



New York City Housing Authority Section 8 – HCV Program

THE TENANT SELF SERVICE PORTAL

The easiest way to communicate or request changes in your tenancy is through the Tenant Self Service Portal.

Log on to the Tenant Self Service Portal at <http://selfserve.nycha.info> to:

- ◆ View basic case information and service requests
- ◆ Monitor Inspections
 - ◆ View recent inspection information
 - ◆ Reschedule an upcoming inspection
 - ◆ Request a special inspection
 - ◆ Request a Reasonable Accommodation
- ◆ File your Annual Recertification
- ◆ Report Changes to Your Household by Filing an Interim Recertification
- ◆ Request to Transfer to a new unit in NYC
- ◆ Request to Port your Voucher to another jurisdiction
- ◆ View a listing of available Section 8 Apartments



The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program is a federal program designed to assist tenants with rental assistance payments, while assuring they are in decent, safe and well-maintained housing.

This guide offers voucher holders important information about the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA's) Section 8 Program.

This guide is designed to answer common questions about the HCV program and help a voucher holder with their housing search.



NYCHA 059.611 (Rev. 10/3/17)v7 SECTION 8 PROGRAM BROCHURE

CALL THE CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTER.

Monday – Friday, 8AM to 5PM.
718-707-7771
NYCHA TTY # 212-306-4845

VISIT A WALK-IN CENTER

Monday – Friday, 8AM to 5PM
478 East Fordham Road, 2nd FL, Bronx NY
787 Atlantic Ave., 2nd FL Brooklyn NY

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!



www.nyc.gov/nycha/section8
<http://selfserve.nycha.info>



WHAT IS A HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER?

The Housing Choice Voucher is the document which certifies your eligibility for Section 8 rental assistance.

The voucher lists the name of the head of household, the unit size the family can search for the time frame for which the voucher is eligible and family obligations.

WHAT IS THE TERM OF THE VOUCHER?

The voucher is valid for 120 days from the date of issuance.*

NYCHA may extend this period for good cause. Good cause may include, but is not limited to, a NYCHA-approved reasonable accommodation for you or a family member with a disability.

The term of the voucher is suspended, or paused, starting when a family submits a complete rental packet to NYCHA. The suspension ends when NYCHA notifies the family in writing whether the assisted tenancy has been approved or denied. Suspension also ends if a family or owner decides not to go through with the rental before the HAP contract is executed.

In other words, the time it takes for NYCHA to review and process a rental will not be taken away from a tenant's search time.

The Rental Packet Checklist (NYCHA Form 059.132) lists all documents that must be submitted to process a rental.

*The term of vouchers issued by other PHAs may vary. All vouchers porting in from other PHAs **will be** automatically extended 30 days.

WHAT ARE FAIR MARKET RENTS AND PAYMENT STANDARDS?

Annually, HUD establishes Fair Market Rents (FMRs) based on social data and surveys. NYCHA uses the FMRs to determine Voucher Payment Standards for different unit sizes.

Voucher Payment Standards are the maximum subsidy NYCHA will pay to a Section 8 property owner on your behalf.

Please see the *Voucher Payment Standards* form in the Briefing Packet for current NYC payment standards and how utility allowances are included in the calculation.

Note: *The maximum allowance is up to 120% of the applicable FMR and can only be approved as part of a qualifying reasonable accommodation request.*

ACCOMMODATE HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD INSPECTIONS AND ALLOW ACCESS TO YOUR UNIT

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) are the minimum criteria all units must meet before NYCHA can pay subsidy on behalf of your family.

NYCHA must inspect a new unit before move-in and on a regular basis thereafter. For all inspections, tenants must provide NYCHA access to their units and a household member 18 years of age or older must be present.

Tenants must allow owners access to their units to complete repairs as necessary.

Failure to comply with NYCHA's HQS inspection and repair policies will result in termination action against a tenant.

MAINTAIN YOUR UNIT

NYCHA considers damage in excess of normal wear and tear to an apartment as a tenant-caused violation. Tenant-caused HQS violations place a tenant in bad standing.

Examples of common avoidable tenant-caused HQS failures:

- ◇ Not maintaining/changing the batteries in carbon monoxide/smoke detectors
- ◇ No electricity/gas when the tenant is responsible for paying utilities
- ◇ A fire escape is blocked by the tenant

CONDUCT

Under no circumstances may any member of an applicant or participant family bring harm to any NYCHA personnel. Bringing harm to a NYCHA staff member will result in the immediate denial or termination of your subsidy.

ADHERE TO YOUR LEASE

You must abide by the provisions in your lease agreement. In addition, you should review and respond promptly to any lease renewal requests from the owner. Doing so maintains timely communication with NYCHA.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SECTION 8 TENANT?

Section 8 tenants are required to:

- ◇ Complete annual recertification
- ◇ Report changes in income, assets and family composition
- ◇ Allow access of a rented unit to NYCHA or HUD for inspection
- ◇ Allow access of a rented unit to an owner for repairs
- ◇ Maintain the rented unit in accordance with Housing Quality Standards
- ◇ Follow conduct requirements
- ◇ Comply with the terms of a lease signed with an owner

Refer to the Voucher for additional family obligations. Tenants must comply with all family obligations in order to prevent termination of their subsidy.

COMPLETE YOUR ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION

On an annual basis, you are required to report your family composition, income, asset and expense information to NYCHA.

