



CITY OF IOWA CITY MEMORANDUM

Date: June 6, 2016
To: Iowa City Landlords and Rental Property Managers
From: Stefanie Bowers, Human Rights Coordinator
Re: Public Assistance Source of Income Under Iowa City's Fair Housing Laws

Please be advised that as of June 1, 2016, it is illegal for any person to discriminate in a real estate transaction against an individual based on his or her participation in the **Housing Choice Voucher ("HCV")** Program (sometimes called "**Section 8**") or use of other rental subsidies.¹ Doing so will allow an injured HCV holder to file a complaint with the Iowa City Human Rights Commission. The amendment was passed by the City Council in February of 2016 to increase fair housing and fair opportunity.

A landlord or property manager may not refuse to rent to a tenant solely because the tenant is a HCV holder or uses a rental subsidy. To avoid unlawful discrimination against HCV holders, landlords and property managers should not:

- Advertise that they are not renting to HCV or Section 8 tenants. In other words, it is illegal to have on your website: No Section 8 allowed;
- Refuse to process a prospective renter's application because he or she has a voucher;
- Communicate to realtors/brokers/agents that they do not want to rent to voucher holders;
- Treat voucher holders less favorably than other potential tenants by inflating rents or screening such applicants more stringently.

The Iowa City Human Rights Ordinance does not require landlords or property managers to rent to a tenant just because he or she is a HCV holder. Landlords and property managers should:

- Screen voucher holders as they would any other prospective tenant, using the same neutral criteria (e.g., criminal background checks, prior rental history, credit checks, etc.);
- Document the selection criteria used to screen rental applicants to show that the same criteria is used for all applicants;
- Have a written policy of the selection criteria used to screen all rental applicants;
- Participate in fair housing trainings on a bi-annual basis.

The Iowa City Commission on Human Rights would much rather educate landlords and property managers to comply with fair housing laws than to see complaints filed. For questions on fair housing or to request a fair housing training please contact the Iowa City Human Rights Office at 319-356-5022 or 319-356-5015.

For questions on the Housing Choice Voucher Program please contact Housing Authority Administrator Steven Rackis at 319-887-6065.

¹ Unless landlord is exclusively a project based Section 8 provider.

For questions on Housing Code Enforcement please contact Senior Housing Inspector Stan Laverman at 319-356-5135.