



LANDLORD & PROPERTY OWNER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CONNECTION (SHC)?

The SHC is a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJ DHS) and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJ DCA) to administer NJ DHS rental subsidies and connect its clients to quality housing opportunities across the state.

Additionally, the SHC conducts inspections of participating housing units to ensure their physical integrity and compliance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Quality Standards. The SHC also provides resident inquiry resolution services for tenants and landlords, as needed.

The goal of the SHC is to provide access to affordable housing for New Jersey residents with special needs by consolidating NJ DHS's rental subsidy resources into one location for convenient and efficient management.

HOW LANDLORDS ARE AFFECTED BY THE SHC

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SHC?

1. The institution of regular monthly payments, as long as the unit is occupied by program participants, and;
2. The ability to market available units (via the New Jersey Housing Resource Center [NJHRC.gov]) to a broader pool of tenants with housing subsidies and supportive services to help them live in stable and independent housing.

HOW ARE CONTRACT RENTS DETERMINED?

Landlords determine the contract rents per unit. Rents charged to tenants receiving subsidies from NJ DHS may not exceed those listed in the NJ DHS Subsidy Program Rent Schedule, and must be the same as rents charged to other tenants in comparable units who are not receiving NJ DHS subsidies.

WHAT IS THE LEASING PROCESS?

If a tenant is interested in renting your unit, the SHC will conduct a unit inspection to HUD Housing Quality Standards. If the unit passes inspection, the SHC will request that you sign a HAP Agreement, SHC Addendum, and W9. Then you can execute the lease. The tenant will provide the lease to the SHC, and staff will let you know what the subsidy and tenant contributions to rent will be.

WHAT IS IN THE HAP AGREEMENT AND SHC ADDENDUM AND WHY DO I HAVE TO SIGN THEM?

The HAP Agreement and SHC Addendum are documents that authorize the SHC to collect information including household members' names, unit address, and landlord's name and payment information. The Agreements also details the landlord's rights and responsibilities associated with accepting a tenant with NJ DHS rental subsidies. Collection of this information and the signed document is mandatory.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT HUD HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS?

You can learn more about HUD Housing Quality standards here: <http://goo.gl/1vVRfn>. This is the standard inspection criteria applied to other rental programs throughout the country.

AFTER TENANT MOVES IN

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I DON'T RECEIVE MY RENTAL SUBSIDY PAYMENT OR IF IT'S AN INCORRECT AMOUNT?

Contact the Supportive Housing Connection toll-free at 1-844-216-6988 or send an email to SHC-CustomerService@dca.nj.gov to reach a staff member who will assist you.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF THE TENANT IS NOT PAYING HIS PORTION OF THE RENT?

First, you should contact the tenant, preferably in writing, with a copy to the SHC. If the tenant authorizes you to do so, you also may contact the tenant's support services provider. Non-payment of rent is a lease violation and you are responsible for enforcing the lease. If payment is not forthcoming after several attempts, you should contact the SHC Support Team, immediately.

AM I ABLE TO EVICT A TENANT FOR NON-PAYMENT OF RENT?

Yes, as long as you follow all state and local laws and copy the SHC on all notices. We expect that you will not initiate actions to evict without first contacting the SHC Support Team for assistance.

CAN A TENANT MOVE OUT DURING A LEASE TERM?

A tenant should not move during the initial term of the lease, but there are certain circumstances that require a move. A tenant should read their lease carefully and abide by the provisions contained in the document. Tenants must contact the SHC before planning a move.

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WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE TENANT CAUSES PROBLEMS, I.E. COMMITS LEASE VIOLATIONS OTHER THAN NON-PAYMENT OF RENT?

It is your responsibility to enforce the lease. You first must contact the tenant to advise him/her of the lease violation and give him/her time to correct the situation, in accordance with NJ law. Send a copy of that notice to the SHC and immediately contact the SHC for assistance.

As with any other tenants in the building, DHS clients have all of the same rights and responsibilities under the lease agreement.

HOW DO I KNOW WHO TO CONTACT FOR SUPPORT AT THE SHC?

Please feel free to contact the SHC toll-free at 1-844-216-6988 or email SHC-CustomerService@dca.nj.gov to reach a staff member who will assist you.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DON'T WANT TO RENEW A TENANT'S LEASE AFTER THE FIRST YEAR?

At the end of the lease period, you may give notice of lease termination to your tenant for good cause in accordance with NJ law. You must give the tenant written notice of intention to terminate the lease, the grounds for the termination, and must give a copy to the SHC.

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO MAKE REPAIRS IF A UNIT DOESN'T PASS THE ANNUAL INSPECTION?

After a failed annual inspection we will send you a letter scheduling a re-inspection 30 days from the date of the failed inspection. If the re-inspection fails, the rental subsidy payment will be abated, effective the first day of the month following the fail date. You may request a third inspection, but should keep in mind that the rent will continue to be abated until the unit passes inspection. If the unit does not pass due to tenant-caused damage, the rent will not be abated.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A UNIT DOESN'T PASS INSPECTION BUT THE FAIL ITEMS ARE THE TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITY?

It is your responsibility to ensure that the unit passes the inspection to housing quality standards. You have remedies available through you through the lease, if you want to pursue them. If you have any questions, please contact the SHC.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE IF A TENANT DOESN'T PAY UTILITIES FOR WHICH S/HE IS RESPONSIBLE?

The tenant is responsible. Should this occur, please notify the SHC. The SHC Support Team may be able to assist the tenant.

WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TENANT-CAUSED DAMAGE TO MY PROPERTY THAT EXCEEDS THE AMOUNT OF THE SECURITY DEPOSIT TO REPAIR?

In accordance with NJ law, landlords have the right to pursue former tenants through the court system for damages beyond what is covered by the security deposit.

HOW AND WHEN CAN I REQUEST A RENT INCREASE?

Rent increases may be requested only at the annual anniversary of the lease by submitting a written rent increase request. Contact the SHC for the appropriate form which must be submitted at least 60 days in advance of the lease anniversary date in order for the new rent to become effective on the anniversary date. Requests that do not meet the 60 day advance deadline will not be made effective until 60 days after receipt. Please note that subsidy increases are at NJDHS' sole discretion, based upon annual appropriations, and that rents always must stay within NJDHS' rent schedules.

WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORTS ARE PROVIDED TO TENANTS?

All SHC tenants receive individualized supports from support services providers of their choosing, which may include transportation, workforce training, among others that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized by NJDHS. The types of supports and frequency of face-to-face visits is determined by the needs of the tenants. Tenants are given supports that are necessary to assist with: making sure rent is paid on time, ensuring the tenant does not engage in behaviors that constitute a lease violation, and maintaining the unit.