



# Housing Choice Voucher Program 2022 Waiting List Opening Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



## 1. What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program?

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program is the federal government's largest program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and persons with a disability to afford healthy and safe housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing authorities (PHAs). As a local PHA, the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Ana (SAHA) receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program.

A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the family's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. This unit may include the family's present residence. Rental units must meet minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by SAHA.

A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by SAHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

## 2. Am I eligible?

Eligibility for a housing voucher is determined by SAHA based on the total annual gross income and family size and is limited to U.S. citizens and specified categories of non-citizens who have eligible immigration status. In general, the family's income may not exceed 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live. By law, SAHA must provide 75 percent of its vouchers to applicants whose incomes do not exceed 30 percent of the area median income. Median income levels are published by HUD and vary by location. The maximum income limits per family size are provided for you below:

<b>1 Person</b> \$47,450	<b>2 Person</b> \$54,200	<b>3 Person</b> \$61,000	<b>4 Person</b> \$67,750
<b>5 Person</b> \$73,200	<b>6 Person</b> \$78,600	<b>7 Person</b> \$84,050	<b>8 Person</b> \$89,450

During the application process, SAHA will collect information on family income, assets, and family composition. If SAHA determines that your family is eligible, the SAHA will put your name on a Waiting List. Once your name reaches the top of the Waiting List, SAHA will contact you to determine your eligibility and issue to you a housing voucher.

### **3. Local preferences and the Waiting List - what are they and how do they affect me?**

Since the demand for housing assistance often exceeds the limited resources available to HUD and the Santa Ana Housing Authority, long waiting periods are common. In fact, SAHA will close its Waiting List on May 31, 2022 when it has more families on the list than can be assisted in the near future.

PHAs may establish local preferences for selecting applicants from its waiting list. For example, PHAs may give a preference to a family who is (1) homeless or living in substandard housing, (2) paying more than 50% of its income for rent, or (3) involuntarily displaced. Families who qualify for any such local preferences move ahead of other families on the list who do not qualify for any preference. Each PHA has the discretion to establish local preferences to reflect the housing needs and priorities of its particular community.

In the HCV Administrative Plan, the Santa Ana Housing Authority has established a local preference for U.S. military veterans and applicants who live or work in the City of Santa Ana. Veterans and families who live or work in the City of Santa Ana move ahead of other families on the Waiting List.

### **4. How do I apply for the Housing Choice Voucher Program?**

SAHA accepts applications in a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, online applications. Applicants who require assistance in completing a pre-application because of a disability, or because they require language translation services or communication in an alternate format may call our Waiting List Hotline at (714) 667-2284, 1-800-855-7100 (TTY or TDD) or e-mail us at [sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org](mailto:sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org).

To apply on-line, as one method, please go to [santa-ana.org/housing](http://santa-ana.org/housing) between May 2, 2022 at 7:30AM and May 31, 2022 at 11:59PM (Pacific Standard Time)

Pre-applications may be submitted in a variety of methods, including online using a computer, smartphone, tablet or other electronic device with Internet access. SAHA has partnered with several agencies to provide computer access. Please go to [www.santa-ana.org/departments/housing-authority](http://www.santa-ana.org/departments/housing-authority) for a list of locations and hours of operation. A computer kiosk is also available for you in our offices at 20 Civic Center Plaza, 1st Floor, Santa Ana, CA or in the Santa Ana Library.

The on-line pre-application form is available in all languages. Before applying on-line, we recommend that you change the website from English to your preferred

language. Applicants will be required to create a user name and password, which should be kept for your records.

#### **5. How do I get a voucher?**

You should apply on-line when the Waiting List is open and your application must be pulled off of the 2022 Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List (the 2022 HCV Waiting List). You must also be determined eligible for assistance.

The buying and selling of Section 8 Vouchers is a federal crime. Please do not provide your personal information or pay any money to anyone claiming to represent SAHA. SAHA does not charge or accept a fee for any service provided to our applicants, participants or landlords. If you are approached by anyone who requests a fee for any service that SAHA provides, that person is a scam artist and is not acting on behalf of SAHA.

