



National Association of Residential Property Managers

NARPM® Policy Statement

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Issue: Source of Income Legislation
Sponsor: Governmental Affairs

The ongoing challenge of providing a variety of affordable housing choices to American families has led some policymakers to enact state or local laws or ordinances that add “source of income” as a protected class under prevailing fair housing laws. In addition, this kind of protection has also been proposed at the federal level. Under these laws and proposals, source of income is defined to include housing supports such as Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV’s, i.e., “Section 8”). The aim of these policies is to compel more landlords to participate in the Section 8 program.

NARPM recognizes that the portability of Housing Choice Vouchers provide that program with an important place in the spectrum of housing supports that are provided to American families and that they play an important role in helping to deconcentrate poverty and afford more families an opportunity to live in neighborhoods of their choice. Moreover, NARPM recognizes that the HCV program also helps protect tenants from being trapped in substandard housing or exploitive circumstances.

NARPM also recognizes that there are legitimate concerns about the HCV program. Examples include the property inspection process, the required HAP contract that supersedes the landlord’s standard lease; FMR’s that are too low for a given area; the practice of withdrawing funds from the property manager without prior notice when a tenant is removed from the program; and the perceived apathy of program staff toward fraud or bad tenant behaviors, among other items.

Given the concerns that have been raised about the HCV program by landlords and property managers, NARPM strongly opposes any legislation or regulation that would have a net effect of forcing landlords to participate in housing voucher program. Such opposition would include any proposal to include source of income as a protected class under fair housing laws. NARPM believes that these kinds of proposals not only force landlords into well-meaning but flawed arrangements, but also violate a property owner’s right to contract in that they effectively force the property owner to enter into a non-negotiable contract with the government.

In order to encourage more landlords to participate in the program, NARPM believes that the inspections process and the landlord-tenant relationship be governed by the existing building codes and landlord-tenant laws in the state/locality where the property is located. This would create more consistency, fairness, and predictability for property managers and owners. NARPM also supports more localization of FMR’s so that they more closely match prevailing rents in a given community. And, NARPM supports income tax credits for property owners in high opportunity census tracts who rent to voucher holders.