

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

CAN YOU MOVE?

1) What if I owe money to the Housing Authority?

- Rent must be paid in full to your property manager prior to moving out.
- You must be in good standing with the property owner. If you owe fees or rent they must be paid in full prior to moving.

THE MOVING PROCESS: LOOKING FOR A HOME

2) What is the first step?

- Communicate with the property manager as soon as possible of your intention to move.

3) How much time will I have to look for a unit?

- Vouchers are issued for **120 days** (4 months).
- HACA may grant one 30 day extension. You must submit a request in writing before the voucher expires.
- If you ask for a **voucher extension** and you want to **extend your lease**, please let your property manager know.

4) How will I find a place that accepts vouchers?

- GoSection8.com has listings of available units with owners that accept vouchers, apartment locators, realtors, and newspapers.

5) What can I expect to pay in rent?

- Your Housing Eligibility Specialist will provide you an estimate of what your rent portion could be based on your family composition and household income.

6) What fees can an apartment charge?

- Typical pre-leasing apartment fees include application fees, security deposits, and pet deposits.

7) Are pets allowed?

- Not all apartments allow pets, and some can charge additional deposits or fees to have a pet.

8) What If I change my mind and want to renew my lease?

- You can stay by submitting a written letter to your property manager.

9) Where can I use the voucher?

- The Voucher can be used with any rental unit such as an apartment, duplex, townhome, condo or single family house if the owner agrees to accept the voucher.

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10) Can I move outside of Austin?

- You may move to other cities or states. This is called Portability. Let us know as soon as possible if you choose this option.

ONCE YOU FIND A UNIT

11) How do I pay for deposits?

- Security deposits are your responsibility. Your assigned Housing Eligibility Specialist may have information on available resources that could possibly help with this.

12) Who pays to connect utilities (water, gas, electricity, trash)?

- Utility charges vary per apartment complex and house, this information will be provided by the new property owner.
- For any tenant paid utilities it is the responsibility of the tenant to call the utility company to connect utilities and pay for any deposits.

13) What's next after I find a unit that accepts my voucher?

- Return the fully completed and signed moving packet including the Request for Tenancy Approval to the Housing Eligibility Specialist who will schedule an inspection.
- Do not move in to the new unit until it has passed a housing quality standards inspection.
- HACA cannot start to assist you with the housing choice voucher program until the unit passes an inspection.

14) What is expected of me with my current unit?

- Leave your unit in good condition or you may have to pay for damages to the unit.
- Pay your rent on time including the last month's rent.
- It is your responsibility to move out from the old unit and into the new unit.

15) How do I know if the new unit has passed inspection?

- Stay in contact with your assigned Housing Eligibility Specialist to find out when the unit passes inspection.

16) When will I know what I have to pay in rent?

- Your Housing Eligibility Specialist will give you a rent estimate of what your rent portion could be. Be prepared to pay this rent portion upon move in.
- Your Housing Eligibility Specialist will notify you by mail soon after you've moved in with your final rent portion.



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ONCE MOVED INTO THE NEW UNIT

17) How long are leases?

- Lease terms are typically one year. After the first year, you may choose to move or renew your lease. The owner has to agree to renew the lease after the first year, so make sure you follow the lease terms during your tenancy.

18) What if there are problems with the unit?

- Notify the property owner or manager if there are any needed repairs. If the property owner/manager doesn't make the repairs, you then may contact your Housing Eligibility Specialist.

19) What if the owner does not respond to repair issues?

- You can notify your assigned Housing Eligibility Specialist in writing of unit repair problems only after you have contacted the property owner and allowed a reasonable amount of time for a response from the owner.

PORTABILITY (TRANSFERRING TO OTHER CITIES)

20) Where can I use my voucher?

- You may move to any city in the United States with a housing choice voucher program.
- HACA's Transfer Specialist can assist you with locating a Housing Authority in the area you choose to move to.