



HAP Express

Charleston Housing's Landlord Newsletter



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CH Offers Direct Deposit

Landlords are now able to take advantage of Charleston Housing's ability to make payments electronically, by direct deposit, to the bank of their choice. Payments made by direct deposit are becoming the norm in situations where a large number of payments are made on a specific date.

Direct deposit eliminates many of our check delivery problems such as postal handling, confidentiality and theft. It also ensures you receive your money timely.

It will probably take one monthly payment cycle before you will cease receiving a check and begin to have your money directly deposited to the account of your choice. You will receive a statement, without a check, when the deposits begin.

If you are interested in direct deposit you may download the required form from CH's website or you may call Tonya Wiersma at 348-6451 ext. 318 to have one sent to you.

Tenant Survey Results

Charleston Housing mailed 250 customer satisfaction surveys to randomly selected Section 8 participants during the first part of October. Thirty-one percent (31%) responded to the survey and the results were positive with regard to tenant satisfaction with their landlord and the service they receive from Charleston Housing.

Ninety-two percent of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their rental unit. Likewise, eighty-four percent say they are satisfied with their neighborhood.

A clear majority of tenants are satisfied with their landlord, eighty-three percent,

and a similar margin believes their landlord is prompt about making needed repairs to their rental unit.

Participants were similarly supportive of the customer service provided by CH staff. Over ninety percent of respondents agreed that Charleston Housing employees were polite and helpful. Likewise, a strong majority stated that inspectors are thorough and professional.

Forty-one percent of respondents have been on the Section 8 program for two years or less.

In recent months, CH has surveyed both landlords and tenants to determine their level of satisfaction with the services being provided.



visit us at
www.charlestonhousing.com

Updated Landlord/Tenant Handbook Available

An updated version of the Landlord/Tenant Responsibility Handbook is now available on Charleston Housing's website.

The handbook is published by the Charleston Public Safety Council for the benefit of all landlords and their tenants. It contains useful information on tenant

screening, leases, and rental law pertaining to deposits, abandonment and the eviction process.

In addition, there is information regarding B & O tax rules and the ordinances and property maintenance code for the City of Charleston.

Perhaps most useful for land-

lords are the sample rental application and lease agreement. These standardized documents make good management tools for owners who don't currently screen their prospective tenants or who are having difficulty with their current tenants.

CH Sets New Voucher Rates for 2005

Effective October 1, 2004 HUD's new Fair Market Rents for the Kanawha-Putnam market will be used in determining the amount of assistance CH will provide to participants (see the chart below).

Again this year CH will set the payment standards for two and three bedroom units at 105% of the FMR.

The rates for three and four bedroom units decreased this year by \$3 and \$50. This is the first decrease in Fair Market Rents since the mid

1990's.

The decrease will not affect existing participants until their second annual review after the change. Therefore, any decrease will not happen until late 2005 and into 2006. This change will not reduce a landlord's rent, but rather will increase the amount the tenant pays.

For new applicants or for those participants moving to new units, the change will be take effect immediately.

In order to determine an affordable rent, a landlord can subtract the average utility cost from the payment

standard amount for the appropriate bedroom size.

For example, the rent for a two bedroom apartment in Kanawha County could be set at a minimum of \$416 for a family with very limited income. This amount is determined by subtracting \$152 in utility costs from the new standard of \$568. Typically, the family will be paying 30% of their income for rent and utilities. If the family has a higher income, the allowable rent might be greater as long as it didn't push the family's rent burden above 40% of their income.

The new rates will be used for all initial contracts processed after 10/1/04 and all annual recertifications beginning 12/1/04.

2005 Payment Standards

<u>Efficiency</u>	<u>1 Bedroom</u>	<u>2 Bedroom</u>	<u>3 Bedroom</u>	<u>4 Bedroom</u>
\$ 385	\$ 447	\$ 568	\$ 726	\$ 747

Below is the approximate cost in utilities (gas, electric, water, sewer, and trash) for each bedroom size. If you deduct this amount from the Payment Standard you will arrive at a rent that most families will be able to afford.

2005 Utility Rate Schedule (calculated 9/04)

Type of unit		<u>Eff.</u>	<u>1Br.</u>	<u>2Br.</u>	<u>3Br.</u>	<u>4Br.</u>
		Kan/Put	Kan/Put	Kan/Put	Kan/Put	Kan/Put
House	Elect	90/92	111/116	162/165	208/210	257/255
	Gas	92/107	127/132	182/185	233/235	286/284
Apartment	Elect	84/86	103/108	152/155	194/196	241/239
	Gas	97/99	118/123	169/172	216/218	266/264
Mobile Home	Elect	88/97	111/116	174/157	193/195	235/233
	Gas	92/94	126/131	191/174	213/215	256/254

*The above utility amounts are approximate based on the tenant paying all utilities and the landlord owning the appliances.



Cold Weather is Here!

Have those heating systems checked and serviced prior to the onset of bad weather and save a lot of time and frustration for you and your tenants!

Remember to change the furnace filter too!

Charleston Housing Offices will be closed on the following dates:

- *November 2.....Election Day
- *November 11.....Veterans' Day
- *November 25 & 26...Thanksgiving
- *December 24th.....Christmas
- *December 31st.....New Year's
- *January 17.....M.L. King Day