if information from you is needed, notify you of changes or provide you a copy of the rent breakdown.

The CDA does require that you sign a twelve-month lease. If you are currently in a lease, you will be required to sign a new lease that is effective with the starting date of your housing assistance.

Side Payments

When you are being assisted on the HVC (Section 8) program it is a program violation to make additional payments (side payments) to the landlord to cover a higher rent amount; it is a violation of the program for the landlord to charge side payments to participants of the HCV (Section 8) program. If the landlord agrees to lower the rent to meet the affordability criteria for a participant or to comply with the rent reasonable determination the rent must be reflected on the executed lease. If the CDA gains evidence that a side payment is being made the participant will lose their housing assistance and the landlord will be required to return all housing assistance payments made by the CDA.

Other Payments (Not Rent)

The Housing assistance program does not include the cost for garages in your assistance if it is not included in the rent, we do not assist with "pet rent" rent you are required to pay for having a pet in your assisted unit, and storage units that are not part of the contract rent for the unit. The cost for garages, storage units, etc. must be voluntary and the same cost for all tenants. You cannot be forced to pay for an extra service if you do not want it. Contact your Housing Specialist if you have specific questions about side payments or additional costs outside of the contract rent for the unit.

DECIDING WHERE YOU WANT TO LIVE

There are many features to consider as you search for suitable housing, so try to select a place that meets your family's needs. Below are some considerations:

SCHOOLS

If you have school-aged children, you will want to consider the various school districts that are available, as well as the distance from the housing unit to the school.

SAFETY

When you search for housing, consider the neighborhood and its surroundings. Try to avoid high crime areas.

WORK

Consider the distance between your workplace and the location of the housing unit.

CHILDCARE

Consider the availability of childcare in the area of the housing unit. If you work, what is the distance between the housing unit, the childcare provider, and your work location?

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

If you do not have a vehicle, what is the access to public transportation in the area of the housing unit?

PREMISES & NEIGHBORHOOD

- Is there a place for children to play outside safely?
- Is the unit in a high crime area? Call the local police department to see how many police calls are made to the area.
- What is the general condition of the neighborhood?
- Are you close to medical services, fire department, or a police station?
- Is there adequate parking for you and your guests?
- Is the area/building well lighted at night?
- If you have pets, do they allow pets? If so, are there additional fees or increased security deposit?

EVALUATING A UNIT

- What is the rent amount?
- How much is the security deposit?
- Do they offer a 12-month lease?
- What are the costs of utilities? Is the unit energy efficient? What utilities will you be required to pay?
- Are tenant-paid utilities separately metered?
- Is the unit free from serious drafts?
- Is the building secure? Do all windows lock? Do the entrance doors have secure locks? Are there cameras on the property?
- Is there evidence that the unit has not been well maintained?
- Is the heating source adequate for the size of the unit?
- Is there enough room for your furniture?
- Does the landlord provide pest control?
- Is the unit clean and ready to move in?
- Are the refrigerator and stove large enough for your family size?
- Are there private, secure mailboxes?
- Are there restrictions on pets?
- Is there sufficient parking and storage?
- Are there sufficient amenities and facilities for your family?
- Is this a smoke-free property?

TIPS TO LOCATE SUITABLE HOUSING:

Property managers and owners advertise rental properties in different ways. Here are some ideas on where to start:

- Check the classified section of all local newspapers.
- Ask friends and neighbors.
- Drive through neighborhood where you may want to live and look for yard signs.
- Check bulletin boards in laundromats and supermarkets.
- Check with real estate offices or rental agencies. Rental agencies sometimes charge a fee.
- Request a vacancy listing from the CDA. You can request one to be mailed to you or you can stop by the office during normal business hours and pick up a copy in the lobby. The vacancy list is updated weekly.
- If you have access to the internet, check out rental websites. Some examples:

www.housinglink.org	www.rent.com
www.apartments.com	www.mynewplace.com
www.forrent.com	www.apartmentsearch.com
www.zillow.com	www.rentcafe.com
www.rent.com	www.apartmentguide.com

