

RENO HOUSING AUTHORITY

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)
Program Briefing



Welcome!

This briefing will include:

- A voucher program overview
- Family, Owner, and RHA responsibilities
- RHA's jurisdiction and areas to rent
- Advantages of living in specific areas
- An explanation of Portability
- Information on Reasonable Accommodations



Frequently Used Acronyms

- **HAP** – Housing Assistance Payment: The portion of the rent RHA is responsible for paying to the landlord.
- **HCV** – Housing Choice Voucher: The most common of the many voucher programs offered. Formerly known as Section 8.
- **HQS** – Housing Quality Standards: HUD standards for the condition of assisted housing.
- **HUD** – US Department of Housing and Urban Development: The federal department over voucher programs.

Frequently Used Acronyms

- **NSPIRE** – National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate: The inspection protocol used by RHA to conduct the HQS inspections.
- **PHA** – Public Housing Authority
- **RFTA** – Request for Tenancy Approval: The document completed by a landlord and tenant to request housing assistance at a unit.
- **RHA** – Reno Housing Authority

Rental Assistance Employee Roles

Housing Specialist

- This is your “case worker”. They respond to calls and emails, rotate walk-in days, and process changes to your income & regular recertifications.

Leasing Agent

- Issues transfer vouchers, processes RFTAs, checks for reasonableness & affordability of prospective units, and prepares HAP Contracts.

General Office Clerk

- Serves as our receptionists, receives & logs incoming mail, and sends out recertification & verification paperwork.

Rental Assistance Employee Roles

Inspections Clerk

- Schedules move-in, regular (biennial) & special inspections and provides the results. Notifies the landlord when you are approved to sign a lease.

Inspector

- Visits the unit to ensure HUD standards have been met (following the NSPIRE inspection protocol).

Landlord Liaison

- The primary point of contact for landlords regarding questions and concerns.

Rental Assistance Employee Roles

Rental Assistance Administrator

- Oversees staff, conducts file reviews for terminations & upon your request, and ensures the department runs smoothly by managing daily operations.

Director of Rental Assistance

- Oversees entire department, developing new programs and ensuring policies follow federal regulations.

Questions Regarding Your Assistance?



Email

Send any questions to section8@renoha.org for a response within 1-2 business days.



Phone Call

775-329-3630 option 5 to leave a message with your name, Social Security Number and detailed message. We will return your call within 1-2 business days.



Walk-In

Thursdays from 9am - 11:30am and 1pm - 4 pm, no appointment needed. You will see the On-Duty Housing Specialist.



Scheduled Appointments

Your Housing Specialist will reach out (by mail) if an in-person meeting is necessary, but you are welcome to call and request a scheduled in-person meeting as well.

