



Pictured Above: LaShawn Williams stands at the front door of her new home (inset).

***“The best thing about owning your own home is the security of knowing it is yours.”***

- LaShawn Williams

## Family Self-Sufficiency Program Helps Family Find Home

A mother of four children, LaShawn Williams wanted to buy a home which would be a safe place for her family. A home in a good neighborhood with a quality school system was ideal to her.

One night while driving through a neighborhood she liked, LaShawn found the perfect house. “I called on it that evening and saw it the next day.”

LaShawn obtained her 1,500 square foot, three bedroom house through the Section 8 Homeownership program. Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency administers this as part of the Family Self-Sufficiency program.

“It was an incredibly easy process to go

through. The people at OHFA really helped me a lot,” she said.

Many families have made the decision to work toward economic

***“The first thing I did was run through my house screaming with excitement.”***

self-sufficiency with the assistance of OHFA’s FSS program. Participants in the FSS program can make mortgage payments with funds previously designated to help pay for rent.

Receiving the keys to her new home proved exciting for LaShawn. “The first thing I did

was run through my house screaming with excitement.”

LaShawn appreciates the security that comes with homeownership.

“The best thing about owning your own home is the security of knowing it is yours,” she said. “It gives you something to pass along to your family after you are gone.”

LaShawn, a dietary aide, has four children ranging between the ages of six and 16.

She received assistance from OHFA’s Section 8 program for seven years.

Currently, 406 families participate in OHFA’s FSS program. For more information, contact Kathy Crittenden at (405) 419-8236.

## 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.

### Important Dates

**Landlord Meeting:**  
November 16 at OHFA  
**Resident Advisory Board Meetings**  
July 30 and October 29 at OHFA  
**Family Self-Sufficiency Program Coordinating Meeting**  
June 25 and September 24 at OHFA  
**Holidays (Offices Closed)**  
May 31, Memorial Day  
July 5, Independence Day Holiday  
September 6, Labor Day  
November 11, Veteran’s Day  
November 25 & 26, Thanksgiving Holiday  
**Rental Assistance In-Service Training (Rental Assistance staff unavailable)**  
June 10 and 11  
September 9 and 10

Please refer to [www.ohfa.org](http://www.ohfa.org) for updates.

NEWS ON 8, Rental Assistance Newsletter  
Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency  
P.O. Box 26720  
Oklahoma City, OK 73126  
[www.ohfa.org](http://www.ohfa.org)

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### OHFA Open Scheduled

The fourth annual OHFA Open is scheduled for July 15, at Traditions Golf Club in Edmond. The tournament is sponsored by Santa's Sleigh, Inc. and organized by OHFA employees as a volunteer project. Proceeds are used to purchase holiday gifts for children staying in homeless shelters during the holiday season.

In 2003, approximately \$20,000 was raised to buy Christmas gifts for 480 children throughout the state. In 2004, Santa's Sleigh hopes to exceed this amount.

For more information about OHFA Open, call the OHFA Open Golf Line, (405) 419-8297.

### Composition Policy Change

**Effective April 1, families who add a member to the household because of birth, adoption or court-awarded custody must report the additional family member by the family's next annual recertification.**

Additions to the household, other than by birth, adoption or court-awarded custody, must have prior written approval from OHFA and the property owner.

If a family member leaves the household, OHFA must be notified, in writing, within 30 days from the date the family member moved.

### Section 8 Waiting List Remains Closed

Last Year, OHFA's Board of Trustees authorized a resolution to close the waiting list to applicants for the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program. The list will remain closed until further notice.



### 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](http://www.ohfa.org).

**Executive Director**  
*Dennis Shockley*

**Rental Assistance Director**  
*Deborah Jenkins*

**NEWS on 8 Editor**  
*Natalie Geis*

[www.ohfa.org](http://www.ohfa.org)  
AA/EEO

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**OHFA is a 2000 Oklahoma Quality Award Winner for Commitment**

OHFA's Administrative Plan for the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program may be viewed at our central office by appointment or at [www.ohfa.org](http://www.ohfa.org)

### Housing Assistance Payment Clerk Line Available

**405-848-1144, Ext. 2898** is available for those having problems with payments to call in and leave a message. Through this line, OHFA can answer questions and help resolve problems or concerns about the amounts paid for rental assistance.