APPLICATION FEES

- It's a good idea to ask about the rental policy a landlord/manager has.
- Rental policy can vary from landlord to landlord and is an indication of what a landlord screens for in accepting or denying applications.
- Do they accept the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)?
- Does a poor credit history impact their decision to accept or deny your application? If you are unsure of your credit report, there are resources available to assist you. For more information, contact the Consumer Credit Counseling Service at 612-617-1778 or 1-800-511-9204.
- Does a poor rental history (Eviction Action or other marks on your rental history) effect their decision to accept or deny your application?
- Does any type of criminal history affect their decision to accept or deny your application?
- How much income must you have to be accepted for the apartment rental you are applying for?
- Find out if you are likely to be denied before paying an application fee. The application fee is your responsibility and could be \$30 or more.
***The application fee is usually not refundable.**

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN A UNIT?

For the unit to be approved, it must meet the following requirements:

- The rent for the unit must be **reasonable** for the type, size, and condition of the unit. The CDA will determine rent reasonableness of the unit you select.
- The unit must pass a Housing Quality Standards inspection.
- The owner must be willing to enter a contract with the CDA and comply with the program rules.
- The rent portion you are responsible for must be affordable for you. Refer to your maximum gross rent worksheet to determine affordability of the unit.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

If you find a property you are interested in, ask for an appointment to see it. Be sure to keep the appointment and be on time. You may want to arrive early to look around the neighborhood. Do not take a lot of people with you to look at the apartment. You want to give full attention to discuss the rental unit and to present yourself at your very best.

INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE LANDLORDS

The CDA is required to provide prospective owners with the following information about you:

- Your current address
- The name and address of your current landlord
- The name and address of your previous landlord (if previously assisted)

SECURITY DEPOSITS

Security deposits are set by the owner of the property. The CDA does not assist with security deposit or application fees.

- The owner may collect a security deposit from the tenant.
- The CDA prohibits security deposits more than amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.
- Before you move into a unit, do an inspection with the landlord. Write down any problems with the apartment, and any areas that are dirty or damaged. Have the landlord or caretaker sign the list. Ask them to make all the repairs before you move in. This is a precaution for preserving your right to your damage deposit and will increase the possibility that the HCV Housing Quality Standards inspection will pass.

RENT REASONABLE

Each assisted unit is reviewed for rent reasonable. The Federal Regulations for the HCV program require that the housing authority complete a rent reasonable analysis on all assisted units.

MOVING OUT OF A UNIT

- When the tenant moves out of the assisted unit, the owner may use the security deposit, including any interest on the deposit, in accordance with the lease, as reimbursement for any damages to the unit.
- Make sure to give proper notice to the owner before moving out of a unit. Failure to do so will cause you to lose your voucher as well as your security deposit. A proper notice for the HCV program is 60 plus one day. For example, if you give notice on September 30, you would be eligible to move December 1.
- Conduct a move-out inspection just like the move-in inspection. Have the landlord sign your inspection notes. Be sure you return all the keys (get a receipt for them), leave the apartment clean, and give the landlord your forwarding address. You may want to take pictures of the unit before leaving.

- The owner must give the tenant a written list of all items charged against the security deposit, and the amount of each item. After deducting the amount, if any, used to reimburse the owner, the owner must refund within 21 days the full amount of the unused balance to the tenant or send a written explanation. Interest on the unused balance is also due to the tenant. You are not responsible to pay for “ordinary wear and tear” which includes worn-out carpet, chipped paint, and appliances that break because they are old.

***If the security deposit is not sufficient to cover amounts the tenant owes under the lease, the owner may seek to collect the balance from the tenant.**

To move with continued assistance with your HCV you must leave your unit in good standing. You and the landlord must sign the mutual termination of the lease form. This is proof for the CDA that you provided a proper notice to the landlord, you have not damaged the unit beyond normal wear and tear, and you do not owe any money to the landlord for unpaid rent or unpaid utilities you were responsible for paying.

