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SECTION 8/HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER WAITING LIST OPENS

*New Process Enables Opening Three Times Sooner Than Prior Years,
To Accept 3,000 Applications*

ROCHESTER, N.Y., November 13, 2019 – The Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) announced today that the waiting list for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, more commonly referred to as Section 8, will open for a two-week period to new applications on December 9, 2019 at 12:01 a.m. and close at 11:59 p.m. on December 22, 2019, just prior to the holidays.

In 2016, RHA enacted a sub-committee to review the Waiting List process and define areas for improvement such as allowing new participants to be accepted into the program at the same time a current participant exits, keeping the waiting list numbers low. The changes were implemented that same year, the last time the Waiting List was open for applications, to provide more efficient, customer-centered approach that would help more people who on their path to self-sufficiency. The new system is working, proven by the reopening of the list in just three years, when previous openings only occurred once in a decade.

“We’re pleased to make this announcement today, a true testament that our new system for managing the list is working as designed,” said Rochester Housing Authority Acting Executive Director Shawn Burr. “This announcement is even more meaningful just before the holiday season, bringing hope for a better future, through quality housing, to thousands of people across our community.”

As of today, RHA is assisting more than 9,000 households utilizing Section 8 vouchers. Rochester has more people living at less than half the federal poverty level than any other similarly sized city in the U.S. (Rochester Area Community Foundation). This high demand and need for housing is demonstrated each time the Waiting List opens, with an average of 15-22,000 applications received.

WHAT IS HCV/SECTION 8?

The rental assistance program, which uses funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), helps subsidize the cost of housing for low-income families and individuals who meet the program eligibility requirements. Assistance is tenant-based, meaning families can live in a qualifying rental unit of their choosing anywhere within the RHA jurisdiction or, if the family is eligible, they are able to "port" their voucher and move anywhere in the country where vouchers are utilized.

For a unit to qualify for the program, the rent must be reasonable in comparison to other similar unassisted units in the area. The unit must also pass a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection and maintain these standards throughout the term of the RHA Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract.

A family will typically pay 30 to 40% of their monthly income (rent plus utilities). RHA will enter into a HAP Contract with the owner to pay the remaining balance.

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WHO IS ELIGIBLE:

Eligibility for a housing voucher is determined by RHA and is based on the total annual gross income and family size. Eligible families cannot exceed the 50% of the median income for the Rochester area.

Eligible families must be US citizens and specified categories of non-citizens who have eligible immigration status. RHA will also examine the criminal background and prior Housing Choice Voucher history of any adult member of the household.

HOW TO APPLY:

Applications can only be submitted through Rochester Housing Authority's website at www.rochesterhousing.org. Those who are unable to access the website can receive assistance through partner agencies by calling RHA's Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List call center at (585) 697-6206 or emailing waitinglist@rochesterhousing.org.

Once the application period is over, there will be an electronic random selection process of all applications. Selected applicants will be notified by mail within 90 days and placed on the waiting list immediately. Those that are not selected for the program will also be notified within 90 days of their application being submitted.

About Rochester Housing Authority

Established in 1955 as an independent public corporation by New York State Public Housing Law, the Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) serves more than 26,000 lower-income families, seniors and disabled residents and program participants in the five-county Greater Rochester area. Approximately 20% of those reside in the 2,400+ RHA public housing units, while others served receive assistance in the form of voucher or certificate programs that help them afford eligible, private housing.

Rochester Housing Authority does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, family status or disability in leasing, rental, occupancy, use or other disposition of housing or related facilities.

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