Frequently Asked Questions

General Information for Tenants

1. How long am I eligible for assistance?

   You will continue receiving Section 8 assistance as long as your income remains within the program limits and you meet all program obligations. These obligations include recertifying annually, permitting Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections, allowing your property owner to make any needed repairs, and meeting the terms of your lease.

2. What is the Voucher Payment Standard (VPS)?

   The VPS is the maximum allowable housing assistance payment NYCHA can pay on your behalf to the Section 8 property owner.

3. How many bedrooms will be listed on my voucher?

   The number of bedrooms on your voucher is determined based on the total number of authorized household members approved by NYCHA and NYCHA’s occupancy standards. Generally, it is two people of the same sex, per living/sleeping area.

4. Can I rent a unit that is larger than my voucher bedroom size?

   Yes. You may rent a unit that is larger than your voucher bedroom size. However, the portion of rent you pay to the
owner cannot exceed 40% of your total household income. NYCHA will conduct a rent reasonableness evaluation to determine whether the proposed rent is reasonable compared to the rent for similar unsubsidized units in the area.

5. How much will my rent be per month?

You will typically pay 30% of your monthly adjusted income toward rent and utilities. However, if the gross rent (rent and utilities) is more than the VPS, you may have to pay more.

6. Can I be terminated from the Section 8 Program?

Yes. If you violate your obligations under the Section 8 program, you can be terminated. Reasons for termination from the program include: failing to complete the annual recertification; failing to allow access to HQS inspectors for a unit inspection; failing to give the owner of your Section 8 unit access to complete needed repairs; allowing unauthorized people to live in the apartment; and committing any serious or repeated violations of the lease.

Annual Recertification Information

1. When will I receive my annual recertification package?

You will receive your annual recertification package approximately 5 months before your next recertification date. All Section 8 tenants must recertify their income and
family composition on time each year in order to remain eligible to receive Section 8 assistance.

2. **Who will assist me with completing my annual recertification package?**

   If you are unable to complete the forms in the annual recertification package and need a reasonable accommodation, call the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, for more information.

3. **What information/documentation will I need to provide during the annual recertification process?**

   Annual recertifications are completed to confirm participants remain eligible to receive Section 8 assistance. As part of the annual recertification process, you must provide information and documentation, as needed, about your family composition, income, and assets.

4. **Can I continue to receive public assistance while participating in the Section 8 program?**

   Yes. You may continue to receive public assistance while participating in the Section 8 program. However, NYCHA will include your reported public assistance income to determine your Section 8 rent share.
5. Do I have to report Social Security Income (SSI) payments for my annual recertification?

Yes. You are required to report SSI income for all household members. NYCHA includes all SSI income to calculate your rent share.

6. Will NYCHA include my child’s part-time job as income when conducting the annual recertification?

If your child is 18 years of age or younger, you must report his/her part-time employment income, but NYCHA will not include it in your rent calculation. If your child is over the age of 18, part-time employment income is included in your rent calculation. If your child is over the age of 18 and is a full time student, only a portion of the income will be included in your rent calculation.

7. Do I have to report all assets, including bank accounts in my child’s name, as part of the annual recertification?

Yes. You are required to report all household assets, including any bank accounts in your child’s name.

8. Why do I need to complete a "Third Party Verification - Consent to Release Information" form with my annual recertification package?

You must sign the "Third Party Verification - Consent to Release Information form at admission and every year during the annual recertification process. NYCHA needs this form in order to perform required income verification. Failure
to sign and return this form may result in termination of your Section 8 benefits.

9. Does Section 8 allow tenants to own rental property?

Yes. You are allowed to own rental property for investment purposes only. However, the rental property cannot be your family's primary residence (except for Section 8 co-op owners). The value of your property and any income earned from the property will be considered when determining your continuing eligibility for the Section 8 program.

10. What happens if a Section 8 tenant does not complete the annual recertification?

A tenant who does not complete the annual recertification or fails to provide necessary documentation by the deadline risks termination from the program.

If NYCHA does not receive a completed annual recertification and all required documentation by the deadline, it will send the tenant notices about possible termination of their Section 8 subsidy. A Section 8 tenant has the right to request an informal conference and/or an impartial hearing to contest the termination of his/her Section 8 subsidy. Information regarding this process is provided on the termination notices.
Briefing and Rental Information

1. What is a briefing?

All new Section 8 participants and tenants who are transferring are required to attend a Section 8 briefing. The purpose of the briefing is to provide you with all the information you need to be a successful Section 8 participant. At the briefing, you will receive your voucher and a rental package. The rental package contains important documents that need to be returned by you once you found a suitable rental unit that accepts Section 8.