#### **6. Housing vouchers - how do they function?**

The Housing Choice Voucher Program places the choice of housing in the hands of the individual family. A very low-income family selected by the PHA to participate is encouraged to consider several housing choices to secure the best housing for the family needs. A housing voucher holder is advised of the unit size for which it is eligible based on family size and composition.

The housing unit selected by the family must meet an acceptable level of health and safety before SAHA can approve the unit. When the voucher holder finds a unit that it wishes to occupy and reaches an agreement with the landlord over the lease terms, SAHA must inspect the dwelling and determine that the rent requested is reasonable.

SAHA determines a payment standard that is the amount generally needed to rent a moderately-priced dwelling unit in the local housing market and that is used to calculate the amount of housing assistance a family will receive. However the payment standard does not limit and does not affect the amount of rent a landlord may charge or the family may pay. A family which receives a housing voucher can select a unit with a rent that is below or above the payment standard. The housing voucher family must pay 30% of its monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities, and if the unit rent is greater than the payment standard the family is required to pay the additional amount. By law, whenever a family moves to a new unit where the rent exceeds the payment standard, the family may not pay more than 40% of its adjusted monthly income for rent.

#### **7. What is the rent subsidy?**

SAHA calculates the maximum amount of housing assistance allowable. The maximum housing assistance is generally the lesser of the payment standard minus 30% of the family's monthly adjusted income or the gross rent for the unit minus 30% of monthly adjusted income.

## 8. Roles - the tenant, the landlord, the housing agency and HUD:

Once SAHA approves an eligible family's housing unit, the family and the landlord sign a lease and, at the same time, the landlord and SAHA sign a housing assistance payments contract that runs for the same term as the lease. This means that everyone -- tenant, landlord and SAHA -- has obligations and responsibilities under the voucher program:

***Tenant's Obligations:*** When a family selects a housing unit, and SAHA approves the unit and lease, the family signs a lease with the landlord for at least one year. The tenant may be required to pay a security deposit to the landlord. After the first year the landlord may initiate a new lease or allow the family to remain in the unit on a month-to-month lease.

When the family is settled in a new home, the family is expected to comply with the lease and the program requirements, pay its share of rent on time, maintain the unit in good condition and notify SAHA of any changes in income or family composition.

***Landlord's Obligations:*** The role of the landlord in the voucher program is to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to a tenant at a reasonable rent. The dwelling unit must pass the program's housing quality standards and be maintained up to those standards as long as the owner receives housing assistance payments. In addition, the landlord is expected to provide the services agreed to as part of the lease signed with the tenant and the contract signed with SAHA.

***Housing Authority's Obligations:*** SAHA administers the voucher program locally. SAHA provides a family with the housing assistance that enables the family to seek out suitable housing and SAHA enters into a contract with the landlord to provide housing assistance payments on behalf of the family. If the landlord fails to meet the owner's obligations under the lease, SAHA has the right to terminate assistance payments. SAHA must reexamine the family's income and composition at least annually and must inspect each unit at least once every two years to ensure that it meets minimum housing quality standards.

***HUD's Role:*** To cover the cost of the program, HUD provides funds to allow SAHA to make housing assistance payments on behalf of the families. HUD also pays SAHA a fee for the costs of administering the program. When additional funds become available to assist new families, HUD invites SAHA to submit applications for funds for additional housing vouchers. Applications are then reviewed and funds awarded to the selected PHAs on a competitive basis. HUD monitors SAHA's administration of the program to ensure program rules are properly followed.

**9. Why is SAHA opening its Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List and when is it opening?**

SAHA's current Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List has been exhausted. In an effort to provide access to affordable housing to extremely low-income residents in the City of Santa Ana, SAHA is opening its Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List on Monday, May 2, 2022 at 7:30AM until Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at 11:59PM (Pacific Standard Time).

**10. Who may apply for the Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List?**

Anyone eighteen (18) years of age or older, or an emancipated minor in accordance with California law may apply.

