




SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

Renters: Know Your Rights!

Even if you owe rent, lose your voucher, or break your lease, your landlord **CAN'T**:

-  Change the locks to make you leave
-  Shut off your utilities (lights, water, gas)
-  Set your things on the street before the sheriff comes

If this happens to you, call Eviction Right to Counsel.

What is a Section 8 voucher?

- A Section 8 voucher is a **“housing subsidy”** that is attached to a person (a **voucher holder**) instead of an apartment. If you move, you can **take your voucher with you**.
- If you have a voucher, you’ll pay about **30% of your monthly household income** towards your rent. The government will make up the difference and pay the rest of the rent to your landlord each month.
- Sometimes, buildings will have something called **“project-based Section 8.”** This is a different housing subsidy that’s attached to the building instead of a person. If you **move out** of a project-based Section 8 complex, the subsidy **won’t come with you**.
- Every Section 8 voucher holder has a **caseworker**. Make sure you know yours!

What are my responsibilities with a Section 8 voucher?



- **Locate a unit within 60 days.** Landlords do not have to accept Section 8. For more time, make sure to request an extension **before** the voucher expires!
- **Recertify every year and whenever your household size or income changes.** Give proof of income for your household to your Section 8 caseworker.
- **Pay your portion of the rent every month.** Tell your caseworker if your income changes - it might affect your rent! **Sign** required consent and verification forms.
- **DO NOT** violate your lease, make the place unhealthy/unsafe, or threaten/do something dangerous. **This includes your guests.**
- **Notify your landlord and your caseworker in writing** of needed repairs.



(833) 837-HOME



(615) 701-7957



(615) 988-6460



This information is only for Davidson County. The information provided here does not and is not intended to constitute legal advice. If you have a legal problem, please call a private attorney or call your local Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland office at 1-800-238-1443 or the Nashville Hispanic Bar Association at 1-615-701-7957. Revised 5/24.

When can Section 8 try to **terminate** my voucher?



You can only lose your voucher **FOR CAUSE** (for a specific reason). For example, you could be at risk of losing your voucher for:

- **Program Violations.** This could mean being evicted, failing to report income or people in your household, damaging the unit, or threatening/doing something dangerous or illegal.
- **Failed Inspections.** If the landlord fails to make repairs in the timeframe set by Section 8, you will have to transfer your voucher to a new unit. If you don't find somewhere to move in 60 days, you could lose your voucher. Ask for an extension in writing **before** the voucher expires if you can't find a place.
- **Prolonged Absences.** If you are going to be away from your home for more than 14 days, tell your landlord and your Section 8 caseworker in writing. Be clear that you are **not** abandoning your unit and let them know why and for how long you think you will be gone.

What happens if my voucher is **terminated**?

- You have the right to a hearing with Section 8 before they terminate your assistance. Ask for a “**grievance**” meeting within **10 days** of the date on the paper that says your voucher is being terminated.
- Bring any **proof** or **information** about the problem with you to your grievance meeting.
- Your first meeting will usually be an **informal** meeting. If you can't resolve the problem there, you can usually request a **formal** hearing.
- If you lose your voucher, you become responsible for **100%** of the rent. If you're not able to pay the rent, the landlord may try to **evict** you.
- Even if you get behind on your rent, your landlord **can't** just change your locks or kick you out. They have to bring you to **court** first.

If you get court papers, GO TO COURT! If you don't, you will lose automatically.

When can I move without losing my voucher?

You can move with your voucher if you give **written notice** to your landlord and your Section 8 caseworker **after your lease ends.**



If you told your landlord and caseworker **in writing** about repairs you need but your landlord still didn't fix them, Section 8 should **cite** them. If the landlord still doesn't fix things after that, you should be able to move with your voucher.