



RentSense

Honor Program

As an administrator of the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher program, Idaho Housing recognizes that although the VASH program provides a voucher for housing, veterans still face rental barriers. Because of this, Idaho Housing works with the Home Partnership Foundation, which created the Honor Program to meet the needs of VASH voucher participants to provide money to help veterans pay their rental or utility deposits.

The Honor Program acts like a revolving loan fund since the Foundation pays the deposit directly to the landlord. Landlords are asked to repay the deposits to the Foundation once the veteran moves out so that the funds can be used again to help other veterans. To qualify for the program, veterans that participate in the VASH program can contact the VA medical centers in Coeur d'Alene, Twin Falls and Walla Walla, Wash., and are referred to Idaho Housing to apply for assistance from the Honor Program.

Veterans Affairs Assistance

Veterans Affairs offices promote a continuum of care to homeless veterans by offering other programs and services. To overcome barriers such as low income and disabilities, the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers may provide temporary financial assistance for security and utility deposits, moving costs, emergency supplies, child care and transportation before placement in permanent housing.

For more information on the SSVF program, visit www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

Help Available for Homeless Veterans



On any given night, there are almost 50,000 homeless veterans, according to the National

Coalition for Homeless Veterans. In Idaho, 14 percent of the state's homeless are veterans, according to the 2014 Point in Time Count.

Thanks to a unique collaboration between Idaho Housing and Finance Association, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), homeless veterans in Idaho and throughout the nation have help to find safe, stable housing and other support.

The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program combines HUD rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services through VA medical centers. The program, which started in 1992 with 1,750 vouchers nationwide, was expanded in 2008 to provide more than 10,000 vouchers over the next two years. Idaho Housing initially received voucher funding to establish the program in Twin Falls and Coeur d'Alene and recently received funding for several more vouchers to make the program available in the Lewiston area. VASH participants are referred to Idaho Housing branch offices from the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMCs), which provide ongoing case-management services.

The VAMCs are responsible for:

- Screening homeless veterans to determine eligibility.
- Providing appropriate treatment and supportive services.
- Providing housing search assistance.
- Identifying the social service and medical needs of participants.
- Providing regular ongoing case management, outpatient health services, hospitalization and other supportive services as needed.
- Maintaining records as required by HUD and the VA.



Idaho Housing provides the rental assistance vouchers for VASH, which follows regulations similar to the Housing Choice Voucher program. After receiving a referral, Idaho Housing reviews the income eligibility of the veteran and his family. Veterans pay a portion of their monthly rent, which is approximately 30-40 percent of their adjusted gross monthly income, directly to the landlord. Veterans are responsible for paying the security deposit and other fees, though there are other sources to help with those costs. (Please see the story on the left.)



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Published annually by Idaho Housing and Finance Association. Comments are welcome. Please contact IHFA Rental Assistance at 800.219.2286. Visit our website at idahohousing.com.

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Get current information and sign up for our landlord email list by clicking the link under "Rental Assistance" at idahohousing.com.

ProgramSense

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections are required to be performed for participants in rental assistance programs. The purpose of the inspections is to ensure the unit is maintained in accordance with the primary goal of the Housing Choice Voucher program—to provide "decent, safe, and sanitary" housing. This is accomplished through 13 key aspects of the HQS inspection outlined by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations. These key aspects dictate the criteria for sanitary facilities, food preparation and refuse disposal, space and security, lead-based paint, and other areas.

Assisted units must maintain the Housing Quality Standards throughout the entire tenancy. The inspection report maintained by Idaho Housing for each rental unit documents the compliance with the HQS standards.

What to Expect from Your Housing Quality Standards Inspection

Idaho Housing must notify you of the items that fail an inspection and provide you with a timeline for repair of those items.

Failure to maintain the HQS standards per the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract typically results in cessation of payments until the repairs are made. When the repairs have been documented by an Idaho Housing inspector payments can be reinstated.

HQS inspections are not done to document living standards or damages done to the unit and are not a condition report. As a landlord, it is your responsibility to document and assess the condition of the unit and damages to your rental and act accordingly in compliance with the lease agreement between you and your tenant.

ResourceSense

As a landlord who participates in the Housing Choice Voucher program, you may not be aware of resources available to help you fully understand the program and its requirements.

The HUD Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract and the lease addendum that are required to be attached to your lease are your most binding documents and should be fully read and understood before agreeing to rent to a voucher-holder. In addition, Idaho Housing's website has an informative video titled "Section 8 Landlord Orientation" that explains the program and helps answer questions that you may have.

To watch the video, go to idahohousing.com, click on the "Rental Assistance" link on the right side of the page, then click "Resources for Landlords." The landlord

Landlord Resource Available Online

page also has information about Idaho Housing's direct-deposit policy and a section to ask questions or make suggestions. IHFA is working on expanding the website in the future.

As always, you can contact your local branch office in Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, Coeur d'Alene, and Lewiston to answer your questions or send you a packet of information to familiarize you with other aspects of the Section 8 program, such as the requirement to provide Idaho Housing with any notices that you serve to your tenants.

Helping you understand your responsibilities on the Section 8 program helps Idaho Housing ensure a good working relationship with our landlord partners and makes possible ongoing rental assistance for your tenants.



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