**11. When can I apply for the Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List?**

Pre-applications will be accepted from Monday, May 2, 2022 at 7:30AM until Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at 11:59PM (Pacific Standard Time).

**12. What happens after I submit the pre-application?**

After you create an account by using your birthday and social security number or password, you will be able to submit your application on-line. After you submit your pre-application, you will receive an e-mail confirmation that you have applied for the 2022 HCV Waiting List.

If you submit a paper pre-application, the paper pre-application will be used by the Housing Authority staff to create your Waiting List pre-application in the Housing Authority's software.

Following the closing of the pre-application period (on Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at 11:59PM (Pacific Standard Time)), pre-applications will be selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List using a computerized, random selection lottery process. Once the lottery is complete, the applicants who have been randomly assigned numbers 1 – 7,500 will be placed on the 2022 HCV Waiting List. The remaining pre-applications will be rejected without the opportunity for an appeal. Pre-applications of applicants who are not one of the 7,500 applicants selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List shall be rejected and shall not have any further right to or entitlement to be listed on the 2022 HCV Waiting List nor shall they have any further right or entitlement to participate in future selections from the 2022 HCV Waiting List created under this opening.

Notice will be sent by mail and e-mail to all applicants informing them if they have or have not been selected through the lottery process to be placed on the 2022 HCV Waiting List. If you were selected, you will receive a notice by mail and e-mail informing you that you were selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List.

If you were not selected, you will receive a notice by mail and e-mail informing you that were not selected. You will be eligible to reapply for housing assistance when the Waiting List opens again. In the event SAHA opens its Waiting List again in the

future, all applicants who were not selected and who want to be considered in the future must apply again in accordance with the terms outlined in such future openings of the Waiting List. Periodically check the SAHA website to find out when our Waiting List will open again. After the lottery is conducted, SAHA will send letters to schedule interviews to the top applicants on the Waiting List based off the amount of available funding and the turnover rate for the HCV Program.

**13. I received an e-mail that my application has been received. Does that mean I am on the Waiting List?**

No. A confirmation e-mail is sent when an application has been received and placed into the lottery. This does not guarantee a place on the 2022 HCV Waiting List nor eligibility for the program. E-mails will be sent to the e-mail address you provided on your online application if you are selected as one of the 7,500 applicants that are generated from the lottery. A letter will also be sent to all applicants, including those applicants who submitted a physical application. Please check your spam and/or junk e-mail folders for the e-mail before contacting our office. If you did not receive a confirmation e-mail, you can contact us by e-mail at [sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org](mailto:sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org).

**14. My application was selected in the lottery. How do I know where I am on the Waiting List?**

Being added to the 2022 HCV Waiting List does not mean that you will receive a voucher right away or that housing assistance is immediately available. You will not know and it is not possible to predict how long you will be on the 2022 HCV Waiting List before your application is selected. The 2022 HCV Waiting List is dynamic and selection is based on the level of available funding and the turnover rate for the HCV Program.

**15. My application was not selected in the lottery. What does this mean and when can I get a voucher?**

Vouchers are only available through the 2022 HCV Waiting List. To receive a voucher through SAHA you will need to apply when the Waiting List is open. If you are approached by someone advising you to purchase a SAHA voucher – STOP, vouchers are not for sale and selling of vouchers is a crime.

**16. What should I do if I did not receive a notice notifying me whether I was selected or not?**

If you know you submitted an application, but you did not receive a confirmation e-mail, please check your mail and/or e-mail account to see if it was placed in your spam and/or junk e-mail folders before contacting our office. If you did not receive a notice, you can contact us by e-mail at [sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org](mailto:sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org).

**17. If I am not selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List, what happens next?**

If you are not selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List, SAHA will not be able to provide housing assistance to you at this time. For other affordable housing opportunities, please visit [www.ochousing.org](http://www.ochousing.org) or call 2-1-1 for additional services.

