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| **HUD-VASH** |
| San Francisco VAMC Comprehensive Homeless Center |
|  HUD-VASH Resident Handbook |
|  |



HUD-VASH

# **San Francisco V.A. Downtown Clinic**

401 3rd Street

San Francisco, CA 94107

(415) 281-5100

# **San Bruno Outpatient Clinic**

*San Mateo County*

1001 Sneath Lane Suite 300
San Bruno, CA 94066
(650) 615-6000

**Santa Rosa Outpatient Clinic**

*Sonoma and Marin Counties*

3841 Brickway Boulevard

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

(707) 569-2300

**Ukiah Outpatient Clinic**

*Mendocino County*

630 Kings Court

Ukiah, CA 95482

(707) 468-7700

**Eureka Outpatient Clinic**

*Humboldt County*

930 W. Harris

Eureka, CA 95503

(707) 269-7500

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**PROGRAM STAFF**

You will be assigned to a case manager to assist you in meeting your goals. Any of the program staff may assist you if you have a need. We are all here to help you reach your goals. Your case manager is:

Case Manager Name Phone Number Phone Number

If you have concerns or questions, please feel free to contact the HUD-VASH Supervisors.

* **Dennis Moore, LCSW** (415) 489-3301
* **Chang Yi, LCSW** (415) 489-3332
* **Nick Madsen, LCSW** (415) 650-6198
* **Rose Nguyen, LCSW** (415) 489-3300
* **Lanetta Smyth, LCSW** (707) 326-1422

Program Support Assistants are also available to answer general inquiries about HUD-VASH.

* **Vita Chang (San Francisco)** (415) 489-3309
* **(Santa Rosa/Northern Counties)** (707) 569-2300

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

Hours of operation for the HUD-VASH Program are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Holidays. We are closed for the following Holidays:

New Year’s Day Labor Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Columbus Day

Washington’s Birthday Veterans Day

Memorial Day Thanksgiving Day

Independence Day Christmas Day

**COMPREHENSIVE HOMELESS CENTER**

Although one-third of America’s homeless individuals are believed to be veterans, services for homeless veterans were once limited in the San Francisco City County area. San Francisco VA Medical Center (SFVAMC) and community agencies took action to address the problem and now there are many treatment and rehabilitation programs to meet the unique needs of homeless veterans. In 1993, the San Francisco VA Medical Center introduced a Comprehensive Homeless Center (CHC), which helps mentally and physically ill homeless veterans rejoin the community as productive citizens. The Housing and Urban Development (HUD)–Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (VASH) Program is an integral part of the services provided by the CHC.

**WHAT IS THE HUD-VASH PROGRAM?**

The HUD-VASH program assists veterans in finding and maintaining permanent housing in order to achieve stability and other personal milestones.

The HUD-VASH Program is a joint effort between the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Supported Housing (SH) Programs. This program assists homeless veterans by providing long-term quality housing, comprehensive case management, and community support services. HUD-VASH is a community-based rehabilitation program, which affords you the skills and support needed to live in the community and to maintain physical and psychological well-being.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the HUD-VASH Program is to offer homeless veterans a chance to obtain housing, integrate into their communities, and participate in meaningful activities.

It is our goal to provide you with the highest quality of care and the basis of our treatment philosophy is the belief that all veterans deserve safe and sustainable housing.

The HUD-VASH program supports health and wellness using an intensive case management method. Your VASH case manager will help you develop the tools to make the changes to support community re-entry, work on relapse prevention, and to enhance your ability to live independently. This is accomplished through assessment, planning, referral to community resources, and tracking your progress. The amount of time you spend in the program depends on your goals and your compliance with case management.

**PROGRAM GOALS** Assisting *homeless veterans to:*

* Obtain the skills and resources needed to resume independent and dignified lives in the community.
* Secure housing in the community.
* Adjust to housing in the community.
* Maintain mental/emotional stability.
* Improve health and quality of life.
* Increase earning potential, work readiness, and education.
* Achieve personally defined goals.

