

NEWS ON 8



Volume 1, Number 1

May 2002

A Newsletter for Section 8 Rental Assistance Landlords and Tenants
Published Twice Yearly by Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency



Leasing specialist Ken Erb discusses leasing requirements with a customer during an initial briefing. Located adjacent to the reception area in OHFA's new building, private work stations allow confidential meetings between Rental Assistance staff and customers. The work stations were installed in response to customer needs for privacy.

VISION & MISSION

OHFA Vision:
Recognized as the industry leader, OHFA makes a difference in the lives of Oklahomans by fulfilling their housing needs and dreams.

OHFA Mission:
To provide affordable housing resources.

Rental Assistance Team Mission:
To secure funds to help eligible low income families obtain decent, safe and affordable housing, and do so while providing courteous professional and efficient service.

Welcome to NEWS ON 8

Deborah Jenkins, Rental Assistance Director

OHFA is always looking for ways to expand communication with our customers. NEWS ON 8 was created as an additional means of communicating with landlords and tenants participating in rental assistance programs. Each article is written with the intent of

providing information relevant for ensuring program success. In this inaugural edition you'll find articles on family obligations, lead based paint, lease agreement language requirements and inspection tips. Phone numbers for contacting rental assistance staff

will be included in each edition of NEWS ON 8.

A special thank you is extended to housing specialist Renee' Paul for suggesting the name for our newsletter.

Enjoy, and thank you for your continued participation.

Illegal Drugs Can Lead to Eviction, U.S. Supreme Court Ruling Says



The Supreme Court recently ruled that public housing agencies have the authority to terminate the assistance of a tenant when a member of the household or a guest engages in drug-related activity, regardless of whether the tenant knew, or should have known, of the drug-related activity.

A Home of Our Own

The state's leader in affordable housing resources has a new place to call home.

Last October, OHFA moved into its own building at 100 N.W. 63rd St. in Oklahoma City.

The agency occupies 22,500 square feet of the 34,695 square-foot building. The remaining area is occupied by Monte R. Lee & Co. and Add-On Systems.

"With a prime

location at Broadway Extension and 63rd, we are able to offer a convenient location for servicing our customers," said Dennis Shockley, executive director.

The OHFA building is also located on the MetroTransit bus route.

OHFA's office space includes private work stations adjacent to the reception area for interviews with customers.

Dates to Remember

Rental Assistance In-Service Training
(Rental Assistance staff unavailable)

June 20 and 21 Sept. 19 and 20
Dec. 19 and 20

Landlord Meeting Dates

June 26 in Lawton
Aug. 7 in Tulsa
Nov. 13 in Oklahoma City

Holidays (Offices Closed)

May 27 July 4 Sept. 2
Nov. 11 Nov. 28 and 29
Dec. 25

NEWS ON 8, Rental Assistance Newsletter
Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency
P.O. Box 26720
Oklahoma City, OK 73126
www.ohfa.org

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Oklahoma City, OK
Permit No. 2177

'It's Made a World of Difference' FSS Leads to Achievement of Dreams



Linda Powers stands near her preschool playground. Linda finished program requirements two years early. She utilized FSS funding to run a home-based preschool.

In the three years since Linda Powers began OHFA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program, the mother of four has come so far. Yet, there is so much more she wants to achieve.

The FSS program offers support through housing assistance and community services. A friend told her about the FSS program, and suggested she open a home-based preschool.

Linda utilized FSS funds to operate her preschool which will soon be accredited as a three-star center—the highest level possible. She recently completed the FSS program requirements two years early.

"This program has taken me out of poverty into having a savings account," she said. "It's made a world of difference to know the money's there. I keep adding to it; at least \$100 per week."

Those receiving Section 8 or voucher assistance through programs administered by OHFA are eligible for the five-year FSS program. To find out how to become a part of the FSS program, call Kathy Crittenden, (405) 419-8236.



Ideas? Suggestions?

Do you have comments or suggestions for OHFA? Please submit them in writing to the attention of the Rental Assistance secretary or visit our website: www.ohfa.org.

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Field Agents

Field agents from the Rental Assistance Team play a vital role in making sure our customers have safe and affordable places to live by conducting housing quality standards inspections. Here are the field agents and their respective service areas.

- **Luanne Alexander**
North Central OK
- **Brenda Berger**
NW & Central OK
- **Sharon Coldwell**
NE Oklahoma
- **Carolyn Cook**
South Central OK
- **Keith Cravens**
Central Oklahoma
- **Ruth Franklin**
SW Oklahoma
- **Roger Hayes**
Central Oklahoma
- **Jack Howell**
East Oklahoma
- **Ganna Hudson**
SW Oklahoma
- **Rhonda James**
Floater Agent
- **Philippe Jamet**
Floater Agent
- **Steve Jett**
East Oklahoma
- **Larry Keith**
SE Oklahoma
- **Sandy Lindsley**
East & NE OK
- **Christina Mahler**
SW Oklahoma
- **Debbie Mauldin**
Floater Agent
- **Dodie Pool**
Floater Agent
- **Mary Revard**
North Oklahoma
- **Judy Wright**
Floater Agent

HQS Inspection Tips

Here are some tips to ensure a rental home passes the housing quality standards (HQS) inspection required by HUD. Make sure these things work and you'll have a better chance of passing your inspection.

