

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SECTION 8 PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER PROGRAM

What does “project-based” rental assistance mean?

Project-based rental assistance means rental assistance comes with the apartment. You will pay 30% of your income toward rent and the federal government, through the Section 8 rental assistance program, pays the difference between your payment and the actual rent charged.

How are project-based vouchers different from Section 8 tenant-based vouchers?

Under the Section 8 tenant-based voucher program, you may select an apartment of your choice. When you move out of the apartment, you can transfer the rental assistance to another apartment of your choice.

Under the Section 8 project-based voucher program, the rental assistance is tied to specific apartments. It is not a mobile subsidy that can be taken with you from place to place. If you move, you do not have any right to continued housing assistance. However, you may be eligible for a tenant-based voucher when one becomes available.

What are the benefits of participating in the project-based voucher program?

Eligible tenants always pay only 30% of their adjusted monthly income towards rent and utilities even if the rent for the apartment increases in the future.

Your apartment is inspected to ensure that it is in good condition before it may be approved for the program.

Where are these apartments located?

Project-based apartments are located in or near most major cities and towns throughout Massachusetts. For a list of apartments in your area contact one of the agencies listed in this fact sheet.

How long will I have to wait for an apartment?

Depending on the location, you may have to wait several years for a vacancy to occur.

How do I submit my pre-application for project-based assistance?

You can submit your pre-application by mail or in person at one of the locations listed. Please note that we cannot accept pre-applications by fax. When we receive your pre-application form, we will add your name to the requested waiting list(s).

What if I am already on a Section 8 waiting list?

If you are already on DHCD’s tenant-based Section 8 waiting list, applying for a project-based apartment will not affect your position on that list. If your personal information, such as address, is different it will be updated using the information that you provide on your most recent pre-application form.

Can I apply to multiple locations?

Yes, but please do not add your name to the list for an apartment unless you think you would really live there. Applying to every project slows down the admissions process for everyone. If you apply for an apartment that does not have an appropriate bedroom size for your family you will not be added to that list.

After I apply may I add or remove household members?

Once you have submitted an application, it is very important that you notify us of any change in your family that could affect the size of the apartment you need. You may add or remove people from your pre-application by submitting the change in writing to the intake department of one of the agencies listed in this fact sheet. Please include your name, Social Security number, the information to be changed, and a telephone number where we can contact you.

Adding or removing household members may affect your eligibility for some apartments. If the change increases or decreases the number of bedrooms your family needs, and the locations to which you have previously applied do not have any apartments with that bedroom size, your name will be removed from that list.

May I change my waiting list choices?

Yes, you may add your name to the list for new apartments as they become available. You may also ask that your name be removed from one or more waiting lists if you no longer have an interest in that apartment. If you add your name to a list, your date of application for that apartment will be the date that your pre-application was received.

How do I change my address?

To submit a change of address in person, visit one of the locations listed and fill out a change of address form. To submit a change of address by mail, write a brief letter which includes your name, Social Security number, phone number, previous address and new address. Mail your letter to the intake department of one of the locations listed. Please note that changing your address with the United States Postal Service or with a local housing authority does not change your address with us. You must update us separately.

What can I expect once I am selected from the waiting list?

You will receive a letter that an apartment is available and you will be instructed to contact the property owner for screening.

Property owners each have their own tenant selection standards which they use to choose suitable tenants for their rental apartments. The owner will either approve or deny your application based on their standards. If the property owner offers the apartment to you, you have (5) days to accept the offer.

If you are approved by the owner and accept the offer you must then complete a final Section 8 eligibility screening procedure at one of the agencies listed in this fact sheet. Please note that an owner may offer an apartment to more than one applicant. In that case, the applicant that first completes the final Section 8 eligibility screening will be chosen to occupy the apartment.

If you accept the offer and occupy the apartment, your name will be removed from all DHCD's tenant-based and project-based Section 8 waiting lists.

What if I want to move?

If you live in the apartment for one full year and have been a tenant in good standing during that time you may request that a tenant-based Section 8 Voucher be issued to you. If tenant-based vouchers are not available at the time of your request, you will be placed on a waiting list for a tenant-based Section 8 voucher.

Can I be denied assistance?

Yes. Even if you can prove that you need housing, we are required by federal law and regulation to refuse assistance if you do not qualify.

What if I have special needs?

Please tell us if you have any special needs which must be accommodated during the application process or when we offer you an apartment. Some examples of accommodations include large-print materials, apartments accessible for wheelchairs or other assistive devices, adaptive features for special appliances and apartments in specific locations, where available. We will make every effort to meet your needs.

How will I know when apartments in new locations become available?

It is your responsibility to contact one of the agencies listed here to learn about new housing opportunities. Unfortunately there are too many people on the waiting list to contact everyone individually.

Where can I get a pre-application and more information about this program?

The following agencies can provide you with information and assistance.

Berkshire County/Pittsfield
Berkshire Housing Development Corporation (BHDC)
74 North Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-4887

Lowell, Lawrence, North Shore
Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI)
167 Dutton Street
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 459-0551

Cape Cod & Islands
Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC)
460 West Main Street
Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 771-5400

Hampden, Hampshire & Franklin Counties/ Springfield
HAP, Inc.
322 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 233-1500

Boston Metro Area
Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP)
125 Lincoln Street
Boston, MA 02111-2503

(617) 859-0400

Worcester County
RCAP Solutions, Inc.
205 School Street, PO Box 159
Gardner, MA 01440-0159
(978) 630-6600

Metro West Area/ Framingham
South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)
300 Howard Street
Framingham, MA 01702
(508) 620-2335

Plymouth & Bristol Counties/ South Shore
South Shore Housing Development Corporation (SSHDC)
169 Summer Street
Kingston, MA 02364
(781) 422-4200