MTW (Moving to Work) Agency

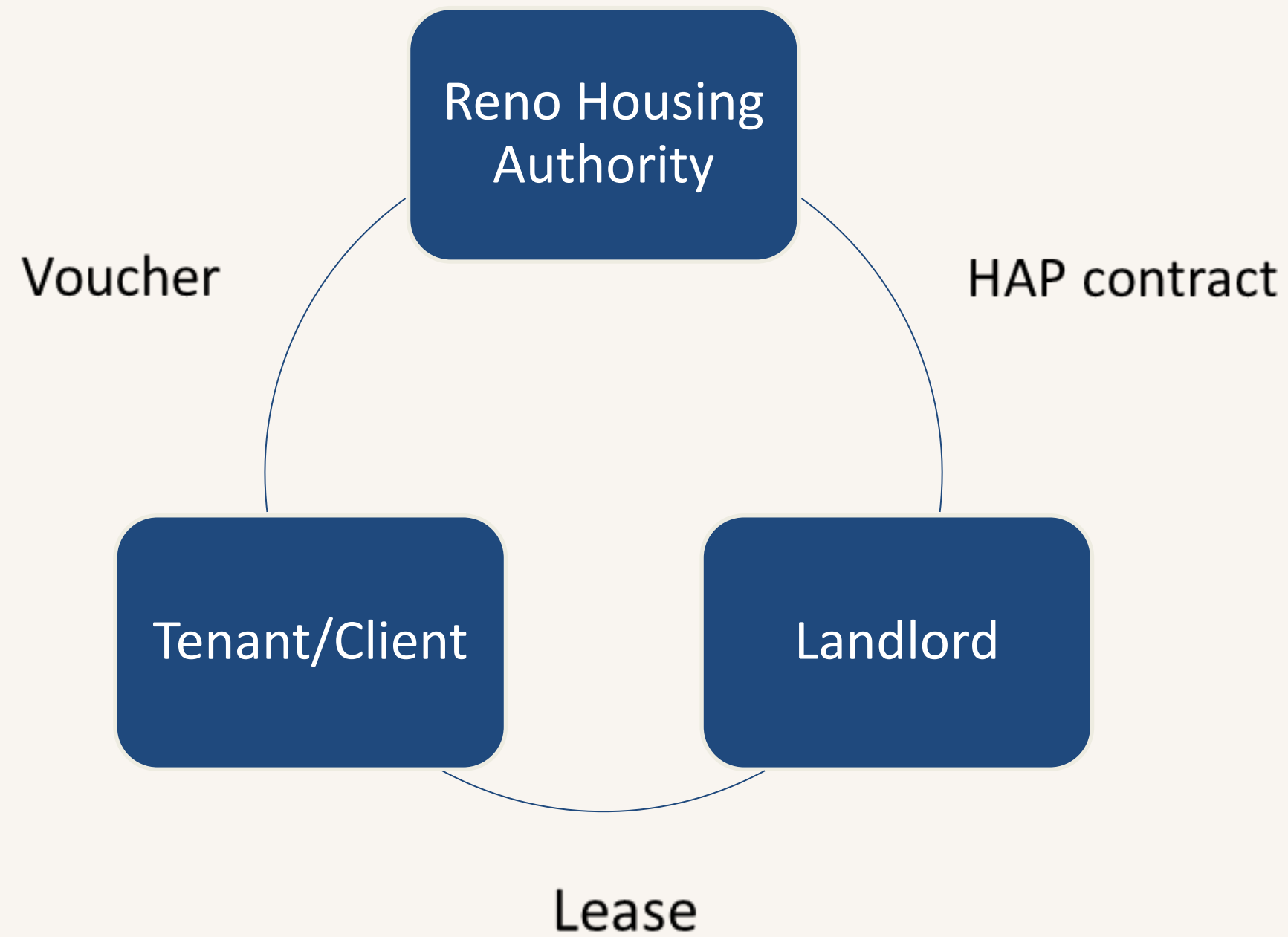
RHA has the unique opportunity to slightly change some of the rules or requirements of the HCV program compared to other Housing Authorities.

Some of these slight changes may impact:

- Recertification timelines
- Medical deductions
- Utility allowances
- Inspections every other year



Circle of Housing Influence



How does the voucher program work?

- Once your voucher has been issued, it is your responsibility to find a unit that meets your household's needs.
- RHA will inspect the unit to ensure it meets HUD's standards.
- RHA will determine that the rent is reasonable based on the market, and affordable based on your income and budget.
- RHA will determine the HAP and your portion of the rent.

How does the voucher program work?

- You enter a lease with the landlord. RHA enters a HAP Contract with the landlord.
- If you are responsible for utilities, you need to setup service and pay for those utilities (either directly with the utility company or through a 3rd party billing service like RUBS).
- RHA will pay the HAP & you will pay your portion directly to your landlord.
- At the end of your lease, you and your landlord can choose to renew for another year, go month-to-month, or you can look for a new unit.

Voucher Obligations: Dos and Do Nots

DO:

- Supply required information
- Allow RHA to inspect unit (with reasonable notice and at reasonable times)
- Give RHA at least 30 days' notice before moving out or terminating your lease
- Give RHA a copy of any eviction notice received
- Use the unit as your only residence.
- Receive RHA approval for all household members & notify RHA promptly if anyone moves out.
- Receive approval to be away from your unit for more than 30 days

Voucher Obligations: Dos and Do Nots

DO NOT:

- Damage the unit/premises or allow others to
- Violate lease terms
- Allow unapproved persons to live in unit or receive mail at your address
- Sublease the unit
- Lease a unit you or your family has any ownership of
- Commit fraud, bribery, or other corrupt criminal activities
- Engage in violent criminal activity, use illicit substances, or abuse alcohol
- Receive other housing subsidies while on the program

Your Responsibilities

- Abiding by the Voucher Obligations and your lease.
- Finding suitable housing.
- Paying rent according to your lease & RHA notices.
- Taking good care of your unit and reporting maintenance issues timely.

Landlord / Owner Responsibilities

- Screening families & determine their suitability as renters.
- Complying with Fair Housing Laws and the HAP Contract with RHA.
- Collecting your portion of the rent, security deposit, & any charges for damages to the unit.
- NOT collecting side payments from you or charging more than approved by RHA (with the exception of items not covered by RHA such as pet rent, cable/internet, etc.).
- Making repairs to the unit.
- Enforcing the lease.

