Frequently Asked Questions

General Information about the Housing Choice Voucher Program

1. What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program?

   The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV Program), also known as Section 8, provides rental assistance to eligible low and moderate-income families to rent housing in the private rental market. Eligibility for this program is based on a family's gross annual income and family size.

   Eligible families will receive a voucher to begin searching for housing. Generally, families will pay no more than 40% of their adjusted monthly income toward their rent share. The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) subsidizes the rent by paying the remaining amount to the owner on the family's behalf. This payment to the owner is known as the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).

2. Can I apply for a Section 8 voucher?

   No. NYCHA is not currently accepting applications from the general public. NYCHA will notify the public when it begins accepting applications and will specify the requirements to apply.
NYCHA currently accepts referrals from the Veteran’s Administration (VA) for the VASH (Veterans Assisted Supportive Housing) program.

Application Information

1. **Whom should I contact about the status of my application?**

The fastest and most convenient way to check the status of your application is online, using NYCHA's [Self Service Portal](#). You must be the head of household on the application to register to access the portal. Registering is easy. Click [here](#) to access the portal. You will need to create a username and password.

You may also call the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday – Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, or visit one of the [walk-in centers](#) in person to obtain information related to your application.

2. **How long will my Section 8 application remain active?**

You must keep your application updated to keep it active. So, be sure to update your application if your living situation, family composition, income, or contact information changes.

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Click [here](#) to access the portal. You will need to create a username and password.

3. **How long will I have to wait before I am scheduled for a Section 8 eligibility interview?**

   There is no way to predict how long you may have to wait before you are scheduled for an eligibility interview. The number of families scheduled for an eligibility interview depends on several factors, including: the family’s priority on the waiting list, the application date, and the availability of vouchers each year.

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4. **Is there a minimum age requirement when applying for Section 8?**

   Yes. The head of household must be at least 18 years of age.

5. **Can I be eligible for Section 8 if I or a member of my prospective Section 8 household has a criminal record??**

   NYCHA must perform criminal background and sex offender checks on all applicants and proposed household members who are 16 years of age or older. Approval or denial of an applicant with previous criminal activity depends on the
nature of the offense and, in some cases, the accuracy and relevance of that record.

6. What should I do if my housing situation or family composition or if mailing address or telephone number change after I submit an application?

If you are the head of household on the application, you should update your contact information online using NYCHA's Self Service Portal. Once you log-in, select the “Check My Application Status” link. You will need to be a registered user to access the portal. You can call the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771, Monday - Friday, between the hours of 8am - 5pm, for assistance.

Please note that certain changes to your family composition or housing situation may affect your priority for assistance. For example, one-person households who are elderly or disabled have a higher priority in the application process compared to one-person households who are not elderly or disabled.
Income Information

1. Is there a maximum income that would make me ineligible for Section 8 Program?

   Yes. The maximum family income is based on family size. The income limits are listed [here](#).

2. Is there a minimum income requirement for the Section 8?

   No. There is no minimum income requirement.

3. Can I continue to receive Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exceptions (SCRIE) when I am accepted to the Section 8 program?

   No. Your SCRIE subsidy must terminate when you become a Section 8 tenant.

Unit Information

1. How much time is allowed to find a unit with a voucher?

   Section 8 vouchers are active for 120 calendar days. NYCHA may extend the initial voucher for an additional 60 calendar days for a disabled voucher holder or a member of his/her prospective Section 8 household who requires a reasonable accommodation to find suitable housing.
2. How do I find a Section 8 unit?

NYCHA helps to make the search easier by offering a listing of properties available to voucher holders. The listing is maintained by GoSection8—the largest rental listing service provider for the Section 8 housing market. Click here to visit the website.

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.