



The hearts of all of OHFA's employees and trustees are with those affected by the Spring 2013 tornadoes.



Steven Sturgeon sits in the formal living room of the Del City home he rents. He found housing assistance and a job through the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program.

HUD-VASH Program Leads Army Vet to Find Inspiration in Helping Fellow Vets

Steven Sturgeon served three years with the U.S. Army from 1989-1992, including a tour to Panama during Operation Just Cause. During this invasion, Manuel Noriega was removed from power.

Today, Steven provides office support to the counselors and social workers at the Oklahoma City Vet Center, located at 1024 N.W. 47th Street. Veterans come to the Center for assistance with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, military sexual trauma and couples counseling.

Steven enjoys visiting with fellow veterans, often offering a cup of coffee and a kind smile.

"I absorb the stories from the Vietnam veterans," Steven said. "It's like a history lesson for me."

A few years ago when facing financial hardships, the single father visited the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center at 921 NE 13th Street for much needed help.

"I was on the verge of not being able to handle my bills," he said. "Pam Stark at the VA Medical Center gave the tools I needed and told me who I needed to see. A lot of doors

opened for me."

One of the doors that opened for Steven was an introduction to the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. HUD-VASH combines Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers from organizations like OHFA with case management and clinical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs. HUD awarded OHFA with 100 of the vouchers. Steven is one of 72 veterans currently participating in the program through OHFA.

"The best thing about the HUD-VASH program is that it helped me save a little money," said Steven. "Basically it helped me get back on my feet."

Another door that opened was his current job at the Vet Center. When Steven visited with an employment specialist at the VA Medical Center, one of the many job leads he received was the office position at the Vet Center.

OHFA also administers OHFA Advantage, a homebuyer program that offers 3.5 percent down payment assistance on a VA loan.

VISION & MISSION

OHFA Vision:
An affordably housed Oklahoma

OHFA Mission:
Creating housing solutions for Oklahomans

WEBSITE

OHFA Website:
www.ohfa.org

Failed Housing Quality Standards Inspections Not Corrected Will Cause Suspension of Housing Assistance Payments

Since May 1, OHFA began abating/suspending Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) when owners/landlords failed to correct Housing Quality Standards (HQS) deficiencies upon OHFA's reinspection of the unit.

This change affects the owners/landlords and tenants participating in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program in the following ways:

- HAP will be abated/suspended after the reinspection when the unit fails to meet HQS requirements by the date listed on the reinspection appointment letter.

- A family residing in an affected unit will not be responsible for OHFA's portion of the rent during the abatement/suspension period. The family will continue to pay their portion of rent only. An owner/landlord may not terminate a family's tenancy when abatement/suspension occurs.

- OHFA will issue the family a voucher to begin searching for a unit that meets HQS requirements, as long as there are no tenant deficiencies required to be corrected.

- If repairs are made after the abatement/suspension period begins, the owner/landlord

or tenant must contact OHFA immediately to schedule a reinspection of the affected unit.

- If OHFA finds the repairs have been made, OHFA will end the abatement/suspension the first day of the month following the date the repairs have been verified as having been completed. **Payments suspended during the abatement period will not be restored.**

- If repairs have not been corrected within 60 days from the date the abatement/suspension period begins, OHFA will terminate the HAP contract.



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.

Address and Telephone Number Changes

So we can better serve you, please notify your team in writing if your mailing address or telephone number changes.

Listing of Available Rentals

<http://ohfa.GOsection8.com> provides a list of available Section 8 rental properties in Oklahoma. Landlords can also use <http://ohfa.GOsection8.com> to list their available units for free by going to the website or by calling toll free 1-866-466-7328.

Housing Assistance Payment Line

405-848-1144, Ext. 2898 is available to report problems with rental assistance payments. When prompted, please leave your message and a phone number where you can be reached. Please provide as much information as possible concerning the payment problem.

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AA/EEO
www.ohfa.org



Oklahoma Quality Award Winner

OHFA's Administrative Plan for the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program may be viewed at its central office by appointment or at www.ohfa.org.

HUD Programs Open to All Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) published a final rule implementing HUD's policy to ensure that its core programs are open to all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status.