2. Do I need an appointment to return my rental packet?

Yes. You need to make an appointment to return your completed briefing packet. Contact the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, to schedule an appointment to return your rental briefing packet.

3. May I bring a family member with me to the briefing?

No. As a result of limited seating capacity in our briefing rooms, only the head of the household will be permitted to attend the briefing. You must bring photo identification to the briefing.
4. What if I need a translator for the briefing?

If you need a translator, you must notify NYCHA at least one week in advance of your briefing date. Contact the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, to schedule a translator to be present at your briefing.

5. What happens if I cannot make my scheduled briefing appointment?

It is important you ask to cancel your appointment in advance, if you know you will be unable to attend your briefing appointment. If you are picking up a transfer voucher, NYCHA will close your transfer request upon your failure to attend two scheduled briefings.

Contact the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, if you need to reschedule your briefing appointment.

6. Where do I go to pick up my Section 8 voucher?

The briefing will be held at one of NYCHA's walk-in centers. Refer to the "Transfer Briefing Call-In Letter" that NYCHA mails to you for information about where and when you can pick up your voucher.
Transfer Information

1. How can I transfer to another Section 8 unit?

   You may request a transfer after your initial lease term with the Owner expires. You must submit the "Voucher Holder's Request for Transfer". You may not move until NYCHA approves your request. If you are adding someone to your household, you should do so before you request a transfer. Contact the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, to request the forms.

2. What is an emergency transfer?

   When you request a transfer by submitting the “Voucher Holder’s Request for Transfer” form, NYCHA will determine if you are eligible to receive a transfer voucher. Transfer requests are reviewed and prioritized as an “emergency” or “non-emergency”. Click here to access NYCHA’s emergency transfer policy.

3. How long does it take for NYCHA to approve a transfer request?

   NYCHA approves transfer requests on average in between 3 and 10 business days. Briefings are scheduled for emergency and non-emergency transfers. Emergency transfer briefings are scheduled within 21 days of NYCHA approval. It takes longer to schedule non-emergency transfer briefings.
4. Does NYCHA have a listing of available Section 8 units for tenants to review?

Yes. NYCHA offers a listing of properties available to voucher holders seeking units in the private market. The listing is maintained by GoSection8—the largest rental listing service provider for the Section 8 housing market. Click here to access this information.

5. Should I give my Section 8 voucher to the Owner of my Section 8 unit?

No. You are only required to show your voucher to the Owner as proof you are authorized to search for a Section 8 unit. You should not give your Section 8 voucher to anyone. Vouchers are not transferable.

6. What documentation do I need to supply in order to qualify for one of the emergency priorities, like Victims of Domestic Violence (VDV) or Intimidated Witness (IW)?

You can find all of the documentation requirements for emergency transfers on this website. If you qualify for one of these emergency priorities, you will need to obtain a new VDV/IW PIN at one of the walk-in centers. Acceptable proof of identity to get a new VDV/IW PIN is a government-issued, photo ID, such as a valid driver's license, passport, or state issued ID. Click here to access NYCHA’s emergency transfer policy.
Interim Information

1. How do I add or remove a family member?

   If you need to add a child as a result of birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody, you must submit a copy of the birth certificate, social security card, and, if applicable, court order. To add other family members, you must request and obtain approval from NYCHA before the person moves into your unit. You will need to submit to NYCHA the “Permanent or Conditional Permission Request for a Family Member/Additional Person to Live with a Section 8 Family” along with supporting documentation. If you would like to remove a family member, you must provide a written notice to NYCHA requesting removal of the household member with your annual recertification package. If your annual recertification has been completed, you must provide a written notice using the “Voucher Holder’s Request for Interim Change” (NYCHA Form 059.645).

2. Can a foster child be added to my Section 8 household?

   Yes. A foster child may reside in your Section 8 unit. However, you must first request permission from NYCHA by filling out the "Permanent or Conditional Permission Request for a Family Member/ Additional Person to Live with a Section 8 Family". Contact the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, to request this form.
Housing Quality Standard (HQS) Inspection Information

1. How often are units inspected?

NYCHA conducts an HQS inspection before a family moves into a Section 8 unit and regularly during occupancy. NYCHA may also conduct a quality control inspection at any time to ensure HQS compliance.

2. What will happen if I miss or need to change my appointment for my unit inspection?

If you miss your scheduled inspection appointment, NYCHA will automatically reschedule an appointment two times and will mail a notice to you about the new date. If you need to reschedule prior to your scheduled inspection, contact the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, to reschedule your appointment.

