Information prepared by the Suburban Hennepin Housing Coalition

The Section 8 Protection Ordinance prohibits the denial of prospective tenants simply for using Section 8 (Housing Choice Vouchers) or other subsidies to help pay rent.

Currently, accepting subsidies are voluntary. Housing providers can refuse to rent to individuals solely because they have a Housing Choice Voucher. In the Twin Cities’ tight rental market, this voluntary approach makes it difficult for families to access housing, particularly housing in opportunity-rich communities and neighborhoods. This ordinance ensures that voucher recipients are not excluded from the rental market for paying rent with a voucher, and that they are assessed as any other applicant would be. This allows families that rely on housing vouchers to have an equal opportunity to acquire housing.

**Impact of Ordinance**

1. **Prevents displacement of families** when a new owner who doesn’t accept in Housing Choice Vouchers buys a property.
2. **Prevents discrimination of voucher holders.**
3. **Opens up housing options for lower income families** who struggle to find homes in a tight rental market.
4. **Helps to efficiently utilize government supplied housing resources:** recipient loses voucher if unable to find housing in allotted time.
5. **Reduces amount of families that need to move away from their communities** in search of affordable housing.

**Positives for Landlords**

- **Reliable, trustworthy tenants** - The government has a rigorous application process to receive housing vouchers and screens all of its participants.
- **Assurance of rent paid** - Rent covered by a subsidy or voucher is paid directly to the landlord from government, ensuring timely and full payments.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Who else participates in this program?**

Around the country, there are currently 13 states other than Minnesota, 10 counties, and over 45 cities that participate in/have a similar program.

**What if there is a problem with the renter?**

Landlords retain all of the rights they already had to deal with troublesome tenants.

**Does a landlord have to lower their rents?**

No, however a landlord cannot raise their rent simply to avoid being part of the program; that could be considered intentional discrimination.

**Does this mean if a person has a voucher a landlord has to accept them as a renter?**

No, however, the applicant has to be assessed just like any other applicant, and if they meet all of the landlord’s qualification policies, then they cannot be disqualified from renting.

*FAQ compiled by attorneys with the Housing Justice Center*