For More Information

Websites
Check out these websites to locate the best areas to look for housing based on the places you go often:
  http://www.walkscore.com/apartments
  http://www.padmapper.com

This website can help you figure out travel distances, times and options (like the bus or walking)
  http://www.maps.google.com

Other Resources
http://www.homeforward.org/find-a-home/learn-about-transportation-costs
This web page has links to the following:
  Moving: Beyond the Basics - an introductory video
  Transportation + Housing Cost Comparison Worksheet
  A guide for using the Walkscore website

For More Information
Contract your Rent Assistance Service Coordinator at 503-802-8333 Option 4
Housing Conditions: The Basics

- Is the property well-maintained overall?
- Does the entry to the unit feel safe? Would you feel comfortable going in and out at night?
- Is the apartment clean? Does the apartment smell clean? (If there’s a funny odor, ask what it is and what they will do about it.)
- Does the plumbing work? Turn the faucets on and off, flush the toilet.
- Do the kitchen appliances (refrigerator and stove) work?
- Do you think the apartment will pass the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection by the Housing Authority?
- Will you have access to a washer and dryer in the complex?
- If you have a car, is there a convenient and safe place for you to park?
- If you have children, is there a place for them to play?
- How quiet or noisy is the apartment complex? Does that fit with your lifestyle?
- Does the neighborhood feel safe? Try to check it out at different times of day—morning, afternoon and nighttime.
- Try to find a home you want to live in for years. Do you like it? Do you feel comfortable there?

When You Meet Your Landlord

- First impressions count. Dress accordingly.
- Bring your references, photo ID and application fee.
- If the landlord accepts you as a tenant, bring your Housing Authority forms.

Costs: Get the Full Picture Up Front

- Do you think you will pass the screening criteria? Ask for a copy of the landlord’s screening criteria before you submit an application and pay an application fee. If you don’t think you’ll pass, think twice about spending the money to apply.
- How much is the application fee? Is it refundable? Can it be applied to the first month’s rent?
- With your Section 8 voucher, how much will you have to pay in rent each month?
- What utilities are NOT included in the rent? How much do they cost, on average, each month?
- Do you have to pay extra for pets (if you have them), parking, laundry or other things?
- How much is the security deposit? What is the policy about getting it back when you move?
- Which utilities do you have to set up yourself? Do they require deposits?

The Hidden Cost: Transportation

- How will you get to the places you need to go on a regular basis? (Work, school, friends).
- Where’s the nearest grocery store? How will you get there and back with groceries?
- If you drive, will you likely spend more on gas than you do now if you move here? A lot more?
- Is there a transit stop near you? How often does the bus or train come? Does it go directly to places where you need to go, or will you have to transfer?
- Can you walk (or go in your wheelchair) to run errands from here?
- If you have kids, how will they get around if you live here? Are there safe places for them to go?