MOVING OUT OF DAKOTA COUNTY (PORTABILITY)

A voucher can be used anywhere in the United States of America and the US Territories that have a governing housing authority. If you are a new admission to the voucher program your voucher will indicate if you can port out. If you are not able to port out of Dakota County, you must reside in Dakota County CDA’s jurisdiction for twelve months. After you fulfill the twelve -month requirement you can move out of the Dakota County CDA’s jurisdiction. If you plan to move out of the county, return your completed RTA to the CDA, **not** the county/city to which you want to move. If you are moving outside of the Twin Cities metro area provide the name and address in writing of the housing authority, you want your file transferred to. If the move does not exceed your 40% and you are eligible to port out of Dakota County CDA’s jurisdiction the CDA will make a copy of your file and mail/fax it to the appropriate housing authority.

Here are several facts to consider if you choose to move out of Dakota County:

- The new housing authority will have different payment standards and utility allowances which will affect your portion of the rent. They may have different subsidy standards which would affect the voucher size that you would be issued.
- Once you move to a new jurisdiction, you must remain in that jurisdiction for a minimum of one year.
- The new housing authority may have some different deadlines, rules, policies, etc. and you may have to attend another briefing session with the new housing authority. This could result in delay of assistance. Start early! Submit the RTA early for metro area moves and moves outside of the metro area. We suggest that you start the transfer process 30 to 60 days before your anticipated lease start date.
- You will have to pay the full amount for the damage deposit requested by the new landlord. Your current deposit with your present landlord will not likely be returned to you until 21 days after you vacate.
- You are not eligible to move if you owe money to the Dakota County CDA. You must have any outstanding debt paid in full (from all housing authorities) before you can move. Being current on your repayment agreement is not sufficient.
- If your voucher was not issued to you by the Dakota County CDA you must get approval from your original housing authority to move. Some housing authorities have move restrictions, they are not allowing moves if it increases the portion of rent the housing authority would pay on your behalf.

INSPECTION

Your inspection will take place according to one of the following:

- If you presently live in the unit where you are requesting assistance to begin, the inspection department will arrange a date and time prior to the first of the month for your unit to be inspected if time permits. There is no guarantee that the inspector will be available to complete the inspection prior to the first of the month. Someone (18 or older) is required to enter and inspect the unit. If you cannot keep this appointment you must call to reschedule with the inspector.
- If the unit is vacant prior to the first of the month, the inspection department will attempt to contact the owner to set up an appointment. If an inspection has not been completed prior to the first of the month you are required to have someone (18 or older) present in the unit on the first working day of the month. An inspection will take place between 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- If the unit is occupied until the end of the month prior to your move-in, the inspection will take place on the first working day on the month. Someone (18 or older) must be present to let the inspector into the unit between 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to complete the inspection. The CDA inspection can be completed if you live in the unit, or the unit is vacant. The inspection can not be completed until the previous tenants have vacated the unit.
- If you have on-site property management and they will be available between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. you can make arrangement with them to let the inspection in your unit in your absence. The CDA requires that you leave written permission for the CDA inspector to enter your unit in your absence.

In all cases, if the unit does not pass or the inspection is done after the 1st day of the month, the assistance will not begin until the day the inspection is passed/completed. The CDA rent portion will be prorated based on a 30-day month.

CALCULATION OF TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT

The Total Tenant Payment (TTP) is the amount you pay monthly toward rent and utilities.

The Dakota County CDA Representative assigned to your file will compute your adjusted income giving you credit for any deductions you are entitled to including dependents, medical expenses (elderly, handicapped, or disabled households only,) and/or expense for the care of dependents, as follows:

- \$480 deduction for dependent per year (all those 17 and under and all those 18 and over, except head of household or spouse, who are full time students, handicapped or disabled).
- Expenses for childcare while you are employed or attending school, providing:
 1. There is no adult household member capable of providing the childcare during the hours the care is needed.
 2. The amount is reasonable for the hours and type of care provided.
 3. The amount of childcare does not exceed the amount of income.
 4. The amount is not paid by the agency or an individual outside the household.
 5. The expense is for children that are 12 years old or younger.
 6. You can provide verification this expense has been paid. We need copies of cancelled checks or a receipt from a licensed childcare provider. Handwritten statements of cash payments will not be accepted.