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

*The HUD-VASH program is designed for the following:*

* To provide support and assistance in reaching goals.
* To provide the supports needed for relapse prevention and community re-entry.
* To provide case management that is innovative and designed around individual needs.
* To help establish a stable source of income.
* To help build the skills that support engagement in meaningful activities.
* To build collaborative working relationships with community providers, housing agencies, etc.
* To help improve and maintain physical health with access to medical resources.
* To promote psychological well-being and increased self-esteem.
* To assess living situations and help strengthen those areas requiring reinforcement through education, groups, and individual training sessions.
* To advocate, when appropriate, with landlords, Public Housing Authority, community agencies, utility companies, the VA, etc.
* To support in the development and implementation of effective coping skills.

**MEDICAL CARE**

You may already have a primary medical provider. If so, please continue to seek medical care from your assigned medical care team. Your case manager can assist you in establishing regular health services. All HUD-VASH clients are eligible for medical care.

**MENTAL HEALTH CARE**

If you already have a mental health care team, continue to seek assistance from that team. If you do not have a mental health team and you would like to receive this service, talk to your case manager about linkages to providers.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

The HUD-VASH program will make all reasonable accommodations to allow maximum access by veterans. It is our policy to make every effort to define and reduce any barriers to care. If you face any impediments to access, please let us know by contacting your VASH case manager for help.

**FAMILY MEMBERS**

If you choose, your spouse and children may live with you in the HUD-VASH Program. You must inform the Public Housing Authority (PHA) and they must approve your family members, in writing, before they reside with you in the rental unit. Even if your family does not reside with you in your home, we encourage you to include them in your care. They are welcome to take part in any educational programs offered by VASH, including classes, social events, clinical programs, and case management. Your family may benefit from having information about your health problems, learning that recovery is possible and getting advice on how to be helpful. You may request that your case manager provide this information to your family or friends over the phone or in person. You may choose to exclude them from any discussions about you and your care. Either way, it is your legal right to determine the level of involvement of your family members in your care. You may discuss this choice with your case manager.

**SCREENING AND ADMISSION**

The target group for the HUD-VASH Program is chronically homeless veterans who have medical, mental health, and/or substance use issues. Veterans must be eligible for health care benefits at the VA. **Veterans must take part in case management for the length of the voucher or until graduation from case management services is indicated.** The household income must not exceed HUD income limits and the veteran and family members must agree to comply with HUD rules. Veterans who meet the basic criteria for HUD-VASH will be assessed by a case manager regarding vulnerabilities, risk factors, and history of homelessness. If you are approved for the program, you will be assigned to a case manager to guide you through the housing process and provide ongoing, comprehensive supports.

In order to receive your HUD-VASH voucher, you will need to submit an application packet to the Public Housing Authority (PHA) in your county. The PHA will need:

* Copy of your driver’s license or state ID
* Copy of your social security card
* Copy of your birth certificate
* Verification of income (pay stubs, letter from the social security office or VA, bank statements, etc.)

If you plan to have your partner or children reside with you, they must also provide these documents. Your case manager will work with you on this process. Once your application packet is processed by the PHA, you will receive a date to meet with the PHA and obtain your voucher. Your case manager may accompany you to this meeting.

The PHA must conduct a criminal background check on every household member before a voucher is awarded to a program participant.Lifetime registered sex offenders are not allowed to participate in this program. Other legal or criminal history should be discussed with your case manager as a barrier to care and for goal setting. You will not be excluded from taking part in this program based on that history. Criminal activity that occurs in HUD subsidized housing, however, results in termination from the HUD subsidized housing program and revocation of your voucher.