**18. When will the 2022 HCV Waiting List be finalized?**

The 2022 HCV Waiting List will be finalized before July 31, 2022. SAHA will place 7,500 names on the 2022 HCV Waiting List using a lottery system. SAHA will notify all applicants of their status by mail and e-mail on or before July 31, 2022.

**19. If I am selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List, how do I check my application status?**

Applicants who have been selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List can check their status by going to [www.assistancecheck.com](http://www.assistancecheck.com). On this website, you can also update your contact information or submit documentation for your pre-application. The log in information for [www.assistancecheck.com](http://www.assistancecheck.com) is the same one that you created to submit your application. Applicants on the 2022 HCV Waiting List should visit [www.assistancecheck.com](http://www.assistancecheck.com) at least once a year to verify their contact information.

**20. What information is needed to apply?**

The pre-application requires your full name, date of birth, mailing address, phone number, annual gross income and information for all of the household members who will reside in your household. The pre-application also requires your social security number. If you do not have a valid social security number, you can choose the “Opt Out” option. The pre-application process takes an average of 15 minutes to complete.

**21. What if I do not have the information needed, may I submit an application without the required items?**

No, but our staff are available to assist you with your application. Applicants who require assistance in completing a pre-application because of a disability, or because they require language translation services or communication in an alternate format may call our Waiting List Hotline at (714) 667-2284, 1-800-855-7100 (TTY or TDD) or e-mail us at [sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org](mailto:sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org).

**22. May I apply more than once?**

No. Only one pre-application per applicant will be accepted. Duplicate or fraudulent applications will be rejected.

**23. Is there a cost to submit a Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List pre-application?**

No. There is no cost to submit a pre-application. SAHA will never ask for your debit or credit card or any other form of payment to submit a pre-application for its services. Additionally, please do not provide personal information to anyone claiming he or she can guarantee a spot for you on the 2022 HCV Waiting List, improve your chances of selection for the 2022 HCV Waiting List or ensure that you will receive any SAHA benefits.

**24. Can I apply for the Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List if I have applied before, was previously terminated from the program, owe SAHA any money or if I am on another Waiting List?**

Yes. You will not be prohibited from submitting a pre-application. However, when you are selected from the 2022 HCV Waiting List, your application will be reviewed in accordance with SAHA's Administrative Plan, which may include a review of your previous participation in a housing assistance program and related rental history.

**25. Am I guaranteed a place on the Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List?**

The 2022 HCV Waiting List selection process (lottery) is random. It does not matter what date and time your pre-application is submitted. All pre-applications whether submitted at the beginning of the day on Monday, May 2, 2022 at 7:30AM until Tuesday, May 31, 2022, at 11:59PM (Pacific Standard Time) of the application period will be placed in random order by the third party software. Applying does not guarantee you a place on the 2022 HCV Waiting List nor eligibility for the program.

Once the random selection (lottery) process is complete, SAHA will send a notice on or before July 31, 2022 by mail and e-mail to all applicants who applied to notify them if they have or have not been selected for the final 2022 HCV Waiting List.

**26. What if something changes on my application?**

All changes must be submitted through [www.assistancecheck.com](http://www.assistancecheck.com). It is the responsibility of the applicant to keep their contact information updated with SAHA. Failure to do so may result in removal from the 2022 HCV Waiting List.

**27. When will I get called from the Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting list for housing?**

Being added to the waiting list does not mean that you will receive a voucher right away or that housing assistance is immediately available. As voucher/funding becomes available, SAHA will draw applicants from the waiting list on a periodic basis.

Once your name has reached the top of the waiting list, SAHA will invite you to attend an orientation meeting and we will provide you with an eligibility packet to complete before your eligibility interview. During the eligibility interview process, SAHA will verify the preferences you checked on your pre-application, conduct a criminal background check on all household members ages 18 years or older, and collect information on your family income, assets and family composition. SAHA will verify this information to determine your eligibility.

If your family submitted all required documents and has been determined eligible for the program, you will be required to attend a Housing Choice Voucher briefing where you will be issued a voucher.