RHA Responsibilities

- Determining your eligibility for the voucher program.
- Explaining the voucher program and your responsibilities to you.
- Inspecting your selected unit and ensuring the requested rent is reasonable and affordable.
- Calculating the Housing Assistance Payment and your portion of the rent.
- Paying housing assistance to the landlord.
- Ensuring the family and landlord are following voucher program rules.

RHA's Jurisdiction

- RHA serves all of Washoe County.
- Outside of Washoe County, the other PHAs are Southern NV Regional Housing Authority (serving Clark County) and NV Rural Housing Authority (serving all other counties).

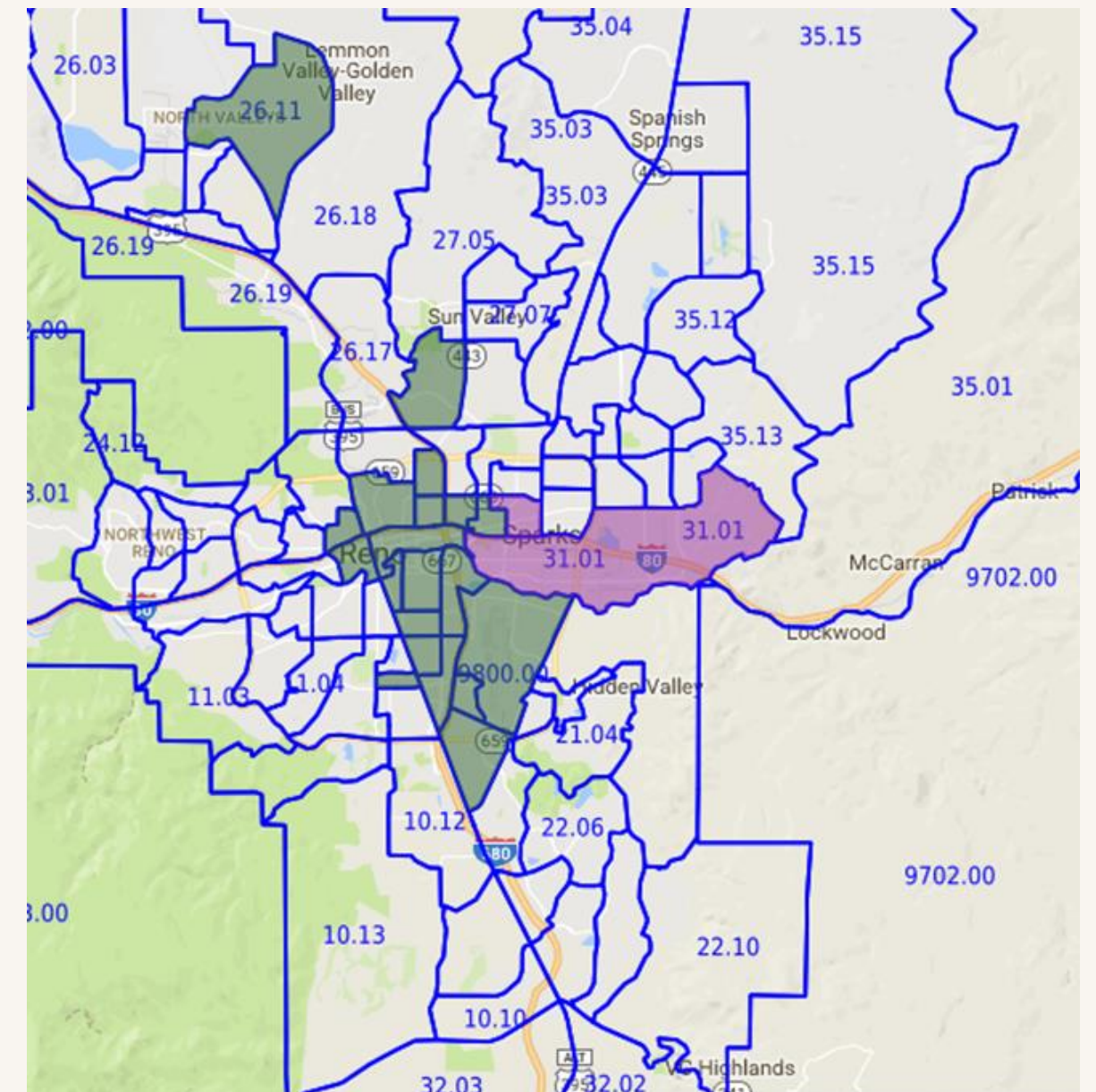


Things to consider when looking for a unit

- Neighborhood
 - Safety
 - Surrounding schools
 - Available transportation
 - Proximity to job opportunities
- Costs
 - What utilities will you be responsible for?
 - What other fees will you be responsible for, not covered by RHA?
- General condition of the unit and complex
 - Is the unit well taken care of?
 - Will it pass inspection?

