



RentSense

What to Expect from Your Annual Recertification Process



Each year on the Section 8 Rental Assistance program, there are several processes that occur to ensure that IHFA is in compliance with the regulations

established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Approximately three months before the anniversary of the month in which you became a participant, you will receive a letter from IHFA informing you of the date and time of both your office appointment to re-verify your income (and to sign pertinent forms) and of the date and time of your Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection.

The HQS inspection is the first thing to be done and an adult member of the household or the landlord must be present at the unit when the IHFA inspector arrives.

The annual or recertification office appointment comes next. IHFA must re-verify your income and allowances to ensure you are paying the correct portion of the rent. Once you have brought in verifications of your family's current income, IHFA's housing specialists calculate your portion of the rent and the amount IHFA will pay on your behalf. After that you receive a notice of the amount of the rent change and the effective date for that change. The annual process is also performed to remind you of your responsibilities on the program and inform you of your rights as a participant, and provides the opportunity to ask questions if you have them.

These processes begin far in advance of your anniversary date to ensure that any unit repairs that need to be made are done and that any paperwork necessary can be completed and returned in time.

Ensuring Continued Assistance from IHFA and Your Status as a Responsible Renter

Moving can be an exhausting and expensive endeavor. Apart from the physical and financial issues associated with the process, there are certain steps you must take in order to move without jeopardizing your rental assistance.

Be sure to give your landlord at least 30-day written notice that you are going to move.

Moving without giving notice to the landlord (and receiving approval from your housing specialist at IHFA) can be cause for termination of your assistance. This will give you time to clean the unit and get everything in order before you complete the move.

Get approval from IHFA to move. You must provide a copy of the notice to move to your IHFA housing specialist and be approved to move with assistance. If you are approved, your current income must be re-verified in most instances and you (and all adult household members) must sign pertinent forms and attend a briefing to receive a voucher to move.

Make sure you are current on your portion of the rent and utilities. One of the most basic responsibilities of all renters is to pay their rent and utilities. Failure to do this can result in receiving an unfavorable referral from previous landlords, but more importantly, can result in termination of your assistance.

Be sure to clean your apartment and leave it in the same condition it was when you first rented it (less normal wear and tear). You need to remove all items from the refrigerator and clean all the appliances provided with the unit. You should clean the bathrooms and remove all furniture and personal belongings from the unit. In addition, you should repair all holes and other damages done by your family members or guests and replace any missing parts from items that were included in your unit as a part of your lease agreement.

Finally, you should conduct a move-out inspection with your landlord. Walk through the unit with your landlord or property manager to see what needs to be done to ensure the full return of

your security deposit. Inspecting the unit once you finish cleaning is an important step in ending the landlord-tenant relationship. Both parties should be present during the inspection so they can agree on what is damaged and what is in need of repair or further cleaning. All observations should be documented and, if possible, photographed or videoed. The Rental Move-In/Move-Out Inspection



Checklist in Appendix D of the "Landlord and Tenant Guidelines" provided by the Idaho Office of the Attorney General (www.ag.idaho.gov) can be helpful for the move-out inspection. If both parties cannot inspect the property together, you should document, photograph and/or videotape the rental. Having an additional individual present during the inspection may also be useful if the tenant needs a witness to testify at a hearing to recover the security deposit. When the lease ends, the landlord has 21 days to return your entire deposit or a lesser amount with a written statement listing the deductions from the deposit and how the deductions were spent.

Following the steps listed above demonstrates that you are both a responsible renter and you are also abiding by the rules and regulations of the Section 8 Rental Assistance program and will continue to receive rental assistance for you and your family.



Lori, a former a Section 8 Participant, purchased her own home with the help of the FSS program.

RentSense for Section 8 Participants

Published annually by the Idaho Housing and Finance Association. Comments are welcome. Please contact IHFA Rental Assistance at 1-800-219-2286. Visit our Web site at www.ihfa.org.

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ProgramSense

Feeling the Pinch of Tough Times?

Today's headlines seem to be filled with bad news about the economy, but one program is helping families meet their employment goals and become free of welfare. The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program is an asset-building program designed to help IHFA Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher participants transition into a life of economic self-sufficiency.

Many families choose the FSS program because there is no risk. Participation in the FSS program is voluntary and there is no penalty for trying. It never affects your housing assistance in any way. Once you choose to participate in the FSS program you begin working with your case manager who will help enhance your employment skills so you can secure

better paying jobs and benefits and who will help you develop a plan for your success. In most cases, when your earned income increases and it results in an increase in your portion of rent, deposits start to accumulate into the FSS escrow savings account. It's that simple!

In 2011, 30 families graduated from the FSS program and nine purchased homes. One graduate said, "This program changed my life forever. Not only will I be a homeowner in two weeks, but the skills in managing my money will help me succeed like I never could before." How can you become one of these successful graduates? Contact the FSS Specialist in your local IHFA branch office.

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Lead-Based Paint is Hazardous for Children and Pregnant Women

interior or exterior paint (or any other coating) that is peeling, chipping or chalking both inside and outside the unit. Included are fences, detached buildings on the property, playground equipment and any common areas through which children pass. Any defective paint surfaces must be repaired and if the inspection reveals defective paint surfaces that exceed a certain level there are other, more stringent, requirements (such as abatement) that are imposed. If no deteriorated paint is present during the inspection, these requirements do not apply.

For more information on lead-based paint, read the brochure "Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home" provided in the briefing packet or available through your local IHFA branch office.

SafetySense

Did you know that many homes built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint? Both inside and outside the home, deteriorated lead-paint (paint that is chipped, peeling, flaking, etc.) mixes with household dust and soil and becomes a hazard for children and pregnant women. Children may become lead poisoned by putting their hands or other lead-contaminated objects in their mouths, eating paint chips or playing in lead-contaminated soil. Lead is a highly toxic metal that may cause a range of health problems, especially in young children.

For the Section 8 Rental Assistance program, HUD lead-based paint regulations require that if there is a child under six in the unit and the unit is built prior to 1978, landlords must take steps to correct any

QuickTips

You May be eligible to Receive a Refund through the Earned Income Tax Credit

If you have income from employment or self-employment and file a tax return, don't forget about the earned income tax credit (EITC). This is a credit for certain people who work and have low wages and reduces the amount of tax you owe. It may also entitle you to a refund! Among some of the requirements to claim this credit, you (and your spouse if you file a joint return) must have a valid Social Security number and you must be a U.S. Citizen or a Resident Alien. For more information about the EITC, visit the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website at www.irs.gov/eflc or contact your local IRS office to ask questions or to obtain a copy of the IRS Publication 596, "Earned Income Credit."



Lead paint can be found in residences built prior to 1978.