3. Who is responsible for repairs in my unit?

Generally, the Section 8 property owner is responsible to make repairs in your unit to ensure it remains in compliance with HQS. NYCHA is not responsible for making repairs and/or paying for repairs to the unit. If NYCHA has determined that repairs are necessary because you or a family member caused damage to the unit, you will be responsible for having the repairs made and paying for them.
4. Will the owner get paid if my unit fails an HQS inspection?

The owner must make repairs within the required time frame to continue receiving HAP payments. If the owner does not make repairs within the required timeframe, payments will be suspended. The owner must correct deficiencies and NYCHA must verify repairs were made, through a Certification of Completed Repairs (NYCHA form 059.307) or re-inspection, before NYCHA can resume payments.

5. How does NYCHA verify the owner has completed repairs?

NYCHA verifies that required repairs, as listed in an HQS Inspection, have been completed by re-inspecting the unit or through a written certification, signed by the owner and the tenant, verifying the completion of repairs. A certification of repairs is not accepted for life threatening violations such as: (1) fire; (2) gas leak; (3) dangerous structural hazards; and (4) sparking or smoking wires.

6. How much time is given to an Owner to correct HQS violations?

The time given to correct HQS violations depends on the nature of the violation. The Owner must correct life-threatening violations within 24 hours. Life threatening violations include: (1) fire; (2) gas leak; (3) dangerous structural hazards; and (4) sparking or smoking wires.
For all other violations, the Owner must correct the condition(s) within 30 calendar days (or within any NYCHA-approved extension). The only exception is window guard violations, which the Owner must correct within 21 calendar days.

7. What is a special inspection?

A special inspection is an HQS inspection requested by the voucher holder as a result of potential hazardous conditions.

8. How do I schedule a special inspection?

The fastest and most convenient way to schedule a special inspection is online, using the Self Service portal. To request a special inspection for your unit or the public space online, you must be the head of the household and be a registered user. To register for the portal, you will need a valid email address and Social Security number.

You may also call the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, to schedule a special inspection.

9. When does heating season begin?

Heating season begins on October 1st and ends on May 31st. During this period, if the outdoor temperature falls below 55 degrees Fahrenheit between 6am - 10pm, the temperature in the unit during these hours must be at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit. If the outdoor temperature falls below 40 degrees Fahrenheit between 10pm - 6am, the
temperature in the unit during these hours must be at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

10. **Who is responsible for changing the batteries in the carbon monoxide and smoke detectors?**

The tenant is responsible for periodically changing the batteries in both the carbon monoxide and smoke detectors throughout the unit after the initial inspection.

11. **What are the requirements for window guards?**

In buildings with three or more units, Owners are required to install and maintain window guards in the public spaces and units (including units on the first floor), where a child 10 years of age or younger resides.

**Lease Information**

1. **Do I have to renew my lease with the owner of my Section 8 unit?**

No. You do not have to renew your lease. Generally, you can transfer once in a 12-month period. The only exception to this would be for emergency situations. If you have not moved in the last 12 months but the lease is still effective, you must refer to the terms of your lease. Breaking your lease could result in the owner bringing a court action against you.
2. What do I do if the owner of my Section 8 unit does not want to renew my lease?

If you are living in a unit owned by a private property owner and the unit is not rent-stabilized, the owner does not have to renew the lease and you may transfer to another unit with continued Section 8 assistance. Contact the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, to request a transfer form.

If you are living in a rent-stabilized unit, with limited exceptions, the property owner is required by law to provide you with the option to renew your lease.

3. Are rent increases allowed?

During the initial term of the lease, the Owner may not increase the rent. After the initial term of the lease, the Owner may request an increase in the rent. The owner must notify NYCHA in writing of the proposed increase at least 60 days before the change would go into effect. In deciding whether to approve the Owner’s request for a rent increase, NYCHA will evaluate whether the rent as increased would be reasonable and in compliance with rent control limits under applicable state or local law.

4. Who pays the utilities?

The Owner and the tenant must agree upon who will be responsible for the utilities. The lease agreement and HAP
5. What do I do if the Owner of my Section 8 unit wants me to start paying for the utilities?

You and the Owner must come to an agreement regarding payment for utilities. If you agree to assume responsibility for paying for utilities, you and the Owner must execute a new lease reflecting that agreement. NYCHA must receive a copy of the new lease, perform a rent reasonableness evaluation, and execute a new HAP contract with the Owner before your new obligation to pay for utilities goes into effect.

If you and the Owner cannot reach an agreement on who pays for utilities, you may decide to transfer.

