



NEWS-8-LETTER

A Publication by
Section 8—Housing Choice Voucher Program
Department of Health & Social Services

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2009

Manager's Corner



We hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season. If you had the opportunity to visit our office in December you would have observed that our staff was certainly in the spirit. Decorations were placed throughout the office to compliment our terrific Christmas Tree and a contest was held for the best decorated office cubicle. The Section 8 program made great strides in the 2008 program year and staff is excited about what the New Year is certain to bring. Among the highlights for 2008 was the move to our new office location, addition of key personnel to our team, outsourcing our inspectional services, attaining high marks on our HUD monitoring visit, and the ability to house 70 families afflicted by domestic violence. In total 2,004 unduplicated families were housed by the Section 8 Program and 100 families are currently participating in our Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Further development of our Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program was also a concentration of 2008 and the program is now poised to assist our participants who choose to move from rental assistance to Section 8 homeownership assistance. We are aware that there are many citizens in our community who lack housing or whose housing conditions are unsafe. The New Year will bring new challenges and opportunities to meet the increasing demand for safe, decent and affordable housing for the citizens of our County. The staff of the County's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is eager to serve our citizens and committed to increasing the number of families that can be assisted from our annual allocation provided by U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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Section 8's Housing Appreciation Poster Contest - "Home Sweet Home"



The County's Section 8 Program is conducting a Poster Contest themed "Home Sweet Home" for program participants ages 6-11 years old. Prizes will be awarded to children of participating households for the top three posting depicting appreciation for the housing service provided by our program. The contest will run through March 31, 2009. Posters must be no bigger than 22 x 28 inches and must be original artwork using markers, paints, crayons, or colored pencils. The posters can be delivered or mailed to the Section 8 office.

U.S. Contracting, Inc. Performs County's Section 8 Inspections



Hillsborough County has out-sourced Section 8 inspectional services in contracting with U.S. Contracting, Inc. The company is well qualified, experienced and has met the vendor bid requirements for this service. U.S. Contracting inspectors are certified and the company has Section 8 housing agency customers in more than 15 states. As an authorized vendor, Inspection appointment letters will soon be issued directly from the company office on their letterhead and re-inspections will be scheduled at the time of inspection where failed items are cited. For more information please contact Deborah Singh, our Inspections Liaison and primary contact source with U.S. Contracting Inc. Deborah can assist with any matters or concerns that you may have regarding Section 8 inspections. She can be reached at (813) 903-3400 x 216.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

You are cordially invited to attend our next Landlord 101 Training Program for all participating landlords and/or landlords interested in participating in the County's Section 8 program.

Wednesday, February 11, 2 p.m.
Section 8 Office
3620 W. Humphrey St. Tampa, FL 33614

For more information or reserve your space:
Sherry Hanson @ 813-903-3400



Section 8 Property Listings



Landlords can list their properties available for the County's Section 8 Program on-line at www.GoSection8.com. The process only takes a few minutes and your listing will be added immediately for FREE. Don't have a computer? Then call the toll free number (866) 466-SEC8 and follow the automated instructions to list your property by fax or mail. Section 8 clients can visit the website to assist them with selecting a suitable housing unit for their families.

Section 8 Staff Profile

ANGELO GARCIA, SYSTEMS COORDINATOR

Angelo Garcia has recently joined the team Section 8 Program as a Systems Coordinator. Angelo has been employed as a Systems Coordinator with Hillsborough County since 1999. Angelo has received his Computer Programming Certification from Albert Merrill School in New York City and he has completed two years in Borough of Manhattan Community College as a Computer Science major and Accounting. In addition he is Certified by the Braxton School of Puerto Rico in Computerized Accounting Principals and is bi-lingual in Spanish & English. Prior to his employment with Section 8 Angelo worked for our Aging Services Department and also at the Tampa Police Department.

EDDA HOPKINS, ACCOUNTANT I

Ms. Hopkins has over 20 years in the accounting field. She has proven to be a vital asset as the Accountant of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Edda received her MBA in Management from Golden Gate University in San Francisco, California; her BA in Business Administration from Inter-American University in San Juan, Puerto Rico; and holds an H&R Block Broker License from NASDA, Series 6 and 63. Edda began a career in the military as an Officer in the United States Air Force serving as a "Trouble-Shooter" and problem solver in the information, cost-management consulting field. Edda was previously employed as an Accountant for a bank and an auditor for a hospital in Honolulu, Hawaii where she then began teaching college accounting courses. She is also bi-lingual in Spanish & English.

Before You Rent/When You Decide to Move Out...



Walk through the premises to identify any problems that should be fixed BEFORE you rent/move out. Take pictures, video or make notes of any questionable conditions and include provisions for repairs in the rental agreement or in a separate written document signed by both parties.

Before renting a dwelling, be sure the rental agreement covers ALL the issues addressed in your walk-through. Before you sign a lease, make sure you thoroughly understand the terms of the agreement. If you DON'T understand, DON'T sign the rental agreement. There is no grace period allowed for canceling rental agreements, so if you sign, you are bound to the agreement.

Should you decide to move, don't forget to give the required notice as stated in your rental agreement. Be sure to check your rental agreement for any other specified conditions.

When you move from a rental unit – no matter the duration – be sure to settle all accounts. Terminate utility service the day you leave, notify the landlord and Section 8, in writing, the post office and others of your address change and make other arrangements to minimize inconvenience to the landlord or the new tenants that will occupy your former unit.

One of the most important responsibilities as a tenant is to leave the premises in a clean condition for the next occupant. Be sure to vacuum, sweep, clean all rooms, cabinets and appliances, as well as other areas specified in the terms and conditions of the rental agreement. Take a last walk-through with the landlord. Note any damages in writing, take pictures to include the date and reach a final agreement.