- Smoke alarms must work.
- Windows that can be reached from the outside must have working locks.
- All utilities must be turned on.
- The stove must be working properly and all knobs must be present.
- Refrigerator must be in the unit and working properly.
- Exterior lights must have globes, if they are designed for them.
- Switch plates must not be cracked or broken.
- If the house was built before 1978 and a child under six will be living there, all peeling, cracking, scaling, chipping and flaking paint must be repaired.



Important Numbers Rental Assistance Team

Recertification Team 1 <i>Alphabet A, D, G, H, K, M, O, and X</i>	(405) 419-8166 Fax: (405) 419-9166
Recertification Team 2 <i>Alphabet B, C, I, J, N, P, T, U, and Y</i>	(405) 419-8167 Fax: (405) 419-9167
Recertification Team 3 <i>Alphabet E, F, L, Q, R, S, V, W, and Z</i>	(405) 419-8168 Fax: (405) 419-9168
Initial Certification Team	(405) 419-8169 Fax: (405) 419-9169
Preapp Status line	1-800-898-6432 or (405) 879-6365
Local Leasing line Toll-free Leasing line Fax Number	(405) 842-2471 1-800-256-1489 (405) 879-8822
Mary Hoock <i>Rental Assistance Supervisor</i>	(405) 419-8266
Jack Bruce <i>Rental Assistance Field Supervisor</i>	(405) 419-8218
Carol Dodge <i>Rental Assistance Manager</i>	(405) 419-8268
John Pettis <i>Rental Assistance Manager</i>	(405) 419-8230
Kathy Crittenden <i>Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator</i>	(405) 419-8236



Key to Lease Agreements

Recent changes in the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program now require owners to provide their own lease agreements for tenants receiving rental assistance.

Landlords need to make sure the following are included in lease agreements:

- The lease agreement should be a standard lease used by the owner for unassisted tenants as well as those receiving assistance.
- It should list the name of the owner, the name of the tenant and the address of the unit.
- The lease agreement must have a starting and ending date and terms for renewal. Examples of

renewal provisions are month-to-month and year-to-year. If renewal terms are not included in the lease, the Oklahoma Landlord Tenant Act provides for the renewal of a lease on a month-to-month basis.

- The lease must have the rental amount and who will be responsible for paying the utilities and furnishing the appliances. If the landlord furnishes utilities, there cannot be a maximum amount a tenant can use.
- A deposit amount should be included in the lease.

Lead-based Paint Removal Regulations

Landlords who own housing built before 1978 that is or could be occupied by families with children under six years old are subject to complying with lead-based paint regulations.

According to HUD's Regulations on Notification, Evaluation and Reduction of Lead Based Paint, housing built prior to 1978 containing deteriorated paint must be repaired (HUD uses the term stabilize).

INSPECTIONS:

During OHFA's initial and yearly property inspections, field representatives pay close attention to interior and exterior paint surfaces or fixtures if a landlord's property fits the two criteria outlined in the lead based paint regulations.

If deteriorated paint is found, the property fails OHFA's inspection. The owner then has 30 days to both correct the situation **and** have the property re-inspected by OHFA. If there are small areas of deteriorated paint, the property owner can stabilize the situation or hire someone.

CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL REQUIRED:

If there are large areas of deteriorated paint, the owner must have paint repaired by a person who is certified in HUD's safe work practices.

A certified professional is required to remove the deteriorated paint when the damaged area exceeds:

- 20 square feet on exterior surfaces
- 2 square feet on any one interior room
- 10 percent of the total surface area on interior or exterior window sills, baseboards and trim.

CLEARANCE EXAMINATION:

Once these maximum areas are repaired and repainted, then a clearance examination is needed. Clearance examinations must be performed by a person certified by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality for Lead Based Paint Inspections or for Risk Assessments.

OHFA will reimburse the landlord for the cost of the clearance examination up to \$150. To request reimbursement, a landlord must submit the following items to Carol Dodge: a copy of the inspection report requiring clearance, a copy of the passed clearance report, and a copy of the paid receipt.

RE-INSPECTION:

Landlords whose property has large areas of deteriorated paint also have 30 days to have the paint professionally removed, a clearance examination conducted and a re-inspection completed by OHFA. A copy of the clearance examination must be provided at the re-inspection.

"Whether damage is small or large, the stabilization process needs to be conducted in accordance with HUD regulations," said Carol Dodge, rental assistance manager. "The key to the whole lead based paint issue is for landlords to keep their units properly painted."

Information on HUD's Regulations on Notification, Evaluation and Reduction of Lead Based Paint (24 CFR, Part 35) can be obtained from:

- National Lead Information Center: (800) 424-LEAD
- HUD's Web Site: www.hud.gov/lea
- OHFA: (405) 842-2471 or (800) 256-1489

Is Your Home a Healthy Home for Children?