FOR ELDERLY ONLY (Head/Spouse aged 62 or older, handicapped or disabled).

- \$400 Deduction per family per year.
- Medical expenses which exceed 3% of the gross annual income and which are not paid by outside sources (insurance etc.).

EXAMPLE:

<u>Annual Income</u>	
Employment (\$5.50/hr X 40hrs X 52 wks)	\$11,440
<u>Deductions</u>	
3 Minor Children (\$480 X 3)	\$1,440
Childcare Expenses (\$50/wk X 52)	<u>\$2,600</u>
Total Allowances	\$4,040
Annual Income After Allowances (\$11,400 - \$4,040)	\$7,400
Monthly Income After Allowances (\$7,400 / 12)	\$617
30% of Monthly Income After Allowances (\$617 x 30%)	\$185***

****This is not necessarily the amount you will pay towards rent. The CDA will evaluate this amount against the payment standard, voucher size, location of the unit, bedroom size of the unit, and the utility allowance. The CDA will send you a rent allocation sheet once your rent portion is calculated. You and the landlord will receive a copy so you know the portion you should pay and what the CDA will pay on your behalf to the landlord.*

What is the Maximum the Voucher Program will pay?

Sample Calculation:

Payment Standard	
Minus Total Tenant Payment (TTP)	
Maximum Voucher Subsidy (estimate)	

Look at your worksheet from your briefing session to do this calculation with *your* income.

What is the Maximum rent I can pay when I am moving or using the program for the first time?

- 1) You can not pay more than 40% of your adjusted income toward your rent and utilities.
- 2) If the unit you select costs more than 40%, the CDA will not approve the unit.
- 3) This means you have a rent limit based on your income.
- 4) The CDA calculates 40% of your household income.
- 5) Then we add the maximum subsidy.
- 6) Then we subtract the utility allowance.
- 7) This is your estimated Maximum Rent Limit, (IMPORTANT: your rent limit may change if your estimated income is different from your verified income information or if you choose a unit outside Dakota County.

40% of Income	
Plus Maximum CDA Subsidy	
Utility Allowance (see Utility Schedule)	
Estimated Maximum Rent Limit	

UTILITY ALLOWANCE SCHEDULE

Effective February 2022

	0 BR			1 BR			2 BR			3 BR			4 BR			5 BR			
	M	T/D	SF	M	T/D	SF	M	T/D	SF	M	T/D	SF	M	T/D	SF	M	T/D	SF	
HEATING																			
Natural Gas	24	30	34	28	36	41	33	41	48	38	48	55	43	54	62	49	59	69	
Bottle Gas	76	92	106	88	111	127	104	129	148	118	148	171	134	166	192	152	185	215	
Fuel Oil	72	92	103	86	109	123	100	126	143	117	143	166	132	160	186	146	180	209	
Electricity	26	38	63	31	45	75	43	59	88	54	73	101	66	87	114	77	102	127	
COOKING																			
Natural Gas		3			3			4			5			7			8		
Bottle Gas		7			7			12			16			21			23		
Electricity		6			7			10			13			16			19		
LIGHTS/REFRIGERATION																			
Electricity		21	27	32	25	32	37	35	44	52	45	57	66	55	69	81	65	82	95
WATER HEATING																			
Natural Gas		6	8	8	7	10	10	11	13	13	17	18	18	18	22	22	20	25	25
Electricity		16	20	20	18	23	23	23	29	29	28	36	36	34	42	42	39	48	48
Bottle Gas		18	23	23	21	28	28	30	37	37	39	51	51	51	62	62	58	74	74
Fuel Oil		17	23	23	20	26	26	29	37	37	40	49	49	49	60	60	57	72	72
WATER/SEWER																			
Water			15			15			18			21			25			28	
Sewer			26			27			34			40			47			54	
Trash			22			22			22			22			22			22	
RANGE/REFRIGERATOR																			
Range			11			11			11			11			11			11	
Refrigerator			12			12			12			12			12			12	
ELECTRIC SURCHARGE																			
			10			10			10			10			10			10	
NATURAL GAS SURCHARGE																			
			10			10			10			10			10			10	