### 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.

- **Luanne Alexander**  
*North Central OK*
- **Christina Christenson**  
*SW Oklahoma*
- **Sharon Coldwell**  
*NE Oklahoma*
- **Keith Cravens**  
*Central OK*
- **Fleashia Ford**  
*SW Oklahoma*
- **Roger Hayes**  
*Central OK*
- **Jack Howell**  
*East Oklahoma*
- **Rhonda James**  
*Floater Agent*
- **Philippe Jamet**  
*Floater Agent*
- **Steve Jett**  
*East Oklahoma*
- **Larry Keith**  
*SE Oklahoma*
- **Kimberly Kephart**  
*SW Oklahoma*
- **Sandy Lindsley**  
*East & NE OK*
- **Debbie Mauldin**  
*Floater Agent*
- **Dodie Pool**  
*Floater Agent*
- **Mary Revard**  
*North Oklahoma*
- **Judy Wright**  
*Floater Agent*

### Important Numbers Rental Assistance Team

- Recertification Team 1 (405) 419-8166  
*Alphabet A,D,G,H,K,M,O, and X* Fax: (405) 419-9166
- Recertification Team 2 (405) 419-8167  
*Alphabet B,C,I,J,N,P,T,U, and Y* Fax: (405) 419-9167
- Recertification Team 3 (405) 419-8168  
*Alphabet E,F,L,Q,R,S,V,W, and Z* 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 (405) 842-2471  
Toll-free Leasing line 1-800-256-1489  
Fax Number (405) 879-8822
- Mary Hoock (405) 419-8266  
*Rental Assistance Supervisor*
- Jack Bruce (405) 419-8218  
*Rental Assistance Field Supervisor*
- Carol Dodge (405) 419-8268  
*Rental Assistance Manager*
- John Pettis (405) 419-8230  
*Rental Assistance Manager*
- FSS/Home Ownership (405) 419-8171

Landlord Spotlight:

## Section 8 Properties Provide Good Homes

Ten years ago, a divorced mother putting herself through college moved into one of Joe Zuspahn's rental properties. With the help of Joe and the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency's Section 8 Rental Assistance program, she graduated from Cameron University and obtained her Certified Public Accountant license. Later, she purchased the home from Joe.

Instances like this are what make Joe happy to be a part of OHFA's Section 8 Rental Assistance program. A retired school teacher, Joe has over 125 properties, 30 percent are rented to Section 8 recipients. He originally began renting properties 23 years ago.

A former field agent, the late Ganna Hudson, contacted Joe on behalf of a friend regarding one of his rental properties. After discovering that this would be the perfect place for her friend to live, she talked with Joe about the Section 8 program.

Joe was interested in the guaranteed income and growth in potential properties

which would come from renting to Section 8 recipients. He opened his properties to those receiving rental assistance from OHFA.

"Section 8 renters are just like everyone else. They are really good tenants," said Joe.

Joe takes pride in his rental property. At every inspection, a maintenance crew is available to make necessary repairs. He has not failed an inspection in 10 years.

To Joe, the landlord-tenant relationship is about more than business.

"My tenants not only rent from me, but they become my friends."

Joe is a retired teacher and coach from Lawton High School. He and his family reside in Lawton.



Joe Zuspahn

There are key areas that Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency inspectors must examine to approve a property for OHFA's Section 8 Rental Assistance program. One area is paint.

If you live in home that was built before 1978 and have a household member who is under the age of 6, inspectors are required to look carefully at the interior and exterior paint. This includes common areas such as apartment breezeways and play areas.

If paint is peeling, chipping, cracking or loose from the surface, the unit will fail inspection. If it is a small amount of paint (your inspector can define this for you) the loose paint can be

stabilized by approved methods. All paint chips must be removed from the ground and repainted with non-lead paint.

If the amount of peeling paint exceeds the allowable HUD levels, the paint can only be repaired using safe work practices and pass a clearance examination. This procedure must be completed by a person who is certified by the state.

When a clearance examination is required or if the unit is found to be lead free, a copy of the inspection must be provided to OHFA. A list of certified lead base paint inspectors, as well as more detailed

information, is available from your OHFA inspector.

### Is Your Paint Peeling? Tips Landlords and Tenants Should Know



By Sharon Coldwell, Field

## Changes in Methamphetamine Procedures

Changes have been made to the grounds for denial or termination of assistance section in OHFA's Administrative Plan.

OHFA will deny program assistance for an applicant, or terminate program assistance for a participant who has been charged/arrested/convicted of using/distributing/manufacturing methamphetamine.

If the family is an applicant, assistance will be denied for a period of 10 years from the date of the charge/arrest/conviction, whichever is most recent.

If the family is a participant, assistance will be denied for a period of 10 years from the date of the termination, unless regulations require permanent denial of assistance.

All of this information can be found in the Rental Assistance's Administration Plan on [www.ohfa.org](http://www.ohfa.org).