The rule explicitly states that eligibility determinations for HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing must be made without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status.

This prohibition applies to owners or administrators of HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing, lenders in a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance program and any other recipient or sub-recipient of HUD funds.

The regulation prohibits inquiring about sexual

orientation or gender identity for the purpose of determining eligibility or otherwise making housing available. Individuals, however, may voluntarily self-identify sexual orientation or gender identity.

Inquiries about an applicant's or occupant's sex is allowed for the limited purpose of determining placement in temporary, emergency shelters with shared bedrooms or bathrooms, or for determining the number of bedrooms to which a household may be entitled.

The rule defines "family" without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, to include single persons or groups of persons residing together, including those who are elderly, disabled, and with or without children.

OHFA Hires Two New Rental Assistance Team Managers with Lots of Experience

When OHFA's two Rental Assistance Team Managers retired last year, OHFA promoted Rental Assistance Team Supervisor Mary Hoock to Office Operations Manager and hired Kenneth Love to serve as Field Operations Manager.

Hoock has worked for OHFA 25 years and has served as the Rental Assistance Team Supervisor for 14 of those years.

She has represented the Rental Assistance Team with independent auditors to ensure their understanding of OHFA's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and to verify the agency's compliance with HUD regulations. Due to her diligence, the Rental Assistance Team has been subject to very few or no findings.

Hoock is also very knowledgeable about HUD reporting systems and ensures that the data OHFA reports to HUD each month is

accurate and complete. In her new position, Hoock will oversee staff responsible for administering the recertification process and the Family Self-Sufficiency and Homeownership Programs.

As Field Operations Manager, Love will supervise field agents responsible for intake and inspections. Love brings with him more than 19 years of management and supervisory experience in public housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program administration. He is a certified trainer in the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) inspection protocols.

In his prior position, Love served as the Regional Inspections Manager for a contractor, where he supervised staff responsible for more than 22,000 unit inspections in a region that included Chicago and Detroit.



Mary Hoock will manage office operations while Kenneth Love will manage field operations.

Landlord Spotlight:**Lawton Landlord Likes to Give His Tenants Peace of Mind**

Finding a new house or apartment to rent can be a stressful process. What can make it even worse is when a home you are about to move into gets rented to someone else, and you have to begin the entire search process all over again. That's why when Brent Baggett of Marathon Properties in Lawton finds tenants, he requires half the deposit and signs a short-term lease with them. He also takes the house off the market.

"They have peace of mind that we're not just going to rent the house out from underneath them," said Baggett.

Baggett welcomes renters with Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and regularly advertises for them in the newspaper and on Craigslist.com. He likes the idea that they have already passed background checks and received income verification.

"If you've been approved through Section 8 for a voucher, we want to find a home for you," Baggett said.

With his business partner, Baggett owns nearly 60 rental properties consisting of both single-family and multi-family units.

"A lot of the people we acquire in Section 8 have had a change in owner or need a larger house," Baggett said.

He explained that when a new owner comes in, they often don't want to accept Section 8 or they sell the house. Either way, the tenant has to find a new place to live and Baggett is eager to



Brent Baggett (right) stops by the home of Preston Charity Jr., one of his tenants. Baggett actively advertises for tenants with Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers in the newspaper and online.

help them if he has an available property.

Baggett only learned about the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program when a potential tenant approached him about it. At first he was hesitant to participate as a landlord. What convinced him was hearing an explanation about how the program works and how inspections are conducted from one of OHFA's field agents, Kimberly Mills.

Because of his experience with the program, he advises other landlords to not be afraid if they are approached to be a Section 8 landlord.

The process takes "a little bit longer up front, but it's worth it on the back end," Baggett said.

HUD-VASH Program Assists Veterans

The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance with case management and clinical services to provide housing for eligible homeless veterans who are single or who have families.

The Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center will determine clinical eligibility for the program and make referrals for housing to OHFA. OHFA will then determine eligibility for housing based on HCV regulations. A veteran or household member required to maintain a lifetime sex offender registry status is not eligible to participate in the HUD-VASH program.

