

PENDER LANDLORD LINK

Information for Landlords Working with the Housing Choice Voucher Program



Compliance Corner: When Water Service Replaces a Well

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Public water service is coming to many areas of Pender County in the next few years. If you choose to change over your rental property from well water to public water, be prepared to do a new lease.

Depending on how your current lease is written, you probably cannot make your tenant responsible for the water bill without writing a new lease. If your lease says the tenant is responsible for electric service only or that does not discuss how water service is provided, then you, the landlord, are responsible for water costs.

Changes in utility responsibility may seem like a "no-brainer", but that isn't the case. Your lease, one that may have been written years ago, is still the governing document in terms of utilities and you cannot make the tenant responsible for a new water bill from newly connected public

water service without either amending the current lease or writing a new lease...both of which require our approval.

Every time a new lease is written, a new Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract is required. Both contracts work together. If you write a new lease but do not sign a new HAP Contract, then we are not permitted to pay you.

Any change in basic terms, such as responsibility for utilities, requires a written amendment or a new lease. Remember to work with us, your business partner, before making changes that could cause a loss of rental assistance payments to you.

Questions? Changes? Call us for help!

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Quality Assurance Inspection Notice

The Housing Director will conduct Quality Assurance inspections quarterly as part of our required inspection and reporting process for HUD. Do not be surprised if your unit gets chosen for a QA inspection soon after its regular annual inspection or a recent move-in inspection.

We will send notices to tenants and landlords for those properties that are chosen for the QA inspection.

Communication: Direct and Timely Communication is Best

Did you ever play the password game as a kid? If so, then you know that what you tell someone and what they hear you say may not be the same thing. By the time the word or phrase you spoke got to the last person in line, it often did not even sound like the word or phrase that you whispered in the ear of the person beside you.

That is why direct and timely communication between you and the Housing Authority is best. Tenants are usually not reliable translators of your meaning or intent. So, be wise and do not send messages to the Housing Authority through your tenants.

We are in a relationship with you too and you should be communicating your needs, concerns, changes and questions to us directly and timely.

If you did not receive an assistance payment and did not receive a letter from us telling you it would be stopped, then we should be your first call.

If you are having an issue with an assisted tenant, always send us a courtesy copy of your lease violation notices and notices of eviction. Telling us after you have been having problems with the assisted tenant can cause you bigger problems when

you involve us late.

Often we hear about problems between you and your tenant from the assisted tenant without hearing information directly from you. Even then, those reports are rarely timely. This can affect how we handle violations of our agreements.

Remember, while we are not parties to the lease, we have a contract with you. That contract gives us, and you, both rights and responsibilities.

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The Pender County Housing Authority provides rental assistance to low-income families based on household income. The program assists eligible families renting in the private rental market from private owners who have available units and who are willing to work with the program.

The goal of any rental assistance program is not to pay all of the families rent, but rather to help eligible families afford better quality housing than the family could afford without assistance.

PCHA is not a property management company and does not manage property for private landlords.

*Do you have a question about
the program rules?*

Please call 910.259.1370 for help

Would you want to live there?

Would I want to live there? Do you ever look at your rentals and think about that?

HUD's standard for passing a unit are basic. Systems (appliances, floors, walls, ceilings, HVAC, etc) must work as designed to work. Units do not have to be brand new or perfect, but they must meet a basic standard of livability that we call decent, safe and healthy.

Too often we are inspecting units that are in marginal condition. Sometimes repairs we see are also marginal. Marginal means it works or meets the most basic requirements, but borders on sub-standard.

As a landlord, ask yourself if you would want to live in the unit your renting. Ask yourself, would you want your family to "make do" with a marginal repair?

The quality of the unit often dictates the behavior of the tenant. If you appear not

care about providing a quality rental unit, tenants have little respect for the unit.

This is NOT limited to families receiving rental assistance, we hear the stories and complaints from unassisted tenants throughout the area. We get calls about poor housing conditions. Everyday, we are seeing more complaints go to other County Departments and County Officials.

Your rental unit is your investment. If it is taken care of, by you (and your tenants), it can generate income for you for many years. However, if you do not take care of your investment and do not give tenant families the respect that you would want accorded to your own family, then you are contributing to a growing problem of sub-standard housing in the County AND hurting your own wallet.

We often hear that landlords "feel sorry" for low income families, using that as an excuse

both to not to enforce lease agreements or maintain units. Unfortunately, the result of these choices can be that low-income tenants end up being forced in to greater poverty because poorly maintained units cost more in utilities...a lot more.

In our community today, we do not have enough housing for all of the families who need it regardless of each family's income level.

By maintaining your properties as if you were living in them and by holding tenants accountable for leases and community rules, you enable to do our part to make sure assisted tenants who habitually violate lease agreements and program rules regarding unit condition are stopped and you help stop the perpetuation of poor quality housing in our County.