6. Will NYCHA pay for my utilities?

If you are responsible for paying for utilities, NYCHA will give you a "utility reimbursement" based on a utility allowance schedule. The reimbursement will be subtracted from your tenant share of rent.

Portability Information

1. Can I rent a unit outside of New York City with my Section 8 voucher?

Yes. You may rent a unit outside of New York City through a process called "portability." You may ask to "port" your
Section 8 voucher to any other public housing authority in the United States or its commonwealths or territories (e.g., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands) that administers an Section 8 program.

2. How can I start the portability transfer process?

You must first request a transfer in writing by submitting the "Voucher Holder's Request for Transfer" and indicating that you would like to port outside of New York City.

For more information, contact the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, to request a transfer form.

Renting Restriction Information

1. Can I receive Section 8 subsidy even though I own my co-op apartment?

Yes. You may receive Section 8 subsidy in your co-op. NYCHA will not pay for any outstanding loans or mortgages. The contract rent for your co-op will be equal to the maintenance fee charged by the building’s co-op board. NYCHA will conduct a rent reasonableness evaluation to determine whether the proposed rent is reasonable compared to the rent for similar unsubsidized units in the area.
2. Can I rent my current unit with my Section 8 voucher?

Yes. You may be able to rent your current unit with a Section 8 voucher if the Owner completes and signs the required documents in your rental packet and your unit passes an HQS inspection.

3. Will NYCHA allow me to rent a unit from a relative?

You are not allowed to rent a unit from a relative unless renting from that relative would provide a reasonable accommodation for you and/or a member of your Section 8 household who is a person with a disability. Relatives include, but are not limited to, a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, or brother of any member of your family. You will need to request and obtain NYCHA’s in such cases.

Reasonable Accommodation

1. What is a reasonable accommodation?

A reasonable accommodation is a change in rules, policies, practices, or services that provides a qualified individual with a disability the same opportunity as non-disabled individuals to participate in or benefit from a program or activity.
2. Who is eligible to apply for a reasonable accommodation?

Any New York City Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher applicant or participant who has a disability may apply.

3. What is a disability?

A disability is a physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, mobility impairments, sensory impairments, chronic health problems, and mental health problems.

4. What kinds of reasonable accommodations does NYCHA provide?

NYCHA provides several kinds of reasonable accommodations including, but not limited to, the following:

   a. A larger voucher size for an existing unit

   A family, in which someone has a disability, lives in a larger apartment than their voucher size and is paying more than 40% of their income towards the rent. With a reasonable accommodation, the family could be approved for the larger voucher size and continue to reside in the larger apartment. For example, one person, who is
qualified for a 0-bedroom (studio) voucher, is living in a 1-bedroom apartment and needs to have the additional space, as a result of a disability. This individual may be able to qualify for a one-bedroom voucher.

b. **Extension of the time on the voucher**

A family, in which someone has a disability, has an initial voucher or transfer voucher and needs additional time to find a suitable apartment. A voucher extension can be requested as a reasonable accommodation of the disability.

**Note:** A voucher extension request is not required by a Section 8 participant who wants to remain active on the Program, but who does not want to move. Voucher extensions are strictly for those who are moving to a new unit.

c. **Increase the Payment Standard for my current unit**

Someone in the household is disabled and the family is residing in an apartment where the rent is higher than the Voucher Payment Standard.
d. Permission to rent from a landlord who is a relative

HUD regulations do not permit a Section 8 family to rent an apartment from relatives. However, a reasonable accommodation may be approved to allow a family, in which someone has a disability, to rent a unit from a family member. The review of this request type will include the consideration of whether the apartment has features which provide relief from the disability.

e. Providing communications for blind or visually impaired persons in an alternative format

NYCHA materials and documents can be provided to persons with a visual impairment who need written materials to be provided in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, audio recordings on a compact disc, etc.

f. Providing communications for hearing impaired persons in an alternative format

NYCHA will communicate with persons with a hearing impairment in an alternative format, such as closed captioning, sign language, etc.
g. Other

If the type of reasonable accommodation a family would like is not listed above, the reasonable accommodation form provides a space where accommodation requests can be written. In addition, participants may call the Customer Contact Center, at (718) 777-7771, for assistance.

5. How do I submit a request for a reasonable accommodation?

You may submit a reasonable accommodation request at any time by submitting the Disability Status and Notice of Reasonable Accommodation form (NYCHA Form #059.109). Documentation from a medical professional may be required. A medical release authorization form and a verification form are included with the Reasonable Accommodation request form. The verification form is used to confirm that the accommodation you are requesting is appropriate for the disability.