Each year, 2,500,000 children are killed or injured by dangers in the home. Here are some tips from HUD's Healthy Home Program:

- Install smoke alarms and make sure they are working properly
- Practice fire escape routes and identify an outside meeting place
- Never use an electric blanket in the bed or crib of a small child or infant
- Keep small toys, balloons, and small balls away from young children.

Trustees Adopt Preference For Applicants with Disabilities

Trustees of Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency recently passed a resolution allowing a disability preference for families applying for rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Those with disabilities or who have an immediate family member with a disability living in the household are eligible to apply for the preference.

"Affordable housing is one of the most challenging barriers faced by individuals with disabilities," said Deborah Jenkins, rental assistance director. "Of the 12,000 families currently on

OHFA's waiting list, 4,800 are disabled. The disabled preference represents OHFA's commitment to help provide equal access to decent, safe, and affordable housing for people with disabilities."

To qualify, applicants must submit a pre-application and attach a disability award letter or a statement from a physician certifying the applicant or family member meets the federal definition of disabled.

A pre-application can be requested by calling (405) 848-1144, ext. 1010 or (800) 256-1489, ext. 1010. Pre-applications can also be downloaded from the agency website, www.ohfa.org.



log onto
www.ohfa.org



Members of the Resident Advisory Board from left to right, back row: **R. Childs; T. Smith; B. Lacy; M. Barnes, and T. Lackey.** Center: **P. Hoffman; M. Thomas; E. Shird; C. Wallace; S. Percell; C. Ikegwu, and P. Jones.** Kneeling: **G. Edwards and T. Lockett.**

Resident Advisory Board Reviews Program Policies

The role of the Resident Advisory Board is to review and make recommendations on policies for OHFA's Section 8 Rental Assistance Program.

These policies are included in OHFA's Five Year Plan and Annual Plan, which must be submitted to HUD for final approval. Current members of the Resident Advisory Board were elected in a meeting held at Francis Tuttle Technology Center on June 13, 2001.

For more information about the Resident Advisory Board, please contact Kathy Crittenden at (405) 419-8236 or (800) 256-1489 ext. 236.



Lease Notes

A family may move at the conclusion of the initial term of the lease, after providing the landlord and OHFA with prior written notice.

Please review your lease for proper notice requirements. If the initial term of the lease has expired and the family and landlord enter into a new lease, a copy of the new lease must be provided to OHFA.

Rental Assistance and Family Obligations

There are several obligations required by HUD that families must follow when receiving rental assistance through the housing choice voucher program. Any information families are required to supply must be true and complete.

Families are obligated to:

- Supply evidence of citizenship or eligible immigration status. Provide information regarding family income and size.
- Provide social security cards or sign consent forms for OHFA to verify social security numbers.
- Provide third-party verification such as a utility bill or copy of rent check to verify family's residence.
- Notify OHFA in writing when family is away from the unit for more than 30 consecutive days. A contract is void when the family is away for more than 180 days.
- Allow OHFA to inspect unit.
- Notify OHFA and landlord in writing before moving or terminating the lease.
- Use assisted unit as the family's only place of residence.
- Notify OHFA in writing within 30 days of the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child.
- Request prior written approval from OHFA to add any other family member to the unit.
- Notify OHFA in writing within 30 days if any family member no longer lives in the unit.
- Give OHFA a copy of eviction notice.
- Pay utility bills. Provide and maintain appliances that owner is not required to provide under the lease.

Each family member must not:

- Own or have any interest in the unit.
- Commit any serious or repeated violation of the lease.
- Commit fraud, bribery, or corrupt or criminal act in connection with the rental assistance program.
- Engage in criminal activity, especially drug-related or violent criminal activity.
- Sublease or sublet the unit, assign the lease, or transfer the unit.
- Receive rental assistance from OHFA while receiving assistance from another housing assistance program for the same unit or a different unit.
- Damage, or allow guests to damage, the unit or premises.
- Receive rental assistance while residing in a unit owned by an immediate family member, unless OHFA has determined the unit necessary for a family member with disabilities.
- Abuse alcohol in a way that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of neighbors.

Family obligations have been adapted from HUD. Refer to your housing choice voucher for a formal version of the family obligations. If you have questions, contact OHFA at (405) 848-1144 or (800) 256-1489.

Rental Assistance Waiting List Purged

OHFA recently completed the yearly process of purging the waiting list of those seeking rental assistance.

Names of those who did not inform OHFA that they wanted to remain on the list were removed.

This process will decrease the waiting time for rental assistance. To be sure we can get in touch with you, remember to notify OHFA of any change of address. Mail address changes to P.O. Box 26720, Oklahoma City, OK 73126-0720.



The following are policy changes adopted by OHFA, Aug. 1, 2001. They can be found in OHFA's Administra-

tive Plan for the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program, which may be viewed at our central office by appointment or at www.ohfa.org.

Families are no longer required to report increases in income between annual recertifications and OHFA will not conduct interim re-exams for this purpose. However, families must report changes in family composition within 30 days and any changes of income as a result of a family composition change will be counted.