Case management, a key component of the program, is required and participants must utilize the supportive services, treatment recommendations, and assistance needed to successfully maintain recovery and sustain housing in the community. To apply for HUD-VASH, veterans should contact their VA Homeless Program.

Translation Service Offered to Limited-English Speakers

OHFA utilizes the services of a company called Language Line to receive and place calls to individuals who speak limited English. Language Line supports more than 200 languages. The service is free to anyone who calls any of OHFA's phone numbers.

Language Line works by adding an interpreter to a phone call to translate between the caller and OHFA staff.

Unvented (Ventless) Space Heaters No Longer Allowed

Effective July 1, OHFA will no longer request HUD waivers to approve unvented (ventless) space heaters of any type. This means any unvented (ventless) space heaters previously approved by HUD will be required to be removed.

Last November, the State of Oklahoma adopted the 2009 International Fuel and Gas Code. Section 621.2 of the Code prohibits the use of unvented (ventless) heaters as the primary source of heat in a dwelling unit. OHFA began enforcing this code in early 2013.

Since unvented (ventless) heaters are no longer allowed as a primary heat source in Oklahoma and owners must now install a vented or electric permanent heat source, OHFA has decided to strictly adhere to HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and stop requesting HUD waivers to allow unvented (ventless) heaters as a primary or secondary heat source for units subsidized under the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.



Important Numbers

Rental Assistance

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

Rental Assistance Supervisor
 Shannon Ogle (405) 419-8233

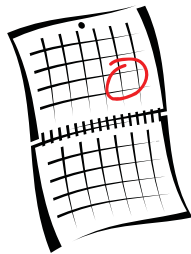
Rental Assistance Managers
 Mary Hoock (405) 419-8266
 Kenneth Love (405) 419-8268

FSS/ Home Ownership Specialists
 Kathy Stafford (405) 419-8236
 Ryland Moore (405) 419-8197
 Sheila Rainger (405) 419-8171

Field Agents

Field agents from the Rental Assistance Team play a vital role in making sure OHFA customers have safe and affordable places to live by conducting Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections.

- Chris Anderson
Floater Agent
- Luke Brooks
East Oklahoma
- Senna Franklin
Floater Agent
- Christina Hines
Floater Agent
- Jack Howell
East Oklahoma
- Gary Kessinger
Floater Agent
- Corey King
Floater Agent
- Rhonda Murrell
Floater Agent
- Philippe Jamet
Floater Agent
- Steve Jett
East Oklahoma
- Kimberly Kephart
SW Oklahoma
- Sandy Lindsley
East & NE OK
- Debbie Mauldin
Floater Agent
- Dodie Pool
Floater Agent
- Shawnta Ward
Floater Agent
- Judi Wright
Floater Agent



Important Calendar Dates

Holidays (Offices Closed)

July 4, Independence Day
 September 2, Labor Day
 November 11, Veterans Day
 November 28 & 29, Thanksgiving
 December 24 & 25, Christmas

Landlord Meetings

November 6 - Oklahoma City
 November 13 - Tulsa

Rental Assistance Training (staff unavailable)

March 7, June 13, September 12 & December 12

Family Self-Sufficiency/Homebuyer Education Classes

June 7, September 6 & December 6

Resident Advisory Board Meetings

May 24, August 30 & November 29

Program Coordinating Committee Meetings

July 26 & October 25



NEWS ON 8

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 www.ohfa.org

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

FSS and Homeownership Programs Now Closed to New Applicants



OHFA is no longer accepting applications for its Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program. All available slots were filled after more than 700 applications were received by the agency. When OHFA reopens the programs to new applicants, a notice will be posted on OHFA's website www.ohfa.org.

Domestic Abuse Victims May Be Eligible for Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Individuals who quit their job as a result of acts of domestic abuse against them may be able to collect unemployment insurance benefits.

Oklahoma law states that a person is eligible for this benefit, "If the claimant separated from employment due to domestic violence or abuse, verified by any reasonable or confidential documentation, which causes the individual to reasonably believe that the individual's continued employment would jeopardize the safety of the individual or of any member of the individual's immediate family."

To determine eligibility or to file a claim, individuals should contact the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission at (800) 555-1554 or visit www.oesc.ok.gov.