Advantages of renting in a low poverty area

- Areas of low-poverty offer benefits to residents including:
 - Increased mental and physical health outcomes
 - Increased likelihood of finding employment
 - Increased likelihood of having higher income
 - Higher scores in schools for children
 - Children more likely to enroll in college
- The shaded areas on the map represent high poverty areas. You are not prevented from renting in these areas. The map is provided for you to make the best-informed decision for your household.



Portability: Moving to another City

Having an HCV allows you to maintain your housing assistance while moving anywhere in the U.S. that has a PHA with an HCV program.

To be eligible to port out, you must:

- Be a Washoe County resident when you receive your voucher, OR
- Live in Washoe County for 12 months before requesting to move

Other PHA's may have different requirements / rules, including what size voucher you are eligible for and re-screening you for eligibility. It is recommended to reach out to the PHA you are choosing to port to regarding their rules.

Please contact the Leasing Agent before beginning the port process.

Reasonable Accommodations

A reasonable accommodation is a change, exception or adjustment that may be necessary for a person with disabilities. This accommodation is provided to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to use and enjoy their unit (common and public spaces included), as well as to fulfill the program requirements.

Reasonable Accommodations for program-related policies (such as a larger voucher due to medical equipment or needing separate sleeping areas) are available through RHA.

Reasonable Accommodations for unit-related items (such as grab bars & parking spaces) are available through your landlord.

Reasonable Accommodations Continued

Reasonable accommodations are only available to persons with a disability.

There must be a nexus between the requested accommodation and the disability.

RHA will verify the need for the requested accommodation with a qualified professional of your choosing, who must have knowledge of you and your disability.

If you feel you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact your Housing Specialist to discuss and complete the necessary forms.

Frequently Asked Questions

If the rent and utilities are more than what my voucher is worth, can I pay the extra?

No. HUD states you cannot pay more than 40% of your monthly adjusted income for rent plus utilities at the initial lease-up. Paying more in a “side deal” with a landlord may cause you to lose your voucher.

When can I sign the lease?

After the unit passes inspection and the rent is determined reasonable for the area and affordable for your household, RHA will notify your landlord that you are approved to sign the lease.

Can I rent a larger unit than my voucher is for?

Yes, as long as the rent and utilities are less than your budget. Your voucher size does not limit the size of unit you can rent, but it does limit the amount of rent RHA can cover for your household.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I decide to rent a smaller unit than my voucher is for?

Your budget will decrease based on the payment standard for that unit size. You will need to contact the Leasing Agent for updated budgets.

What if I am responsible for utilities?

ALL utilities that are listed as your responsibility in the lease and HAP contract are your responsibility to pay.

Can my utilities be in someone else's name?

NO. Utilities must be in your name directly (or someone in the household). Review your lease carefully!

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I ever be responsible for paying more than 40% of my adjusted income in rent?

Yes, if at lease renewal the rent is raised above the payment standard, you will be responsible for the difference IF you decide to stay in the unit.

Does RHA help with security deposits or credit checks?

No, the deposit is your responsibility. RHA can only assist with rent, not including any optional amenities offered by a complex (ex. garage, storage unit, etc.)

What happens if my income goes down after move-in?

Your portion of the rent is based on your household's income. If your income goes down, please report changes to your Housing Specialist with an Update Form.

Documents to Sign

After completion of this video, please click on the links to download your Briefing Handbook and Section 3 Employment brochure, as well as download and complete the additional to opt into our notification system, Nixle. This form can be returned to our office at any time.

You will then be prompted to sign several forms, including your Emergency Contact form and voucher.

Additional Documents to Review

Make sure you check out the following documents, which have been uploaded to your Rent Café portal:

- **Family Summary:** This shows all of the household member and income information on your file.
- **Voucher Summary:** This summarizes the important information about your voucher, including your budget for shopping for a unit.

Important Takeaways!

Know your voucher expiration date. Extensions take time and are NOT guaranteed.

Unless it is part of an approved Reasonable Accommodation, you CANNOT rent from a family member.

Information on the lease-up process, maintaining your assistance, and other important topics can be found at our online video resource library located at www.renoha.org.

Information on RHA's Resident Services program can be found online at www.renoha.org/for-residents/.

Thank you for your time.

We are here to help you throughout this process. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

Rental Assistance contact information:

- Phone: 775-329-3630 option 5
- Email: section8@renoha.org
- Walk-in: Thursdays 9am – 11:30am and 1pm – 4pm