## Briefly Speaking

### Inspection Requests

Once you have requested an inspection, it usually takes two or three weeks to process the request. This is due to the volume of families we serve.

### Address and Telephone Number Changes

So we can better serve you, you must notify your team in writing if your mailing address or telephone number changes. This will help us get in touch with you in a timely manner. A notice to move must be submitted to your landlord/tenant and OHFA simultaneously.

### Check Mailing

Checks are mailed the first business day of the month. If the first day of the month is a Saturday or Sunday, your check will be mailed on Monday. Payments are made once a month.

### Completion of the Scheduling Request is the Tenant's Responsibility

Completion of paperwork is the tenant's responsibility. Landlords can assist with this process, but it is up to the tenant to make sure the paperwork is completed and turned in to OHFA. Do not leave your paper work with your landlord.

## Major Changes Proposed for the Section 8 Voucher Program

by Deborah Jenkins, Rental Assistance Team Leader

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's current FY 2005 budget proposal converts the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program to a Flexible Voucher (FV) dollar-based program. The Flexible Voucher proposal would fundamentally change the tenant-based housing assistance system from unit-based funding, using actual costs per household, to dollar-based.

A dollar-based system would provide a set amount of funding regardless of actual program costs. The intent of the Flexible Voucher proposal is to give housing authorities more flexibility in administering their programs. Some of the proposed

changes under the proposal include the following.

- ? Removes the 40 percent limitation placed on the family's share of rent at initial lease-up
- ? Removes the requirement for housing authorities to house extremely low-income families before others
- ? Eliminates required allowances, deductions, and income exclusions
- ? Permits housing authorities to establish a flat rent schedule
- ? Removes the requirement for housing authorities to conduct HQS inspections prior to execution of the HAP contract

## African American Housing Fair a Success

Over 850 people attended the first African American Housing Fair in Oklahoma City on February 28. The purpose of the event was to increase homeownership among African Americans. St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Fannie Mae, OHFA, The Urban League and the Northeast Homeownership Consortium planned this faith based initiative.

This initiative is the basis for establishing a process that can be replicated at other churches across Oklahoma City and nationwide. A partnership and pilot program was created and implemented in March 2003

with the intent of identifying and replicating the most effective methods of reaching out to appropriate members of the church and assisting them to become homeowners.

Housing Fairs similar to this one are currently being scheduled for August in Tulsa. Plans for a Lawton based fair is planned to occur before the end of the year.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 47 percent of African-Americans own a home of their own. This percentage is well below the overall national homeownership rate of 68 percent for all other ethnicities combined.

## Oklahoma NAHRO to Award Scholarship

The Oklahoma Chapter of National Association Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) is pleased to announce a 4 year, \$1,000 annual scholarship for recipients or members of families who are recipients of Public Housing and Section 8 programs; members of families who have received housing assistance from a Community Development Agency; or children of paid employees of a Housing or Community Development Authority.

This scholarship is established for current high school seniors or students presently enrolled in an Oklahoma accredited college,

university, or vocational training school that might otherwise not be able to attend or continue to attend an institution of higher learning.

The scholarship is payable directly to any college or vocational school within the State of Oklahoma. It is also annually renewable, based on updated recipient information and the Chapter's financial status. The fund is payable at \$500 per semester with verification of the recipient's full-time enrollment and continued academic achievement (2.5 cumulative grade point average). For more information, go to [www.oknahro.org](http://www.oknahro.org).

## Tips for Passing an Inspection



by Keith Cravens, Field Agent

The following are some suggestions that could be used by tenants and landlords prior to annual and initial inspections by OHFA.

- When tenants and landlords receive notification of inspection, both tenant and landlord should walk the unit together inside and outside to determine if any repairs are needed.
- All utilities must be ON at time of inspection.
- All electrical outlets must be in working condition and light bulbs must be in all overhead light fixtures.
- All doors/windows should be in operational condition. Weather tight ceilings and walls should be clean and free of holes, cracks and bulging material.
- Check for water leaks in all plumbing fixtures, under sinks and wash basins. Make sure toilets are in good operational condition.
- If a new water heater was installed within the last 12 months of your lease, make sure there is a TPR valve and copper or galvanized metal discharge line.
- Make sure all painted surfaces have no peeling, chipping or chalking paint.
- Check the batteries in all smoke detectors.
- Make sure all exterior light fixtures have both the bulb and globes, if designed for globes.

These are just a few steps the tenant and landlord could take to insure the inspection goes smoothly. If there is any question about any repairs prior to the inspection, the tenant and/or landlord should contact OHFA for assistance.