Landlord Resources

Advertising and locating property has never been easier!

The Greenfield Housing Authority has partnered with GoSection8, http://greenfield.gosection8.com/Tenant/tn_Results.aspx, which provides an enhanced program to list rental properties online. Listings are available to potential Housing Choice Voucher tenants seeking apartment units, duplexes, single-family homes or townhomes in the private market.

If you have any questions regarding registering, creating or viewing property listings, please contact the GoSection8 toll free help line at 1-866-466-7328.

Fair Housing

The Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office has authored a fact sheet for realtors and landlords to clarify Massachusetts fair housing laws for renting and advertising properties.

Housing Quality Standards

To rent to a tenant who has a Housing Choice (Section 8) Voucher, your property must meet the minimum Housing Quality Standards (HQS).
Fact Sheet for Realtors: Fair Housing

The Attorney General’s Office is responsible for enforcing many fair housing, consumer protection and lead paint laws. These include the Massachusetts Anti-discrimination Law, M.G.L. ch.151B, which prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental or advertising of housing by realtors, landlords, mortgage lenders, brokers, and property managers on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status or membership in the armed forces, receipt of Section 8 or other public assistance, or genetic information; as well as the federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to discriminate against someone in the sale or rental of housing because of a person’s race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, familial status, national origin, or handicap/disability.

Real estate professionals who rent, sell or buy property need to understand and comply with these laws so that they can make sure that tenant and prospective tenants’ rights to non-discriminatory treatment are protected, that rental advertisements are lawful, and that they can ensure that clients purchasing homes as rental income properties understand their legal obligations.

Guidance for Renting and Advertising Rental Properties:

- **It is against the law** to refuse to rent an apartment to someone because of the person’s race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity, marital status, religion, age, sexual orientation, military background, or disability or because a person receives public assistance, such as Section 8.

- **It is against the law** to refuse to rent to someone with children, unless the building has three units or less, one of the units is occupied by an elderly person (65 years or older), and the presence of children would constitute a hardship to that elderly person. You cannot advertise a rental property which indicates a preference for tenants without children.

- **You may not refuse to rent** to a tenant because he/she is too young or old, unless the building has three units or less, one of the units is occupied by an elderly person, and the presence of children would constitute a hardship to that elderly person. (With exception for properly licensed age 55+ communities.)

- **You may not refuse to rent** to a potential tenant because the person is blind, hearing impaired, or needs a guide dog. You also may not advertise a rental property that indicates a preference for tenants without disabilities.

- **Avoid advertising rental properties in a way that indicates bias or preference.** For example, it is illegal to post an advertisement saying “No Section 8” or “No Children”. Real estate professionals advertising rental properties also should avoid words that might be code for bias, as in “Perfect for professional couple” or “Single person preferred”.

For more information, please contact the **Attorney General’s Civil Rights Division** at http://www.mass.gov/ago or 617-963-2917.

You may also learn more from the **Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination** at http://www.mass.gov/mcad.

**Lead Paint:**

Massachusetts lead paint law, M.G.L. ch.111, § 197, requires owners to “de-lead” or remove lead paint hazards from any unit where a child under age six lives. The law also prohibits property owners from refusing to rent to someone with a child under six in order to avoid an obligation to de-lead.

Real estate professionals should ensure that housing advertisements do not discourage applicants with children under six from applying, and ensure that their clients understand that owners cannot refuse to rent to an applicant because of the obligations of the lead paint law.

To help prevent issues from arising, real estate professionals can advise their clients of these obligations when they are looking to purchase a home and intend to rent all or part of the home to tenants or when the real estate agent or broker agrees to list a rental property. De-leading costs can be an important factor in the financial decision-making process about a property. There may be state and local resources available to home owners to help defray the cost of de-leading.
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Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection Checklist for Landlords

This checklist is a tool for owners to prepare their units for an HQS Inspection. The checklist highlights some of the common violations found during unit inspections. The items on this checklist must be in working order or completed prior to the HQS Inspection.

- Utilities must be turned on
- No chipping/peeling paint inside or outside the unit if the home was built before 1978 and a child under 6 years of age resides in the unit
- Interior common areas must be free from significant holes, clutter and damage
- Stove and Refrigerator must be clean, secured and in good working condition
- Heating system must be permanently installed and working properly
- Hot and Cold running water in the kitchen and bathroom(s)
- There must be a shower or bathtub that works
- There must be a flush toilet that works, does not leak and is securely mounted
- Bathroom(s) must have either an outside window or an exhaust fan vented to the outside
- There must not be any plugged drains or plumbing leaks
- All plumbing fixtures must have a gas trap/P trap/drum trap to prevent sewer gas from entering the unit
- The hot water tank must have a temperature pressure relief valve with downward discharge pipe made of galvanized steel or copper tubing that is between six (6) to eight (8) inches from the floor or directed outside the unit
- Windows cannot be missing, broken or cracked and all sliding glass doors must have a lock
- All ground floor windows and exterior doors must open and close as designed and have working locks
- Each living space must have two means of fire egress (door & window)
- The unit must be free from roaches, rodents and/or any other infestations
- All electrical outlets/switches must have cover plates and be in good working condition
- All ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) must work properly
- All junction boxes are covered and there are no missing knockouts
- The roof must not leak. Indications of a leak are discolorations or stains in the ceiling
- The floor covering cannot be torn or have holes that can cause someone to trip
- Three (3) or more risers on stairs must have handrails (interior or exterior) and stairs and railings must be secure
- Walk offs or porches thirty (30) inches above grade must have guard rails
- Exterior foundation and siding must be intact and have structural integrity
- Chimney must be intact and have structural integrity and all flues must be free of holes and properly sealed at the chimney
- Exterior must be free from garbage and debris
- There must be working smoke detectors properly mounted on each level of the unit including the basement, walk-up attics and enclosed porches, consistent with the local Fire Department regulations
- Buildings with any fossil fuel must have carbon monoxide detectors on each floor, including basement & within 10 feet of each bedroom