**USING YOUR VOUCHER**

Once referred to the PHA, you should begin your housing search. Most rental agencies require that you pay an application fee. This fee can range from $10-$40 and is non-refundable. Your case manager can help you find a housing unit and will remain involved with you to assist in the transition to stable housing. Your case manager may also transport you during your search. The case manager will assist with referrals to community agencies that may assist you with security deposits, utility deposits, and furniture. These resources are limited and you should not count on them.

**Do not sign a lease until your case manager tells you that the PHA has approved your move-in.**

As you embark on your search for housing, please try the following tips:

* Check local newspaper classified ads
* Check unit guides
* On the internet, go to GoSection8.com. (If you don’t have internet access, try your local library, the VA library, or ask your case manager to assist you)
* Call local real estate agents to see if they manage any rental property
* Your case manager can also provide you with housing location information

**Most of all, keep a positive outlook.** Finding good housing can be a challenge, but it is not impossible. In fact, it is very possible.

**UNIT INSPECTIONS**

Participants in the HUD-VASH program should keep their units clean and safe.

The PHA will inspect the unit you select to make sure that the home meets basic housing standards. The PHA will also ensure that the unit manager is doing their part to complete regular repairs on the unit. Some of the issues the PHA looks for when inspecting a unit are:

* No cracks, leaks, or holes in walls or roof
* Carpet is not worn or stained
* Working smoke alarms
* Proper plumbing and all drains flow freely with no leaks
* Fire safety and no grease buildup around stove or oven
* Stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, etc. are working properly
* No pests, roaches, rats, mice, etc.
* Working heating system
* No furniture blocking exits or walkways

HUD-VASH clients are responsible for the general care of their home once they move in. This means changing light bulbs, keeping fresh batteries in the smoke alarms, cleaning the floors and carpets, keeping the home clean and free of pests. You should report any leaks, pests, draining problems, broken appliances, flooring issues or damage to the landlord as soon as you notice it.

Your case manager will also make scheduled home visits to ensure the following:

* You are able to do the normal household duties
* People who are living in the unit have been approved by HUD and the landlord
* Your home is a safe living setting
* There has been no damage to the unit

**WHAT WILL I HAVE TO PAY?**

**HUD-VASH is NOT FREE Housing**.HUD requires that you pay at least **30%,** but not more than **40%,** of your adjusted household income toward your rent and estimated utilities. Your rental portion is based on the amount of money you receive before deductions such as taxes. Income also includes the amount of money received as gifts or donations from others or child support and alimony that you receive. HUD does not deduct payments or debts that you are repaying from your adjusted income. Disabled persons receive an annual deduction, which results in slightly lowered rent. It is important to know that even if you have no income, HUD requires that you pay at least $50 monthly toward your rent. This should be a factor in deciding whether this program is right for you in terms of your financial situation.

**SUPPORTED HOUSING AGREEMENT**

The VA Supported Housing Agreement (HA) is a contract that you and your case manager will sign at the same time. This contract describes the VASH program supports and rules. Each veteran will receive planning and support based on their unique needs, goals and desires, but the HA contains program basics. You will need to sign the HA stating that you are aware of and agree with the terms of the program. If you and your case manager decide that a certain part of the HA will not affect you, the item can be deleted from your HA. In the same way, you may add other items to the Housing Agreement as appropriate.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

HUD-VASH is designed to help you build, grow, and strengthen your community supports. Community supports are the people and places that help you meet your needs and goals. These include the places you choose to live, work, or go to school. It also includes the people with whom you engage in recreational activities and places where you spend your time, attend to your spiritual needs, receive mental or physical health care, or go to for a feeling of safety or control. People find that community supports help them to deal with daily stress, get help with day-to-day problems, fill their time with satisfying activities, obtain information and help needed to meet goals and meet their needs for friendships and positive relationships.

**MONEY MANAGEMENT/BUDGETING**

Many veterans with a long history of substance abuse/dependence or chronic homelessness have limited skills in the areas of handling money and staying on a budget. The VASH program staff will provide support and education to build skills in setting a budget and handling your money.

**VOCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

The VASH Program can provide you with vocational assistance and referral to vocational training and services. The vocational specialist will support you in your goals to increase your income through employment. Vocational programming can assist you in locating a job, finding meaningful work opportunities, or assist you in reaching your educational goals.



**CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

* **Assessment:** The case manager will regularly assess your strengths, needs, abilities, preferences, and barriers to care.
* **Personal Planning:** Your Treatment Plan will address the problems that are important to you. Your case manager will help you carry out your stated objectives, make changes in the plan as needed, and monitor them over time.
* **Referral for Services:** Referrals for direct services are coordinated by the case manager and may include psychiatric or medical evaluation, counseling, legal assistance, family intervention, recovery/aftercare, vocational/employment, housing, psychotherapy, grief counseling, credit counseling, educational training, GED preparation, specialized groups and classes (e.g., anger management, assertiveness training, community re-entry). These services will also include help with getting the items needed to secure a voucher with the local Public Housing Authority.
* **Counseling:** Your case manager will conduct private counseling sessions with you if you need help in the areas of housing, employment, relapse prevention, use of leisure time, socialization skills, legal issues, and other areas.
* **Tracking Your Progress:** Consistent evaluation of progress toward personal goals includes tracking your medical status, emotional/mental well-being, education, financial/budgeting skills, adjustment to housing, recovery process, employment/vocational issues, social/family concerns, as well as your integration into the community.
* **Recording your Progress:** Staff will record your progress in the medical record, complete psychosocial assessments, self-sufficiency planning, document clinical concerns requiring intervention, behavioral changes, motivation, compliance, medical emergencies, feedback from medical providers, discharge planning, etc.
* **Follow-up Services:** To ensure that you move toward your goals, program staff will work with you to navigate the systems with which you interact.
* **Liaison:** Your case manager may act as a liaison between you and your probation or parole officer, you and the PHA, you and landlords or property manager, or between you and other community agencies, as you deem appropriate.
* **Case Manager Selection:** The HUD-VASH supervisor will review the Veteran’s current needs and personal history as well as the case manager’s expertise and caseload acuity in order to determine assignment.
* **How to Change Case Managers:** As participants in the HUD-VASH program, it is your responsibility to make efforts to engage with your assigned caseworker. If you feel that the relationship is not working, then you are strongly encouraged to communicate this to the caseworker and attempt to reach a resolution. If you have tried to address the situation and still feel that your working relationship is unsuccessful, please contact a HUD-VASH supervisor to evaluate your concerns and options. In some instances, we may be able to assign you to a new caseworker who better matches your needs. This is dependent, however, on a number of factors, including staff availability, the nature of the request to transfer, and whether or not it is clinically indicated.
* **Mandated Reporting and Risk of Harm:** Your HUD-VASH case manager is a Mandated Reporter, which means that they are required by law to report suspected abuse and/or neglect of children and older adults to authorities. They are also required to contact law enforcement and/or emergency medical services if there is reason to believe that you may harm yourself or another. If you have questions or concerns about what this means, please consult with your worker.
* **Medications:** HUD-VASH caseworkers are unable to deliver medications from your doctor or pharmacy. It is against Medical Center policy for anyone other than the intended recipient to transport prescription medications on your behalf. If you have questions or concerns about how to access your medications, please discuss this with your doctor or caseworker.

**TERMINATION AND DISCHARGE**

The VASH Program is a long-term case management program and every effort will be made by staff to ensure your success and maintain your program participation as needed. You may be discharged, however, for the following reasons:

* You have shown success in the program and it is agreed that you have reached the full benefit of the program.
* You have shown success and have obtained a stable income that is above HUD income limits.
* You have not kept in contact with your case manager and/or you are non-compliant with the Housing Agreement.
* Your care is greater than the HUD-VASH program can provide.
* Your behavior places you and/or the case manager at risk.

