

APPLICANT FAQ'S

The Voucher Program is designed to achieve three major objectives:

1. To provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing for very low income families while maintaining their rent payments at an affordable level.
2. To promote freedom of housing choice for very low income families of all races and ethnic backgrounds.
3. To provide an incentive to private property owners to rent to very low income families by offering timely assistance payments.

Question: How do I get on the Voucher Program?

Answer: In order to be eligible to participate on the Voucher program you must first be on the waiting list. Vouchers are given to the persons on the waiting list when they have been selected by date, time and preference.

Question: Do I have to be on State Welfare in order to be eligible for Section 8 Assistance?

Answer: No, however you must be at or below the very low income limits set by HUD to be eligible. Most all selections will be for the extremely low income guidelines; the only time THA will extend to the very low income, is when we are exhausting the waiting list. Should this happen, the maximum amount of gross income can not exceed the very low income limit and applicant still be eligible for the Voucher.

Income limits are as follows:

	<u>Extremely Low Income Limit</u>	<u>Very Low Income Limit</u>
1 person	\$12,700	\$21,150
2 person	\$14,500	\$24,200
3 person	\$16,300	\$27,200
4 person	\$18,100	\$30,200
5 person	\$19,550	\$32,650
6 person	\$21,000	\$35,050
7 person	\$22,450	\$37,450
8 person	\$23,900	\$39,900

Question: What if I am working?

Answer: You may still be eligible to participate providing your family income does not exceed the income limits for your family size.

Question: How do I know if I qualify for a preference?

Answer: Waiting list preferences are as follows:

1. The applicant family is residing in a public or private care facility as a result of severe illness or disability; with housing, the family could transition back into the community to live independently or with the assistance of an aide.
2. The head or spouse of the applicant family is a current member of the military, a veteran or the surviving spouse of a veteran.
3. The applicant family is residing in a public or private shelter as a result of domestic violence; and/or has had actual or threatened physical violence directed against the applicant or the applicant's family by a spouse or other household member who was living in the unit with the family. The actual or threatened violence must have occurred within the past 6 months.
4. The applicant family must have one or more family members who are 62 years of age or older, handicapped or disabled.

Question: What happens when I am denied for a preference?

Answer: If THA denies a preference, the applicant will be notified in writing with the reason the preference was denied, and offer the applicant the opportunity for a review, should the applicant not request a review, they will be placed back on the waiting list without the benefit of the preference.

Question: When will I be helped?

Answer: The Housing Choice Voucher program is not an emergency housing program; therefore, assistance is not readily available for each applicant. A waiting list has been established and each applicant receives a number on the waiting list. Once their number is reached, the applicant is notified by mail and an appointment is scheduled. Determination of eligibility is conducted shortly thereafter. Due to limited funding, availability of vouchers and length of time participants remain on the program, applicants may be on the waiting list for several years.

Question: I am homeless, and I need help. What can I do?

Answer: We have information regarding shelter, food, health care, jobs and other benefits.

Question: I received a letter to call an interviewer, what does this mean?

Answer: Your application was received; you were put on the waiting list, now you have been selected to see if you are eligible to receive a voucher. You will be asked to come to an interview to verify household composition, family income, provide birth certificates, social security cards for each household member, and sign and date forms needed to verify your eligibility.

Question: How long from the interview, do I get a voucher?

Answer: The verification process is anywhere from 6 to 8 weeks long.

Question: I cannot come to the interview; can my mother come on my behalf?

Answer: All adult members are required to attend the interview and sign the applicable documents and verification forms. If the head of household cannot attend the interview, the spouse may attend to complete the paperwork and certify for the family. The head of household, however, will be required to attend an interview within 5 business days to review the information and to certify by signature that all the information is complete and accurate.

Question: I missed my scheduled appointment, now what?

Answer: It is the applicant's responsibility to reschedule the interview if he/she misses the appointment. If the applicant does not reschedule or missed 2 scheduled meetings, THA will reject the application, unless the applicant can provide acceptable documentation to the HA that an emergency prevented them from calling or attending. THA will not reschedule the appointment more than twice.

Question: What are Housing Vouchers?

Answer: The Housing Choice (Section 8) Voucher program is the Federal Government's major program for assisting very low income families, the elderly, and the disabled to rent decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since the rental assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find and lease privately owned housing, including single family houses, town houses, and apartments. The participant is free to choose any housing that meets requirements of the program.

Question: Does the Housing Authority staff find me housing, once I am on the program?

Answer: No, the Housing Authority staff can provide you with a list of apartments, houses, etc, that landlords have listed with us; however, you must see the unit and work with the landlord regarding occupancy. You may also find rental units in the classified section of newspaper or with a real estate agent.

Question: If a unit is on the list, does that mean it already qualifies for the Voucher program?

Answer: No, just because the apartment is on our listing does not mean that it qualifies for the Voucher program. There are several steps that have to be reviewed before it is considered appropriate for the Voucher program. The following are steps THA takes to see if the unit is eligible:

1. Meets rent reasonableness for units in the same type of unassisted unit
2. Consider utilities, appliances, and amenities
3. Condition of unit, size of unit, and location
4. Other mitigating factors which may come into play when negotiating rent amounts
5. An inspection will have to be conducted to see if the unit passes HQS

Question: Do I have to pay the Housing Authority to conduct an inspection?

Answer: No, the Housing Authority will conduct the inspection at no cost to the tenant.

Question: How much rent would I pay if I were on the Voucher Program?

Answer: Eligible participants pay 30% of their adjusted gross income per month for rent. Housing Authority sends the difference directly to the landlord.

Question: How long can I remain on the Voucher Program?

Answer: You may remain on the program as long as 30% of your adjusted gross income does not exceed your entire amount of rent, you also must not violate any Family Obligations under the programs regulations.

Question: What if I have more question about the Voucher Program?

Answer: All voucher holders are required to attend a Briefing Session prior to participation in the program. You will actually receive your voucher at this session. This allows Assisted Housing staff to explain the program in its entirety so participants understand the rules and regulations of the program.

Question: What are the terms of a lease?

Answer: The initial term is for one year.

Question: Can I move in before I receive a voucher:

Answer: Yes, but please be aware that you are responsible for all portions of rent until the unit passes inspection and THA enters into a contract with the owner. It is in your best interest to wait until everything has been completed.