Heating Codes:

M = 3 or more attached units

T/D = Duplex or 2 family home

SF = Single family & mobile homes

Payment Standards

Effective May 1, 2022

Voucher Size	Payment Standard
0 Bedroom	\$935
1 Bedroom	\$1,180
2 Bedroom	\$1,420
3 Bedroom	\$1,845
4 Bedroom	\$2,155
5 Bedroom	\$2,475
6 Bedroom	\$2,800

SUBSIDY STANDARDS

The CDA will determine the appropriate voucher size by applying the following criteria:

CDA Policy

The CDA will assign the first bedroom to head of household and spouse/co-head, if applicable.

Thereafter, the CDA will assign one bedroom for each two persons within the household, as shown in the following chart.

Subsidy Standard Number of Bedrooms	Number of Persons
1	2
2	4
3	6
4	8

The regulations for the HCV program provide that a family may rent a unit with more bedrooms than stated on the voucher, but the family's subsidy will be based on the applicable payment standard for the unit size for which the family is eligible. If a family rents a unit with fewer bedrooms, it must comply with the HQS requirements (not more than 2 persons per living/sleeping room). The subsidy will be based on the unit size in this case.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

An HCV (Section 8) applicant/participant (or household member) who has a handicap or disability may ask for an exception to the Dakota County CDA's rules, policies, or procedures as a reasonable accommodation of their disability if compliance with the existing rules constitutes a hardship considering the person's disability. The CDA may make an accommodation if it does not create an undue financial or administrative burden, or fundamentally change the nature of the program.

You may request a reasonable accommodation at any time. You must send your written request to: **Dakota County CDA; 1228 Town Centre Drive; Eagan, MN 55123**. It is your right and responsibility to decide when and if you want to request a reasonable accommodation.

INSPECTION STANDARDS

The home you choose must meet Housing Quality Standards. It can be any type of unit. The CDA must inspect and approve your choice.

Lead Base Paint Exposure Testing

CAUTION! If the unit was built before 1978 and you have children under age 6, there must not be any chipped or peeling paint inside or outside of the property.

See your family physician or call Dakota County Public Health. Intake 651-552-3115. They will refer you to low-cost medical clinics for lead-based paint testing.

DWELLING UNIT MUST INCLUDE

Living room, kitchen, bathroom, and one (1) living/sleeping room for every two (2) family members.

ALL ROOMS MUST HAVE

- Ceilings and walls must be in good condition. There must not be any large cracks or any peeling and/or chipped paint or loose plaster.
- Floors must be in good condition. The floor covering must not be curling or have loose edges or holes.
- Windows must be in good condition and must open and close. The sills and frames must not be rotting. There can be no cracked, broken, or missing windowpanes. Windows that are within six feet of the ground must have adequate locks that are permanently attached to the window. Window screens should be in good condition.
- All rooms must have two (2) sources of power, except the bathroom which only requires a permanently installed light fixture. Kitchen must have one (1) permanently installed light fixture and one (1) outlet. All outlets and switches must have covers that are not cracked or broken with no exposed, frayed wiring. There must be no open, exposed electrical boxes or wires.

KITCHEN

- Must have a range, oven, and refrigerator
- Stove - all burners of the stove must work with the pilot light or electric range.
- Refrigerator - the door gasket must be attached to the door securely, forming a proper seal.
- Sink - must have hot and cold running water, a drain with trap, properly hooked to a waste line, with no leaks.
- There must be adequate food preparation and storage areas, with adequate means to dispose of food waste.

BATHROOM

- Must be inside unit
- There must be a private flush toilet that is fastened tight to the floor.
- There must be a sink with hot and cold running water with no leaks.
- There must be a tub or shower.
- There must be a fan or a window that opens.
- There must be no rotten or weak areas on the floor or any water damage to the ceiling.

BEDROOM

There must be either two (2) outlets or one (1) light and one (1) outlet. The window(s) must open and be large enough to use for an emergency exit. There must be a source of heat.

HEATING

The dwelling unit must have a heating system that will heat the unit to a comfortable temperature and must meet local codes.

STEPS/PORCHES

Any porches, balconies or decks which are more than 30 inches above ground must have a rail 36" high. All stairs (inside and outside) with four (4) or more steps must have a handrail. All steps must be sturdy.

SITE

There must be no hazards in the area such as broken-down buildings or large amounts of trash or junk.

INFESTATION

There must be no insects or rodents in the unit.

SMOKE DETECTORS

A working smoke detector with a live battery must be installed on every level of the unit, including the basement and outside of sleeping rooms. If any members of the family are hearing impaired, a detector for the hearing impaired must be installed.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

There must be one approved and operational carbon monoxide alarm within 10 feet of each bedroom. Apartment complexes that have a monitored Centralized Carbon Monoxide System should mail or fax the CDA a statement from the monitoring company so that the complex can be listed as exempt from this requirement.

Each unit must have adequate garbage storage facilities.

Most commons fail conditions:

Nonfunctioning smoke detectors

Inoperable bath fan

Leaking faucets/plumbing

Cracked and/or broken windowpanes

Carpet and vinyl conditions—safety issues

Missing or damaged window screens

Missing or cracked electrical switch plate and outlet covers

Peeling and/or chipping exterior and interior paint

Burners on kitchen stove/range not operating as designed

Railings on four or more steps not present

Missing Carbon Monoxide detectors

FRAUD NOTICE

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is seriously concerned about fraud in the HVC (Section 8) Program and has asked the CDA to send this reminder to all families in the program. Going along with these simple rules will help you stay in the HCV (Section 8) Program and help the program run fairly and honestly. Not following these rules could result in referral of the matter for investigation, termination of your assistance, and you being accused of a federal crime.

We review your income, assets, expenses, and household composition annually to make sure that you are paying the proper rent to your landlord and that you have been issued the appropriate voucher size for your household composition. When we ask for this information be sure to:

1. Let us know about all income received by members of your household and income that you expect to receive in the next year. Remember to include income from second jobs, overtime, part-time jobs, social security, MFIP, General Assistance and income received for child support.
2. Let us know the names of everyone expected to live in your household in the next year. You must report anyone moving in, or out, of your household within ten days. You must get prior approval to add members to your household. You must request to add members to your household in writing.

Your rent payment to your landlord must not be more than the amount in your lease that we calculated at the time of our review. If you are now paying (or if your landlord asks for) any money in addition to this payment, please report this to us at once. We will determine if these extra payments are permissible. Exceptions would be for pet fees, charges for the garage or parking space (the CDA does not assist with these additional expenses).

It is very important that you report all income, assets, and expenses in your household and any changes in the number of people living with you. You are obligated to notify the CDA within ten days of any change. The CDA must approve any additions to your assisted household. We urge you to be sure that you are meeting these responsibilities so that you will continue to receive assistance.

If you know of any cases of fraud by landlords, other families, or if you have any questions on this subject, please call, or write the Dakota County CDA at 1228 Town Centre Drive, Eagan, MN 55123, 651-675-4400. If you know of any cases of fraud by CDA employees, write the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Minnesota Office, 220 South Second Street, Minneapolis, MN 55401 Attention: Portfolio Management Specialist or call (612) 370-3072.

INFORMAL HEARING PROCEDURES

The Dakota County CDA will give program participants an opportunity for an informal hearing to consider whether decisions relating to the individual circumstances of the family are in accordance with law, HUD regulations, and CDA rules, in the following cases:

A determination of the computation of the amount of housing assistance payment for the family;

A decision to deny or terminate assistance on behalf of the participant;

A determination of the number of bedrooms entered on the certificate/voucher under the CDA standards for a family who wants to move to another dwelling with continued participating in the program.

Written notice of these determinations by the CDA will state that if the participant does not agree with the decision, they may request an informal hearing on the decision within 10 days of the date of mailing.

The guidelines for the informal hearing include:

The hearing may be conducted by any person designated by the CDA other than a person who made or approved the decision under review or a subordinate of such person.

At their own expense, the participant may be represented by a lawyer or other representative.

The CDA and the participant shall be given the opportunity to present evidence and may question any witnesses. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules and evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

Participants will be given the opportunity to examine before the CDA hearing any CDA documents that are directly relevant to the hearing. The participant will be allowed to copy any such document at their expense. If the CDA does not make the document available for examination on request of the participant, the CDA may not rely on the document at the hearing.

The CDA will be given the opportunity to examine any documents that the Participant intends to submit at the hearing before the hearing and will be permitted to copy such documents at its own expense. If the Participant does not make any document available for examination by the CDA, the Participant may not rely on the document in the hearing.

If the participant does not attend a hearing or is more than (15) minutes late, the right to review by a hearing officer is forfeited. Only ONE opportunity will be provided for a participant to attend an informal hearing.

The person who conducts the hearing shall issue a written decision stating briefly the reasons for the decision. Factual determinations relating to the individual circumstances of the participant shall be based on evidence presented at the hearing. A copy of the hearing decision shall be furnished promptly to the participant.

The CDA is not bound by a hearing decision:

Concerning a matter for which the CDA is not required to provide an opportunity for an informal hearing or otherwise in excess of the authority of the person conducting the hearing under the CDA hearing procedures, or contrary to HUD regulations or requirements or otherwise contrary to Federal, State or local law.

If the CDA determines that it is not bound by a hearing decision, the CDA will promptly notify the participant of the determination and of the reasons for the determination.

NOTICE OF PLANS TO MOVE

TO: Dakota County CDA, Housing Assistance Department (Section 8)

FROM:

Name

Date

FAMILY ID# _____

ADDRESS: _____

Street, Apt. No.

City, State, Zip

I am planning to move on _____ and want to
(Moving Date)

transfer the housing assistance to my new address. I know that I must give the CDA a minimum of a proper **60 plus one day notice** of my plans to move. I must also give my landlord the required notice as stated in my lease. I understand I must have my landlord sign a mutual termination form to ensure that I am vacating in good standing. I have given a proper notice to my landlord, I have not damaged the unit beyond normal wear and tear, and I do not owe any money to my landlord for unpaid rent or other fees.

I understand that I may not be allowed to move with housing assistance if I owe any money to the CDA. If my voucher is from a housing authority other than the CDA I understand my original housing authority will approve or deny my request to move. I understand if I am moving more than once in a twelve-month period, I will have a delay in my housing assistance payments. I understand if I have not given proper notice, I will have a delay in the housing assistance payments made on my behalf.

When the CDA receives this notice, a CDA representative will review my file. If I do not owe the CDA money for an outstanding debt and my original housing authority allows me to move, a CDA representative will notify you of next steps. I will receive an application to complete, a Tenant Certification and voucher to read, sign and date, and an RTA for my new landlord to complete. I must return the RTA form to the CDA by the 15th of the month for rental assistance to begin on the 1st of the following month.

I have made a copy of this for my records.

Signed

Date

Telephone Number

REASONS YOU COULD LOSE YOUR HOUSING BENEFITS

The Dakota County CDA wants you to be successful in keeping your voucher. Please remember the most common reasons that participants lose their benefits:

- Skipping out on the lease (vacating without a proper notice to the CDA and the landlord).
- Eviction for a lease violation. The landlord takes you to court and wins an action against you.
- Failing to report all people who are living in the assisted unit.
- Failing to report all income for all household members in the assisted unit.
- Failing to attend scheduled appointments at the CDA office and with the CDA inspector.
- Failing to supply information needed by CDA staff that is required to calculate your proper rent amount.
- Failing to provide true and complete information when completing the CDA paperwork.
- Failing to cooperate with the inspection.
- Having household members on your application who are assisted on another person's assisted household.
- Participation in illegal drug related or violent criminal activity. (This includes all members and visitors to your home.)
- Conducting your self in a manner that is threatening or abusive to CDA personnel.