VASH case managers will complete ongoing assessments and discuss your progress with the VASH team. **If you are not compliant with case management, you will receive a discharge notice.** You will be given 15 days to appeal the termination decision.

**APPEALING VASH DISCHARGE**

If you would like to appeal our intent to discharge you from the HUD-VASH Program, you must first file a written response stating your desire to appeal. This appeal must be in writing and sent to the:

**HUD VASH** **Program Manager (Discharge Appeals)**

**c/o Alice (Jia) Son, LCSW, Director Hud/Vash**

 **901 Market Suite 380, San Francisco, CA 94103**

You have seven working days from the date the discharge notice is received to respond with your request for an appeal. Once your request for appeal is processed, you will be able to come before the VASH team to state your concerns and the reasons you believe the decision is unfair.

If you do not request an appeal in writing, or if you fail to present for your appeal, the PHA will be advised of our intent to discharge you from the HUD-VASH Program. At that point, you and the landlord will receive a 30-day written notice from the PHA stating that you are being discharged from HUD-VASH.

**Discharge from the VA Supported Housing Program will result in the loss of the Housing Choice Voucher.**

**CASE MANAGEMENT AFTER DISCHARGE**

Veterans who surrender their vouchers or who are discharged from the HUD-VASH Program will have the option of continued case management services for six months after their discharge. These services will provide support as needed for your continued success in the community. Although you are not required to accept this service, we urge you to use available supports to aid your success.

**RE-ENTRY TO HUD-VASH**

Failure to comply with the program requirements may result in early termination from the HUD-VASH Program. Our staff will make every effort to help you identify your barriers to successful housing and will attempt to implement an action plan to maintain your housing. If you are discharged from HUD-VASH, however, our staff will help you with the development of a plan to re-enter the program and to access referrals for VA and community support services.

Veterans who have been discharged may be readmitted to the program. You will have to comply with reentry goals established by your case manager and with HUD guidelines. If you are eligible and accepted, you will be assigned to a case manager. If immediate opening are not available, you will be placed on an interest list. If denied acceptance, you will be provided with referrals to other options to meet your needs.

**GRIEVANCE POLICY**

You can report any concern about this program or your care by verbal report or in writing. We ask that you follow these steps when you disagree with a decision that affects you:

**Step 1**: For all disagreements about your care and the HUD-VASH Program, please start with your case manager. If your case manager does not resolve your concern in a fair amount of time, please proceed to the next step.

**Step 2**: HUD-VASH Supervisor

c/o Dennis Moore, LCSW; Chang Yi, LCSW; Nick Madsen, LCSW; Rose Nguyen, LCSW

901 Market Suite 380

San Francisco, CA 94103

The Program Manager will respond to your concern in seven working days from the date received. If you do not agree with this result, you may proceed to the next step.

**Step 3**: HUD-VASH Director

c/o Alice (Jia) Son, LCSW, Director Hud/Vash

901 Market Suite 380

San Francisco, CA 94103

The Director of the Comprehensive Homeless Center will respond to concerns in seven working days from the date received. If you do not agree with the results of the Director of the Comprehensive Homeless Center, you may proceed to the next step.

**Step 4**: Chief of Social Work

Joanne Peters, LCSW

4150 Clement Street

San Francisco, CA 94122

The Chief of Social Work will respond in seven working days from the date received.

**Fair and prompt consideration will be given to assist you in solving your concerns. All concerns are tracked internally to use for program improvement purposes.**

**ETHICAL CONCERNS**

You have the right to report ethical concerns without fear of retaliation. If you have an ethical concern, please report it to your case manager or a HUD- VASH Supervisor. If you are unable to resolve the concern in this way, or you are uncomfortable resolving it in this way, please contact the Director of the Comprehensive Homeless Center at (415) 489-3306 or a patient advocate at (415) 221-4810.

