

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

FAQ

Q: How do I receive a Housing Choice Voucher?

A: You must apply online and be placed on a local housing agency waiting list. We have 32 local housing agencies; each one maintains separate waiting lists for their area of operation.

Q: How do I get an application?

A: Applications for the waiting list are only accepted online. Opening and closing of the waiting list is published in the area newspaper two weeks before the waiting list is opens.

Q: Are there instructions on how to complete the application?

A: Yes, instructions are provided online to complete the application:

- Before you begin the application process, have your social security number (SSN) for the head of household. The SSN is being submitted over a secure environment.
- You will be asked to provide a correct mailing address, email address and phone number so the local housing agency can contact you regarding your application. If your contact information is incorrect, your name will be removed from the waiting list. Email is faster than using the USPS.

Q: Can I have someone listed on the application as an additional contact person on my behalf?

A: You can include the name, address, telephone number and email address of a family member, friend, or social, health, advocacy, or other organization. This is an optional question and it not required to submit your application.

Q: Can people who live outside of the local housing agency's waiting list apply?

A: Yes, applications are accepted from everyone, but each Virginia Housing agency has a residency preference, so those who live/work inside the area will be placed on the waiting list before those who don't.

Q: Can someone complete an online application for me?

A: Yes, anyone can complete the online application on behalf of an applicant.

Q: Can Virginia Housing or the local housing agent mail/fax/email me an application?

A: No, you must apply online.

Q: How do I apply if I don't have computer access or internet?

A: The two-week newspaper notification provides adequate time for you to contact family, friends, public libraries, your church and/or other local organizations to arrange to use their internet to access the online application.

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FAQ (continued)

Q: How do I know where I am on the waiting list?

A: The local agencies can tell you where you are on the waiting list and what your number/position is, however, the waiting list is dynamic, and your number/position could change as other applicants report changes in local preferences.

Q: When will a waiting list open?

A: It is not possible to predict when a waiting list will open. Virginia Housing and the local agency will open the list when there are not enough applicants to fill anticipated vacancies.

Q: How long do I have to wait before I get a voucher?

A: Because it all depends on the rate of turnover (who gives up their voucher or leaves the program) and the level of federal funding available, it isn't possible to predict how long you will remain on a waiting list.

Q: How much time do I have to complete the application?

A: The online application is designed to be quick and easy to complete. You have an initial 20 minutes to submit the application. If more time is needed, an additional 20 minutes is provided. The clock does not start until you enter your SSN.

Q: How will I know if my application was accepted?

A: A confirmation number will be provided to you once you have completed the application. This is your notice that you are on the waiting list. You will not receive a letter in the mail.

Q: What should I do if I don't receive a confirmation number?

A: If you do not receive an online confirmation number, then your application was not accepted, and you will not be on the waiting list. You should immediately reapply before the application deadline closes. If you encounter any problems receiving your confirmation number, please email HCVWaitList@VirginiaHousing.com before the waiting list closes. Issues reported after the waiting list closes cannot be addressed.

Q: How will I be contacted when a voucher becomes available?

A: You will be contacted by the local housing agency either by email or by letter to verify your eligibility. Always follow-up with the local housing agency to be sure they have your correct addresses on file. And if you are worried that your email was not received by the local agency, please call to confirm the email was received.

Q: Can I apply to more than one housing agency's waiting list?

A: Yes, you may apply to more than one.

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FAQ (continued)

Q: Is the online application only in English?

A: No, it is also available in Spanish.

Q: Is there a fee to apply online?

A: No.

Q: May I apply to the same waiting list more than once?

A: No, the online system will not accept a second application for the same waiting list.

Q: When will you be taking applications in the area where I live?

A: All announcements regarding the date and time to open and close a waiting list are published in the local newspaper.

Q: What is a local housing agency's waiting list area?

A: Local housing agencies serve specific areas. These are called “areas of operation” or “waiting list areas.” For example, Pembroke Management, Inc. administers the voucher program for the counties of Craig, Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski. The area served by Pembroke Management is their waiting list area.

Q: What is a local residency preference?

A: A residency preference is given to an application based on a member of the applicant's family living, working or being hired to work in the waiting list area served by the local housing agency. The residency preference puts applicants who live/work in the waiting list area ahead of those who don't. All of our local housing agencies have a local residency preference.

Q: What are the definitions of the local preferences?

A: Definition of local preferences:

Client with agency services - services provided by a local housing agency to a special-needs population.

Applicant family - a family, defined by the local housing agency, which is applying for assistance.

Disabled family - a family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities; or two or more persons with disabilities living together; or one or more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides (24 CFR 5.403).

Elderly family - a family whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person who is at least 62 years of age; or two or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living together; or one or more persons who are at least 62 years of age living with one or more live-in aides (24 CFR 5.403).

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FAQ (continued)

Homeless - Any person or family that: (1) lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; or (2) is living in a shelter or utilizing shelter resources that provide temporary living arrangements; or (3) is exiting an institution where the person resided 90 days or less and was homeless prior to being institutionalized; or (4) is fleeing any type of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or other dangerous or life-threatening situation.

Homeless with children under age 18 - Any family that has children under age 18 and: (1) lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; or (2) is living in a shelter or utilizing shelter resources that provide temporary living arrangements; or (4) is fleeing any type of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or other dangerous or life-threatening situation.

Preference for singles - single persons who are age 62 or older, displaced, homeless, or persons with disabilities are given preference over other single persons (24 CFR 982.207(b)(v)(5)).

Rent burdened - a family paying more than 50% of monthly family income for rent and utilities.

Waiting list area - a jurisdiction identified as the Virginia Housing local agency's area to operate and provides services.

Working family - a family where the head, spouse or sole member is employed OR where the head and spouse, or sole member is age 62 or older, or is a person with a disability.

Substandard housing is defined by HUD if it is dilapidated. A housing unit is dilapidated if it:

- does not provide safe and adequate shelter AND meets the criteria in either paragraphs two, three or four;
- endangers the health, safety or well-being of a family in its present condition;
- has one or more critical defects; OR as a combination of intermediate defects in sufficient number or extent to require considerable repair or rebuilding. (The defects may involve original construction, or they may result from continued neglect or lack of repair or rebuilding);
- does not have operable indoor plumbing;
- does not have a usable flush toilet, bathtub or shower inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family;
- does not have electricity or has inadequate or unsafe electrical service;
- does not have safe or adequate source of heat;
- should, but does not, have a kitchen;
- or, has been declared unfit for the habitation by an agency or unit of government.

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FAQ (continued)

Q: What if I have special needs?

A: If you or anyone in your family is a person with a disability, and you require a specific accommodation to fully utilize our programs and services, please contact the local housing agency in your area to request an appointment to apply during the application acceptance period.

Q: What if my circumstances change while I'm on the waiting list?

A: There are two important changes to report in writing or by email:

- All mailing/email address changes (so the local housing agency can contact you) and report any changes that may qualify your family for the local agency preferences (so your application is on the waiting list in the correct position).
- It is not necessary to report family composition or income changes as this information is not a question on the online application. Report all change of circumstances to the local housing agency not Virginia Housing

Q: What happens when my name reaches the top of the waiting list?

A: The local housing agency will send you a letter or an email requesting you complete the formal application process. Once the information is verified and your application is determined eligible, a voucher will be issued. If you do not respond to the letter or the email your name will be removed from the waiting list.

Q: What is the website to apply online?

A: <https://vhda.apply4housing.com>