

Figure 1-1 Key Activities in the Section 8 Program



Application Process

- A household in need of assistance applies for a Section 8 voucher by completing a PHA's application form.
- If the waiting list is "open," the agency administering the Section 8 program is accepting applications.
- If the waiting list is "closed," no one can apply for a voucher.

Screening and Verification of Eligibility

- When a household reaches the top of the list, the household will be required to supply documentation that verified eligibility for the Section 8 program.
- At this point, the PHA may also screen the household with regards to prior tenant history and/or recent criminal history.

Selection from Waiting List

- Depending on how many vouchers are available, the application is either: placed on a waiting list or, after verifying the household's eligibility for the Section 8 program, the household is given a voucher right away.
- In most communities, there are not enough vouchers for everyone who needs one so there are usually long waiting lists.
- Households move from the bottom of the waiting list to the top. Sometimes this takes a short amount of time and sometimes this takes years, depending on many factors that are discussed in the guidebook.

Section 8 Briefing

- When a household reaches the top of the waiting list, and is determined eligible for the program, the household is issued a voucher.

Housing Search

- The Section 8 household then has a short time (usually 60 to 120 days) to find a rental unit in the community that meets Section 8 guidelines (i.e., affordable and decent).
- In some cases, the household may already be living in a housing unit that meets the Section 8 guidelines and may choose to use the voucher in the existing unit.

Housing Quality Standards Inspection and Rent Reasonableness Determination

- If the owner agrees to participate in the Section 8 program, the unit is inspected to ensure that it is safe, decent, and of good quality.
- The rent of the unit is compared to rents of similar unassisted units in the community to ensure it is reasonable.

Annual Reexamination, Housing Quality Inspection, and Rent Reasonableness Determination

- At least annually, the Section 8 household must reestablish eligibility for the program and the unit is reinspected to ensure that it continues to meet Section 8 standards.

PHA Approves Unit and Computes Total Tenant Payment and Subsidy Amount

- All paperwork is signed (i.e., lease between household and owner; and contract between PHA and owner) and the household moves into the unit.
- At this point, the Section 8 rental assistance begins. The household pays between 30 and 40 percent of their income toward rent and any tenant-paid utilities, and the rent subsidy pays the difference. This subsidy is paid directly to the owner of the housing unit.