

HQS Inspection Checklist

Each unit rented to a Section 8 Voucher holder must pass a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection. The checklist below is a tool for tenants and owners to prepare their unit for an HQS inspection. This checklist highlights some of the COMMON violations found during unit inspections. This is not a complete list of things that will be checked.

- Utilities (water, gas, electric) must be turned on for the completion of the inspection.
- No chipping or peeling paint inside or outside the unit.
- Stove must be clean and in working order and secured.
- Refrigerator must be clean and be in working order with a good door seal.
- There must be a permanently installed working heating system.
- Hot and cold running water in the kitchen and bathroom(s).
- There must be a shower or bathtub that works.
- There must be a flush toilet that works, is securely mounted and does not leak.
- The bathroom must have either an outside window or an exhaust fan vented to the outside.
- There must not be any plumbing leaks.
- There must not be any plugged drains (check for slow drains).
- All plumbing fixtures must have P-traps to prevent sewer gas from leaking into the unit.
- All ground floor windows and exterior doors shall open and close as designed and must have working locks. Doubled keyed dead bolts are not permitted.
- Each living space must have two means of fire egress (i.e. door & window)
- All electrical outlets/switches must have cover plates and be in good working condition.
- All ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) must work properly.
- There must not be any missing, broken, or cracked windows.
- The roof must not leak. Indications of a leak are discolorations or stains on the ceiling.
- The hot water heater tank must have a temperature pressure relief valve with downward discharge pipe made of galvanized steel or copper tubing that is between six inches to eight inches from the floor or directed outside the unit (no PVC). CPVC is acceptable.
- The floor covering cannot be torn or have holes that can cause someone to trip.
- If there are stairs and railings, they must be secure.
- Four or more exterior stairs must have handrails 34 inches to 38 inches from the ground.
- Walk offs or porches 30 inches above grade must have guard rails 36 inches from the ground.
- There must be working smoke detectors properly mounted on each level of the unit**
- All sliding glass doors must have a lock or security bar on the door that works.
- All construction/rehabilitation (painting, carpet replacement, etc.) must be completed.
- The unit must be free from roaches or rodents.

This brief listing is for the purposes of information only is not intended as a completed listing. Check HUD and local codes for other requirements.

St. Joseph County Housing Authority

107 W. Center St., P.O. Box 425, North Liberty, IN 46554

Ph: 574-656-3545 // Fax: 574-804-1005

mail.sjcha@gmail.com

Ingrid Reese, Executive Director

Dear Landlord:

Please take the time to screen all your prospective tenants, as the Housing Authority only screens for verification of income eligibility.

If, after careful consideration, you decide you wish to rent to this applicant, please do the following:

1. You and the applicant complete and sign the Request for Tenancy Approval.
2. Complete and sign the Landlord Verification Form.
3. Complete and sign the Landlord Certification Form.
4. Submit a copy of driver's license
5. Complete and sign the Background Check Form
6. Use the move-in checklist to determine if the unit is ready.
7. Attached a copy of your lease for approval.
8. Return all signed documents to the Section 8 office,

St. Joseph County Housing Authority
PO Box 425, North Liberty, IN 46545
email: mail@sjcha-in.com

Once we have received the signed documents, a rent reasonableness comparison and verification of ownership will be done. If both are approved, our inspector will contact you to schedule an inspection.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 574-656-3545.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Reese
Executive Director
Saint Joseph County Housing Authority

LANDLORD INFORMATION

Section 8 Rental Assistance

St. Joseph County
Housing Authority

PO BOX 425
107 W CENTER ST
NORTH LIBERTY, IN 46545
574-656-3545



HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing to very low-income families in St. Joseph County and to be an advocate for support programs that enhance the quality of life of those we serve.

Please direct your questions regarding the Rental Assistance Program to the Section 8 Office at 574-656-3545

The Section 8 Waiting List is currently closed until further notice.

The jurisdiction of the SJC Housing Authority is the rural area of St. Joseph County, IN. – Walkerton, North Liberty, New Carlisle, Lakeville, Osceola, Roseland, and other rural areas in the county with five digit street addresses.

