



SHOLA OLATOYE
CHAIR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:
UNDERSTANDING CHANGES TO NYCHA'S SECTION 8 VOUCHER PAYMENT STANDARD

1. What is the Section 8 voucher payment standard?

The voucher payment standard is the maximum amount of money a public housing authority can pay to an owner for an apartment. The payment standard is set for each voucher bedroom size and is a percentage of the Fair Market Rent (FMR) established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

2. How is the payment standard set?

Housing authorities generally set their payment standards between 90 and 110% of FMR. For many years, NYCHA has historically set its voucher payment standard at 110% of FMR— the highest level in this range.

3. Why is NYCHA changing the payment standard?

Due to a decrease in Federal funding and increased costs, NYCHA has made the difficult decision to reduce its payment standard to 105% of the Fair Market Rent (FMR). This means that NYCHA will reduce the amount it pays for rent on behalf of the tenant. This change is necessary so that NYCHA can continue to pay subsidies for those families who are currently receiving Section 8.

4. Will the payment standard change apply to everyone in NYCHA's Section 8 program?

No. It will not apply to families living in project-based units or those with enhanced vouchers.

5. How will the new payment standard affect families?

If a family's contract rent is above the voucher payment standard in 2016, they will likely see an increase in the tenant share of the rent. This is because NYCHA will be paying a lower subsidy amount to the owner using the new payment standard.

6. When will new payment standard go into effect?

If a family stays in their current unit, NYCHA will apply the new payment standard for the 2016 annual recertification. If a family moves to a different unit on January 1, 2015 or after, NYCHA will use the new payment standard to determine how much the tenant share will be as of the date of the new rental. You will be notified of your new share when you receive your voucher change notice.

7. Will everyone see an increase in their tenant share of the rent as a result of the new payment standard?

No. Only families whose contract rent is higher than the new payment standard will see an increase. The contract rent is the agreed upon rent for the apartment reflected in the lease between the owner and tenant.

8. How will I know if I am affected?

If your contract rent is at or above the new payment standard, you may see an increase in your portion.

9. How does the new Section 8 voucher payment standard differ from current standards?

The chart below shows the current NYCHA payment standard at 110% of FMR, and the new payment standard of 105% of FMR, and the difference between those payment standards for each unit size.

BEDROOM SIZE	PAYMENT STANDARD (110% of FMR)	New Payment Standard (105% OF FMR)	DIFFERENCE
0	\$1,279	\$1,255	-\$24
1	\$1,336	\$1,311	-\$25
2	\$1,584	\$1,555	-\$29
3	\$2,037	\$1,999	-\$38
4	\$2,282	\$2,240	-\$42
5	\$2,624	\$2,576	-\$48
6	\$2,966	\$2,912	-\$54
7	\$3,309	\$3,248	-\$61
8	\$3,652	\$3,584	-\$68

10. How many families will be affected by the change in the payment standard?

We estimate that about one-third of the families on the Section 8 program (about 29,000 families) will pay a higher tenant share when the new payment standard goes into effect.

11. How much more will affected families pay?

It's hard to say with certainty because a family's contract rent and income may change. Below are estimated averages of tenant share increases.

MONTHLY INCREASE IN TENANT SHARE	ESTIMATED # OF AFFECTED FAMILIES
Up to \$20	3,072
\$21 - \$40	26,331
\$41 - \$60	412
\$61 - \$80	1
\$81 - \$100	0
\$101+	0
TOTAL	29,816

We estimate that the average monthly increase could be \$25.

12. Can a family move if they cannot afford the rent?

Yes, a family can move to a new unit. But, starting on January 1, 2015, the new voucher payment standard will apply when the new move takes place. If a family stays in their current unit, the new payment standard will apply at the 2016 annual recertification.

13. Can a disabled family request a reasonable accommodation if the payment standard causes a rent hardship?

Yes, NYCHA will review requests for a reasonable accommodation. A disability is defined as a physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment. Examples include mobility impairments, sensory impairments, chronic health problems, and mental health problems.

A reasonable accommodation may be requested at any time. To request a reasonable accommodation, the head of household must call the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771 and request a Disability Status and Notice of Reasonable Accommodation form (059.109). Confirmation of the need for the reasonable accommodation must be submitted by a medical professional and returned to NYCHA.

14. Are there any other services which could assist my family with rent?

If you become behind in your rent and your housing is at risk you can apply for emergency rental assistance from the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA), and, if you are eligible, assistance may be provided. You can call HRA at 718-557-1399 or go to their website at nyc.gov/hra for more information (See "Emergency Assistance" under "Cash Assistance").