**CODE OF ETHICS**

1. All staff is expected to abide by the Statement of Organizational Ethics.
2. All staff is expected to behave in a professional manner in all contacts with other staff, Veterans, and Veterans’ family members or their significant others.
3. All staff will be held accountable to the ethical and conduct standards of their professional associations and licensing/certification boards.
4. All staff-veteran, veteran-staff, and staff-staff interactions are to be conducted with respect and dignity.
5. Confidentiality will be maintained by all staff at all times.
6. Any inappropriate social and/or personal relationship or contact between staff and veterans (including former patients in or outside the hospital) are not allowed.

**SMOKING POLICY**

The VA is a non-smoking facility and smoking is allowed only in designated smoking areas. In addition, smoking is not permitted in government vehicles. Smoking policies at housing units vary and some housing units do not permit smoking inside the home. This might be something for you to consider as you select your housing unit In keeping with the core health mission of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the following measures have been adopted in order to strengthen existing smoke-free policies.

1. Whenever possible, smoking areas should not be within 50 feet of any entrance of a VA healthcare or office building that is routinely used by patients, residents, employees, or staff.
2. All facilities need to work to reduce the number of smoking areas on their grounds.
3. Wherever possible, the designated smoking area for employees and staff needs to be separate from that of patients and residents.

**ACCESS TO YOUR RECORDS**

Your medical records and all other information about you will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required or permitted by law or you consent to its release. Your case manager may ask you to sign consent for Release of Information to discuss your case with your landlord, prospective landlord, community agencies, family members, or others. You may withdraw your consent at any time.

The Department of Veterans Affairs uses the Release of Information Form 10-5345. Your consent (signature) for release of information will expire at a specified date or upon your discharge from the program.

**PATIENT RIGHTS**

Patients have a right to be treated with dignity in a human environment that affords them both reasonable protections from harm and appropriate privacy and confidentiality of information with regard to personal needs.

**Patients/Residents Have a Right To:**

* Considerate and dignified care that respects your personal value and belief systems regardless of race, sex, national origin, age or sources of payment for care.
* Freedom from abuse, exploitation, retaliation, humiliation and neglect.
* Prompt and appropriate care in the least restrictive environment for that treatment.
* Patients and family participation in decisions regarding care.
* Participate in consideration of ethical issues that arise in the provision of care.
* Receive information necessary to give informed consent in terms the patient can understand prior to the start of any procedure or treatment, including significant alternatives and the identity of persons responsible for treatment.
* Maximum possible privacy and security.
* Have all medical and personal information treated as confidential unless consent to its release, or disclosure is required, or permitted by law.
* Designate a representative to make medical decisions on the patient’s behalf in the event that they are incapable of understanding a proposed treatment or procedure or are unable to communicate wishes regarding care.
* Formulate Advance Directives.
* Obtain complete and current information in understandable terms concerning diagnosis, treatment and prognosis.
* Refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the medical consequences of such refusal.
* Know if the hospital plans to engage in any experimentation affecting treatment and the right to refuse to participate in such research.
* Expect reasonable continuity of care, know in advance what appointment times and physicians are available and to know what is necessary for continuing care after discharge.
* Communicate freely and privately with persons outside the facility and to have or refuse visitors.
* Wear the patient’s own clothes and keep personal possessions, barring any medical or safety related factor.
* Express a complaint and receive prompt attention to matters of concern without fear of retaliation or access to case being compromised.
* Receive unopened mail. Have restrictions explained. If there is reason to believe the mail may contain contraband, the patient will open the mail in the presence of an appropriate staff member.
* Know what hospital rules and regulations apply to all patients and residents.
* Receive pastoral care/counseling or spiritual services.
* Have freedom from mental, physical, sexual, and verbal abuse or neglect.
* Access to protective services.
* Receive assistance in determining guardianship, if necessary.
* Receive assistance with special communication needs.

**PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

* Follow all of SFVAMC’s safety rules and posted signs.
* Be considerate and respectful of SFVAMC personnel and other patients.
* Cooperate with treatment staff. If the patient has questions or disagrees with a treatment plan, the patient is responsible for discussing it with treatment staff.
* Prevent any injury to the patient/resident, other patients, visitors, and staff members by your own actions and to be responsible for the safekeeping of clothing, money, and personal possessions patients choose to keep on their person while they are in this facility.
* Keep all scheduled diagnostic or treatment appointments on time.
* Avoid interfering with the treatment of other patients, particularly in emergency situations.
* Encourage visitors to be considerate of other patients and SFVAMC personnel, and observe the visiting hours.
* The patient should understand what medications they must take following discharge from the SFVAMC, and whether scheduled for outpatient follow-up.
* Inform SFVAMC personnel of desired changes in Advance Directives.

**FINAL REMARKS**

You are starting a journey that leads to stable and safe housing in a home of your choice. This journey begins with the VASH program staff. Case management is the key part of the program, the goal of which is to assist you in reaching your objectives. We wish you the best as you embark on your new beginning. In order to serve you better and meet your needs, the VASH staff welcomes your input. If you have any suggestions, complaints, opinions, ideas or proposals, please feel free to talk to any of the VASH staff members.

![C:\Users\vhasfchubbad1\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\OEV1QY5R\MP900387468[1].jpg]()**Appendix A: TIPS FOR RENTERS**

**→ Think about your safety and triggers to relapse**

When you are looking for a rental home, consider the safety and character of the neighborhood and the rental unit itself. If you have concerns, find out what you can expect your landlord to do to ensure your safety (security guards, locked gates, or police patrol).

**→ Dress for success**

As you visit potential housing units, be prepared. Dress as you would if you were going to look for employment. Most landlords want to meet potential renters in person. Always be polite and friendly while working with the prospective landlord.

**→ Review the lease**

Carefully read the terms of your lease before you sign it. Do not sign the lease until the PHA or your VASH case terms that you do not agree to. Do not sign the lease until the PHA or your VASH case manager tells you the inspection passed and that you are ready to move in.

**→ Get everything in writing**

To avoid disputes with your landlord, get everything in writing. Keep copies of any messages between you and the landlord. If you make a verbal agreement, follow up with a letter to confirm your agreement.

**→ Understand your rights to privacy**

The landlord has the right to enter your unit to make certain repairs, but he/she must provide you with notice before entering your unit. Understand your rental rights.

**→ Ask for repairs**

The landlord is required to maintain safe and livable housing. If your rental unit is not kept in good repair, you have a number of options. If your landlord refuses to repair your unit, discuss this with your case manager.

**→ Talk to your landlord**

Keep communication open with your landlord. If there's a problem talk it over to see if the issue can be resolved. Always be respectful.

**→ Purchase renters' insurance**

Your landlord's insurance policy covers the actual building itself. Their insurance will not cover your losses due to theft or damage. Renter’s insurance covers your contents and it covers you if someone who claims to have been injured in your rental unit sues you.

**→ Protect your security deposit**

To protect yourself and your security deposit, make sure you are aware of the deductions to that the security deposit that are in your lease.

**Appendix B: HOUSING WORKSHEET**

**Initial Costs of moving into a house:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **On Hand**  | **Estimated Cost** |
| **Application Fees** | $ | $ |
| **First Month’s Rent** | $ | $ |
| **Security Deposit** | $ | $ |
| **Utility Deposit** | $ | $ |
| **Misc.** | $ | $ |
| **Total:** |  |  |

**Sign Handbook Receipt**

**on the Next Page**

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**Appendix C: PATIENT RISK STATEMENT**

I, , have been advised of the potential risks of independent housing, the transit system I use for travel, the areas where I receive VA services, and the areas where I am referred for additional services.

**Appendix D: PATIENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT**

Veteran’s signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Case worker’s signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Notes**

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