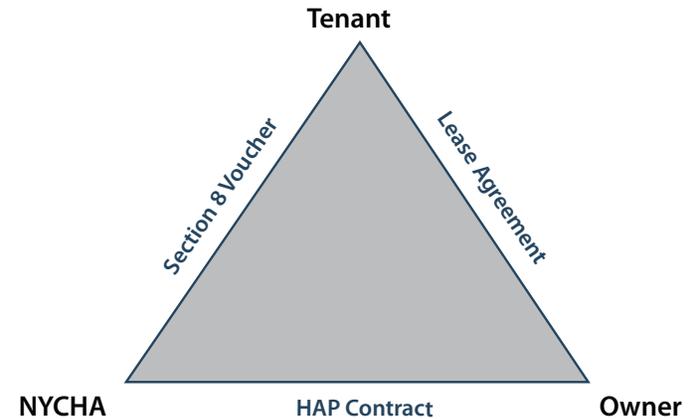
To complete your annual recertification, you must submit an Affidavit of Income for every household member and a *Third Party Verification-Consent to Release Information* form for all household members 18 years of age or older.

You must also submit any supporting documentation for your declaration (e.g., paystubs, bank statements, etc.).

NYCHA will verify all information and issue Voucher Change Notifications as necessary to ensure the total tenant payments and subsidy payments represent your current financial situation.

REPORT CHANGES BETWEEN ANNUAL RECERTIFICATIONS

Changes in family composition must be reported to NYCHA within 30 days of the change. To report a change in income, assets and/or expenses before your next annual recertification, request an interim change on the Tenant Self Service Portal.



HOW ARE RENT SUBSIDIES AND TOTAL TENANT PAYMENT CALCULATED?

NYCHA calculates the Total Tenant Payment (TTP) and NYCHA share using:

- Voucher Payment Standard
- Gross Household Income
- 30% of a family's adjusted monthly income or 10% of a family's adjusted monthly income (whichever is higher)
- Any dollar amount over the Voucher Payment Standard
- Utility Allowance
- Eligible deductions

For new applicants in the HCV program, the TTP can never exceed 40% of a family's monthly adjusted income and for existing applicants the TTP cannot exceed 30% of a family's adjusted monthly income. NYCHA will conduct an affordability test to ensure that the unit is affordable.

When determining the maximum rent a family can pay, NYCHA factors in the utility payments the tenant is responsible for. Afterward, NYCHA conducts an affordability check — an applicant family's share, or TTP, must be within 40% of their monthly adjusted income.

The TTP is typically 30% of the family's adjusted gross income. In the HCV program, the owner receives the TTP from the tenant and the HAP directly from NYCHA.

WHAT IS RENT REASONABLENESS AND HOW IS IT DETERMINED?

HUD requires NYCHA to ensure that rents charged by owners to Section 8 participants do not exceed rents charged for comparable unassisted (i.e. unsubsidized) units in the private market. This requirement is known as rent reasonableness. NYCHA considers various factors when determining rent reasonableness, including: location; unit size, type and age; property amenities and services; and utilities provided by the owner as specified in the lease.

When searching for housing, consider renting in neighborhoods with low poverty concentrations.

It is reported that moving to areas with low-poverty concentrations have positive physical and mental health effects.

Research has also shown that families who have lived in low-poverty neighborhoods for a period of time had an increased likelihood of finding employment and received higher incomes. It is also shown their children received higher scores in school and were more likely to enroll in college.



WHERE CAN I RENT A UNIT?

As a Section 8 voucher holder you can lease a unit in or out of New York City.

To search for a unit in the five boroughs, log on to the Tenant Self Service Portal or visit nycha.gosection8.com to browse available unit listings.

If you wish to move out of NYC, log on to the Tenant Self Service Portal and submit a Portability Transfer Request.

Read *How Portability Works*, included in your briefing packet, to familiarize yourself with some neighboring PHAs and learn about porting your voucher to another jurisdiction.

Please note, websites such as www.cidny.org, www.NYHousingSearch.gov, www.socialserve.com or www.showmetherent.com have filters built into their search engines, which allow the search of accessible apartments.

HOW DO I REQUEST A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

If you, or a member of your household, are living with a disability you may submit a reasonable accommodation request. This request modifies program policies, practices and/or services in order to enable equal participation in the HCV Program.

To request one, you may submit a completed Request for a Reasonable Accommodation form via the Self Service Portal, by mail or in person at a Walk-in center. You will be asked to provide documentation to support your request.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I FIND A UNIT?

When you have found a unit, complete the required paperwork with the owner of the unit and upload the documents to the Tenant Self Service Portal.

Documents that must be returned include:

- ◇ *Request for Tenancy Approval* form signed by you and the owner
- ◇ Original Lease Agreement signed by you and the owner
- ◇ Lead Based Paint Disclosure form signed by you and the owner
- ◇ Section 8 Property Owner Registration form completed by the owner
- ◇ W-9 Tax form completed by the owner

Note: Owners can upload their documents directly to the Owner Extranet.

Depending on the type of unit chosen, additional documents may be required. Refer to the *Briefing Packet Checklist* for a list of all required documents.

Speed up your rental by ensuring the unit is move-in ready—refer to *A Good Place to Live! brochure* for tips on what NYCHA looks for when inspecting.

Time will not be taken from your voucher while it is under NYCHA review.

NYCHA does not disclose information about participant families to owners.

HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT IF I THINK I HAVE BEEN A VICTIM OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION?

The federal Fair Housing Act, the New York State Human Rights Law, and various local laws, such as the New York City Human Rights Law, prohibit discrimination by housing providers.

It is a violation of NYC Local Law 10 for an owner of a building with six or more units to refuse to rent to a Section 8 voucher holder.

If you feel you have been a victim of housing discrimination in your housing search, contact the NYC Commission on Human Rights. You can file a discrimination complaint on their website at nyc.gov/cchr or by calling 311.

Refer to *Are You a Victim of Housing Discrimination?* in your briefing packet to learn more.

HOW CAN A TENANT OPT OUT OF THE HCV PROGRAM?

Notify NYCHA in writing if you no longer wish to participate in the Section 8 HCV Program.