Housing Program Knowledge & Verification Toolkit

This toolkit helps Housing Specialists find reliable program information, verify requirements, and keep knowledge current. It covers CityFHEPS, FHEPS, Section 8 and related programs. Always distinguish official rules from informal guidance.

1. Program Knowledge Essentials

Checklist — complete before advising any client about program rules or eligibility.

- ☐ I have identified the correct official program name (CityFHEPS / FHEPS / Section 8 / Other).
- ☐ I have confirmed the information source is an official agency website or document.
- ☐ I have noted the date I last verified this information.
- ☐ I understand the difference between general guidance and case-specific determinations.
- ☐ I will not quote fixed payment amounts that may have changed.
- ☐ I will direct the client to the responsible agency for final eligibility decisions.
- ☐ I have documented any uncertainty and will follow up with a verified source.

Specialist Information

Name: _____ ization: _____ _____

2. Official Sources & Research Log

Record the official sources you consult. Prefer primary agency websites and published guidance.

Program / Topic	Official Source (URL or Document)	Date Checked	Notes / Status

Recommended Official Starting Points

CityFHEPS / HRA	https://www.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/cityfheps.page
FHEPS	https://www.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/fheps.page
NYCHA / Section 8	https://www.nyc.gov/site/nycha/section-8/section-8.page
HPD	https://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/index.page
HUD (Federal)	https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8
NYC Commission on Human Rights	https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/index.page

3. Program Comparison Worksheet

Compare key features across programs. Use only verified information. Leave blank if unknown.

Criteria	CityFHEPS	FHEPS	Section 8	Other
Target population / household type				
Income / eligibility considerations				
Who administers the program				
Typical application pathway				
Inspection / unit approval process				
Portability / transfer options				
Key documents commonly required				
Notes / recent changes observed				

4. Rule Verification & Change Control

Track changes in program guidance so advice remains accurate over time.

Change Log

Date	Program	What Changed	Source	Action Taken

Before Advising Clients — Quick Verification

- [ ] Confirm the information is still current on the official website or portal.
- [ ] Check for any temporary suspensions, policy updates or COVID-era residual rules.
- [ ] Note whether the guidance is for applicants, current participants or landlords.
- [ ] If information conflicts between sources, escalate to a supervisor or agency contact.
- [ ] Never guarantee approval, payment amounts or timelines based on general guidance.

5. Client Guidance Exercise

Practice responding when program information appears to conflict or is unclear.

Scenario

A client tells you that a broker said CityFHEPS will cover the full rent and security deposit for a specific apartment. Your last check of the official site indicated that security deposit assistance is limited and subject to approval. The client is eager to apply immediately.

Your Response Planning

What is the first thing you would verify?

How would you explain the difference between broker statements and official rules?

What would you tell the client about next steps?

When would you escalate this situation?

6. Weekly Knowledge Review

Use this page at the end of the week to capture learning and remaining questions.

This Week's Learning

Key facts or process updates I confirmed:

Questions that remain unanswered:

Sources I used this week (URLs or document names):

Responsible Use of AI Tools

- ☐ I treat AI answers as starting points only — never as final program rules.
- ☐ I verify any AI-generated program information against official sources before sharing.
- ☐ I do not input confidential client data into public AI tools.
- ☐ I note when AI was used as part of my research process.

Weekly Review Completed

Specialist Signature / Initials: e: