

176 Rustic Drive
Circleville, Ohio
740-477-2514
pmha@pickawaymha.com
Fax: 740-477-7456
pickawaymha.org
TTY/TDD Customers:
Contact Ohio Relay Services
@711 or 1-800-750-0750



Pickaway Metropolitan Housing Authority

Commissioners:

Katie Logan
Hedges
Jay Elsea
Michael Taylor,
Sr.
Donald Hatfield
Kip Nungester

We wanted to take an opportunity to reach out to all landlords on the PMHA Housing Choice Voucher program in an effort to bring you up to date on our status regarding office operations, program adjustments and features to our website that may be beneficial to you.

Our office is currently closed to the public but intends to reopen on Monday, October 5, 2020. Through the pandemic we have conducted business successfully by fax, emailing documents and using regular mail. In the future we would like to continue to do this as much as possible, however we also want our office open to serve our clients and landlords. Until we reopen, if you would like to visit the office to sign paperwork or for any other reason, please call 740-477-2514 to let us know you are coming or that you are already in the parking lot. We will grant access to the building to you, or if appropriate staff is available, bring the paperwork outside to your vehicle. For purposes of entering the building, we do require masks. If you do not have one, we can provide one for you. Our staff wears a mask each time they step outside of their personal office for the protection of their co-workers and the public. Let us know if we can make this easier in any other way.

Derek Robinson became the new Agency Assistant on September 8, 2020. Derek will have many responsibilities within PMHA but will most frequently be the person who answers the telephone when you call the office. Derek has been a member of our maintenance staff for several years and decided to apply for the office opening when it became available. We are adapting this position to include other responsibilities and we feel confident Derek is the person who can help with this transition of responsibilities.

We have recently upgraded our website to include new features that will benefit persons who wish to apply online or who are already residents participating on our program. The website is now fully accessible to persons who are vision impaired. We will begin the transition to a paperless operation this Fall, and it is our goal to request a website feature for online signatures for both tenants and landlords. Once we confirm the availability of this option, we will let you know. Our website now includes a link where landlords can look up payment histories from PMHA. We receive requests for this information frequently and we are pleased to offer this to you. Upon accessing the website, click on the Landlord link and then the link "Landlord Payment Lookup". You may visit the website at pickawaymha.org.

As another feature to the website, we are asking that landlords make sure that we have either a current email or cell phone number and that you let us know which method is an acceptable

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

HUD Notification of Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability Status

Pickaway Metropolitan Housing Authority does not discriminate on the basis of disability status in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its federally assisted programs and activities. The person named below has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's regulations implementing Section 504 (24 CFR, part 8 dated June 2, 1988):

Jean Maynard, Pickaway Metropolitan Housing Authority, 176 Rustic Drive, Circleville OH 43113, Phone: 740-477-2514, Email:
jmaynard@pickawaymha.com

way to reach you if we want or need to send out a mass message. You can email this information to drobinson@pickawaymha.com

On August 13, 2020, our Board approved a change to our security deposit fund availability for current program participants. The program previously permitted Housing Choice Voucher recipients to use the security deposit fund for payment of their security deposit to the landlord. Until now, recipients have been limited to one use of this fund for deposit assistance. The recipients are required to repay the loan to PMHA and failure to do so could result in termination from the program. Because payment of a security deposit can be a roadblock to renting housing, we asked the board to allow previous recipients who successfully repaid their first loan to be able to apply for deposit assistance again. The Board has approved this language.

In July, we hosted a few HCV Landlords for breakfast at the PMHA office. We kept this initial gathering small so we could meet COVID requirements for social distancing in our available space. It was their recommendation that we continue to host these meetings to receive Landlord feedback and for an opportunity to learn more about day to day events at PMHA. We look forward to doing so as the threat of COVID wanes. Please let us know if you would like to attend a breakfast in the future. Again, you can email your interest to drobinson@pickawaymha.com.

One of the requirements of our program also discussed during that breakfast was Rent Reasonableness. When a landlord requests a rent for a HCV rental property, we are required to submit the information from the Rent Reasonable Data form to a company who has a data base of rental housing and associated rents for our area. This company is responsible for determining whether the rent requested by the landlord is reasonable for the property based on comparable information. The company that we and many other housing authorities use is Nelrod. Nelrod has had difficulty obtaining information for our area because there has not been a high volume of sales to obtain data from for purposes of comparability. We contacted Nelrod to ask if we could enlist our program landlords to provide information regarding rentals owned that **ARE NOT** rented through our program. Nelrod would be thrilled to receive this information for unassisted rental properties you may own. The landlords who attended our breakfast have agreed to participate. We are now asking all landlords to do this so that we can establish a large data base which results in better rents for you and a faster response to our requests for approval. If you are interested in sending information on your unassisted units to Nelrod, we can provide the form for you. Please contact one of our HCV staff members or Derek at the email above to request the form. We can provide one via email or regular mail, or you can pick them up at the office when we reopen. We cannot however, return them for you as this information is to come from you directly to Nelrod.

Their mailing address is:
Janell Hoppe
The Nelrod Company
3301 West Freeway
Ft Worth, Texas 76107

The email address is:
janell@nelrod.com

In addition to adding new units for comparable purposes, we are authorizing Nelrod to combine the average and below average jurisdictions into one location, called average neighborhoods.

They have made this change with other agencies and it has worked well in providing rent reasonableness data.

Finally, on September 16, 2020 our Board discussed policy regarding the approach to tenant fails versus landlord fails, and pass with comments. A Pass with Comments situation occurs where there are items that would be an HQS fail if they were larger in size or a health and safety issue. Examples are a hairline crack in an outlet cover or light switch, or an indentation in linoleum that is not ripped or torn but perhaps indented due to the weight of the resident or the lack of proper cushioning attachments to support the chair legs so they do not press into the flooring. Those items have been marked as fails in some PMHA inspections. We are recommending that our HQS Inspectors be more lenient in this regard and to pass with comment that this item will be monitored so it does not become a health or safety issue.

Regarding tenant fail versus landlord fail, it is at the discretion of the HQS Inspector to fail an item based on whether the issue is at the fault of the tenant or the fault of the landlord. Usually it is easy to distinguish. Inspectors typically mark it as a landlord fail because the repair must be made within 30 days or the rent is abated. Inspectors do not feel the tenants will have the financial means or capability to make the repair, so these damages have always been marked as a landlord fail. The staff recommended to the Board and the Board concurred with an adjustment in this way of thinking. If there is a damage that is obviously the fault of a tenant, the inspectors will now mark it as a tenant fail. We are further recommending that the landlord make the repair upon entering into a Repayment Agreement with the tenant, with the Repayment Agreement establishing a schedule by which the tenant is responsible to repay the landlord for the cost of the repair. If the tenant pays for the debt, it allows them to be accountable and to gain an appreciation for the cost of maintaining a unit. If the tenant fails to enter into or uphold the terms of the Repayment Agreement, the landlord would be justified in taking appropriate action based upon legal advice from their attorney.

Based on information provided, the Board moved and voted to approve this clarification of PMHA policy toward pass with comments and tenant fail versus landlord fail inspection criteria.