You may request to have the forms mailed to you by calling the Customer Contact Center, from Monday through Friday, 8:00AM to 5:00PM, at (718) 707-7771. Your request may also be submitted online by clicking here and then clicking on the Reasonable Accommodation tab. The forms are also
available at the Walk-In Centers and the addresses can be found here.

6. Where should I return the Disability Status and Notice of Reasonable Accommodation form, the authorization form, and the medical verification form?

Please return all of the forms, together in one package, to the address printed at the top of the Reasonable Accommodation form or submit the forms to one of the Walk-In Centers. Please do not submit the forms separately. If the required documentation is not received, in a complete package, NYCHA’s response to the reasonable accommodation request may be delayed.

7. What if I am unable to complete the Disability Status and Notice of Reasonable Accommodation form myself?

If you are unable to complete the form or the online request process, please call the Customer Contact Center, at (718) 707-7771, or go to a Walk-In Center for assistance.
8. I would like to transfer to another unit to better accommodate my disability (e.g., a first floor unit or a unit in a building with an elevator). What forms are required to submit the request?

If you are requesting to move to accommodate a disability, you must submit the Voucher Holder’s Request for Transfer (NYCHA Form # 059.004); in addition to the Reasonable Accommodation medical letter. Transfer request forms can be obtained by calling the CCC or visiting one of the Walk-In Centers listed above. The Reasonable Accommodation form may not be used as a transfer request form.

9. If additional documentation is needed for my Reasonable accommodation request, how long will I have to provide it?

Individuals who have requested a reasonable accommodation will be allowed a period of fifteen (15) calendar days to submit additional documentation.
10. What will happen to my reasonable accommodation request if I do not provide the required documentation within the period of time allotted?

If the documentation needed to review the reasonable accommodation request has not been submitted within the time allotted, the request will be cancelled. You may submit a new request, along with the required documentation, at any time.

11. Can NYCHA help me make my unit or building accessible?

Since most Housing Choice Voucher applicants and participants rent units from private owners, NYCHA does not make physical modifications such as installing bathroom grab bars or railings to their apartments. Applicants and participants may request that the homeowner make these modifications. Unless the homeowner is legally required to make the accessibility modifications, the cost of the modifications is to be paid by the tenant. The apartment would have to be restored to its original state once the family moves out.

Project Open House, which is administered by the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, is a program that may be able to help with the cost of accessibility modifications. The Program provides grants for property owners to make a
number of physical modifications to rental units and common areas. Click here for more information.

12. How long after a reasonable accommodation request is submitted can a decision be expected?

A decision will generally be made within five (5) business days of receiving all documentation necessary to process the request.

13. How will I know whether the request is approved or disapproved?

NYCHA will notify you of whether your reasonable accommodation request was approved or disapproved using the Reasonable Accommodation Request: Section 8 Review and Determination form (NYCHA Form # 040.797). In some cases, NYCHA may approve a modified version of the request. If the request was disapproved, or if a modified version of the request was approved, the form will state the reason for the decision. The form will also provide information about the option to request an impartial hearing.
14. Is NYCHA required to approve my reasonable accommodation request?

No. The decision to approve or disapprove a reasonable accommodation request is based upon a number of factors such as the likelihood that the accommodation would provide relief from the disability and whether or not it involves a fundamental change to NYCHA’s operations. NYCHA may suggest an alternative accommodation to the one you requested.

15. How much time is allowed for the submission of an impartial hearing request?

An impartial hearing request must be received within thirty (30) calendar days from the receipt of the Reasonable Accommodation Request: Section 8 Review and Determination form (NYCHA Form # 040.797).

16. What course of action can I take if I have a complaint about NYCHA’s reasonable accommodation process?

NYCHA has a Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator that handles complaints and issues surrounding the reasonable accommodation process. You may contact the Customer Contact Center for more information. You may also file a
complaint orally, or in writing, with NYCHA’s Department of Equal Opportunity (“DEO”). A complaint must be filed within three (3) months of receiving the disapproval notice.

17. What role does NYCHA’s Department of Equal Opportunity play?

NYCHA’s Department of Equal Opportunity investigates complaints of disability discrimination for failure to provide a reasonable accommodation. If appropriate, NYCHA’s Department of Equal Opportunity will attempt to negotiate a resolution of the complaint.

18. How long does it take to learn the results of NYCHA’s Department of Equal Opportunity investigation?

NYCHA’s Department of Equal Opportunity provides its findings within ninety (90) calendar days of the receipt of the complaint, unless additional time is warranted.