WHAT IS SECTION 8?

The Section 8 program provides assistance for low income families in the private rental market through the Housing Assistance Payments Program. Funds to operate the Program are provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

RENTAL VOUCHER HOLDERS select a unit from the private rental market. Program participants normally pay between 30% and 40% of their monthly adjusted income towards rent and utilities. The Housing Assistance Payment subsidizes the balance of the rent to the property owner.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MY UNIT TO BE RENTED TO AN ASSISTED FAMILY?

The unit must meet HUD Housing Quality Standards and the rent must be approvable within HUD Fair Market Rents and market rate comparable (copy of HQS is available).

HOW DO I MAKE A UNIT AVAILABLE TO VOUCHER HOLDERS?

You may call the Housing Authority to have the unit listed on our list of available units. You may also advertise in the newspaper or South Bend Tribune with the phrase “will accept Section 8.” Our families look for those listings.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A LANDLORD?

1. Maintain your property in good condition. Repairs must be completed within a reasonable amount of time upon request by the Housing Authority or the tenant. Emergency repairs must be completed within 24 hours of notice to landlord.
2. A landlord needs to set reasonable rules about the use of the unit and common areas.
3. A landlord does not enter a unit without a tenant’s permission and proper notice (usually 24 hour notice) except for emergencies or tenant requested repairs.
4. A landlord collects appropriate security deposit as directed under the program requirements and uses it only as directed by state law.
5. A landlord must comply with equal opportunity requirements.
6. A landlord enforces tenant obligations under the lease.
7. A landlord should expect the tenant to:
 - Pay rent on time
 - Keep unit clean
 - Avoid illegal activity
 - Permit access for repairs
 - Avoid damage to the property
 - Refrain from disturbing others
 - Allow only those occupants on the lease to reside in the unit
8. Complies with terms and conditions of the lease and HAP Contract.
9. Takes action through Court to evict when tenant violates the lease.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN A VOUCHER HOLDER IS INTERESTED IN MY UNIT?

LANDLORD SCREENS TENANTS

You must screen the prospective tenant carefully to insure you are making a good selection. When one of our families contacts you, we can only certify to you their income eligibility for the program. We cannot provide a reference as to their expected behavior as tenants. You may use any or all of the following screening procedures:

Credit Checks Landlord References
Criminal Checks Home Visits

We encourage all of the above screening methods as long as you do not discriminate. Discrimination includes any tenant selection based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap or familial status. The prohibition against discrimination based on familiar status makes it illegal, in most circumstances, to refuse to allow children to live in a residential unit.

REQUEST FOR TENANT APPROVAL

When you have selected a tenant, he/she will have a "Request for Tenancy Approval" form for you to complete. When you or the tenant submits the form to our office, you will need to contact the Section 8 Inspector for an inspection appointment.

UNIT INSPECTION

The unit will be inspected to insure that it meets HUD Housing Quality Standards. If the unit fails, a letter will be sent stating the needed repairs.

LEASE AND CONTRACT

After the unit passes inspection and the rent has been approved by the HA, the landlord and tenant enter into a lease for an initial term of one year. The lease must meet the approval of the Housing Authority and include HUD lease requirements including the VAWA addendum and HUD tenancy addendum. The Housing Authority and the landlord sign a Housing Assistance Payments Contract (HAP) through which the rent is assisted on behalf of the tenant.

SECURITY DEPOSIT

You may collect a security deposit from the tenant. The Housing Authority prohibits security deposits in excess of private practice, or in excess of amounts charged by the owner to unassisted tenants.

WHAT IS THE TERM OF THE LEASE

After one year, the lease is renewed for a specified time period, (ex., month-to-month, six months, one year, etc.). The tenant may vacate with a 30 or 60 day written notice after the term of the lease expiration. If the tenant remains in the unit, the tenant is re-certified for eligibility and the unit is inspected for Housing Quality Standards annually. After one year, the landlord may request a rent increase that must be approved by the Housing Authority for reasonable rent. This request must be submitted in writing to the tenant and the Housing Authority **60 days** prior to renewal.