**28. When will the waiting list be reopened again?**

SAHA will reopen the Waiting List after the 7,500 applicants have been pulled off of the 2022 HCV Waiting List. Based on the level of program funding it is expected to

take five to seven years to serve all 7,500 applicants. Please check the SAHA website at [www.santa-ana.org/departments/housing-authority](http://www.santa-ana.org/departments/housing-authority) for any announcements.

**29. I am homeless and applied for the program. Why wasn't I selected?**

There is no preference for people experiencing homelessness for the 2022 HCV Waiting List. 7,500 names will be randomly selected from the entire pool of applicants.

**30. My adult child was selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List. Will I be included in their voucher?**

Eligibility is determined when the applicant is selected from the 2022 HCV Waiting List. If you are not a member of the household at the time you submitted your application, you may not be added to your child's voucher.

**31. If I have applied to one housing authority's Waiting List, may I apply to another open waiting list?**

Yes. You may apply to more than one Waiting List for more than one Housing Authority.

**32. What happens if my name is selected from the Waiting List and I did not receive my eligibility notice and missed my appointments?**

You will be given two opportunities to attend an orientation and/or eligibility interview. If you miss these appointments, and did not make prior alternative arrangements with SAHA, your name will automatically be removed from the 2022 HCV Waiting List. You may reapply when the Waiting List reopens.

**33. May I appeal the decision to be removed from the 2022 HCV Waiting List if I missed my appointments?**

No. There is no appeals process for applicants to the 2022 HCV Waiting List. You may reapply when the Waiting List reopens.

**34. When and how do I change my contact information with SAHA?**

You are required to keep your contact information up-to-date and should advise SAHA of any changes in a timely manner. You could lose the opportunity for a voucher and housing assistance if we are unable to contact you. If you have any changes to your name and/or contact information please update the information as soon as possible by going to [www.assistancecheck.com](http://www.assistancecheck.com). SAHA does not provide status updates or make changes to applicant information by phone. Applicants who require assistance in completing a pre-application because of a disability, or because they require language translation services or communication in an alternate format may call our Waiting List Hotline at (714) 667-2284, 1-800-855-7100 (TTY or TDD) or e-mail us at [sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org](mailto:sahawaitinglist@santa-ana.org).

**35. What is the difference between the Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher Waiting Lists?**

Housing Choice Vouchers is defined as tenant-based assistance wherein the assistance is tied to the family. It provides rental assistance for families in the private rental market and the family can choose any housing units that meets the requirements of the program.

Project-Based Vouchers are tied to a specific unit in a property contracted with the Housing Authority. Applicants selected for a Project-Based Waiting List may only receive a Project-Based Voucher at a specific property.

Applicants who were selected for both the Tenant-Based and Project-Based Waiting Lists will only be removed from a list for which they have been selected. Applicants cannot transfer to the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List from the Project-Based Waiting List or to another Housing Authority.

**36. If selected for the 2022 HCV Waiting List, do I automatically qualify for housing?**

No. If selected, you will be placed on the 2022 HCV Waiting List and will be contacted once your name reaches the top of the list for the eligibility process. This eligibility screening process will determine if you meet the basic eligibility requirements of the program. If you meet the program requirements, you will receive your voucher.

**37. How long is the waiting time to get a voucher once I have been placed on the 2022 HCV Waiting List?**

The wait time to receive a voucher is based on a variety of factors. What position you are on the 2022 HCV Waiting List, if you are a resident or work in the City of Santa Ana, if you are veteran, the availability of our vouchers and your eligibility, all play a role in determining how long your waiting time could be. It could be as quickly as a couple of months or as long as 7 years or more.

**38. Is there a preference given to applicants?**

Yes. The Santa Ana Housing Authority has a local preference for veterans and applicants who live or work in the City of Santa Ana.

**39. How many applicants will be placed on the 2022 HCV Waiting List?**

No more than 7,500 applicants will be placed on the 2022 HCV Waiting List.

**40. What regulations cover this program?**

Regulations are found in [24 CFR Part 982](#).