



## Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) FAQs

**Q. What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program?**

A. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, also known as Section 8, is a Federal rental assistance program funded by the US Department of Housing Urban Development (HUD). The program allows families to choose and lease safe and decent affordable housing. Albuquerque Housing Authority administers the Section 8 Program. AHA determines how much rent an eligible family can pay based on their income and the approved rent for the unit the family wants to lease. Eligible families will be required to pay only a portion of the total rent to the landlord (generally, 30% of the families adjusted monthly income). AHA will pay a rental subsidy, on behalf of the tenant, for the remaining amount of the total rent to the landlord.

**Q. What is the difference between Public Housing and the Section 8 Program?**

A. AHA's Public Housing Program provides apartments to eligible low income families in developments owned by AHA. The Section 8 Program is an affordable housing option where AHA issues vouchers to eligible persons to rent apartments or houses with private landlords in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, and Bernalillo. Participants in Section 8 may be eligible to "port" (transfer) their voucher to another participating jurisdiction after one year.

**Q. Can I apply for a Section 8 Voucher? Who should I contact for information regarding the status of my application? How long will my Section 8 application remain active?**

A. You can check the status of your application by calling 505-764-3989. Be sure that you have your social security number ready. Our waiting list is currently closed. AHA has not determined when the Section 8 waiting list will be reopened. Check our [website](#) frequently, as this may change on short notice. Section 8 applications do not expire. All applications are considered active until you receive notification for an interview. Be sure to update your information with AHA as it changes.

**Q. What are the Voucher payment standards?**

A. ALL payment standards are subject to negotiation depending on the utilities and the inspector. Click [here](#) then go to 'Landlord/Tenant Resources' to view the most recent payment standards.

**Q. What should I do if I miss the appointment for my interview?**

A. It is important that you make an attempt to attend this appointment. If unable do to extenuating circumstances it *must* be documented. Please contact the Section 8 Intake Specialist at 505-764-3904 or you may come into the office to submit an appointment request for a rescheduled appointment.

**Q. Will AHA pay for my moving expenses, damage deposits or application fees etc.?**

A. AHA will not pay for moving expenses, damage deposit or application fees etc. for Section 8 voucher holders or tenants.



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Equal Housing Opportunity Agency



**Q. How is it determined that I am eligible for a voucher?**

A. See Chapter 6 of Section 8 Administrative Plan. AHA will verify that you are eligible for participation in the Section 8 program using HUDs local preference system. AHA will collect verification on your income, assets, and your family size and will verify this information through other local agencies such as; Employers, Child Support Enforcement, Department of Social Services, Social Security Administration, and Veterans Affairs etc. AHA will also conduct a criminal background check along with our preference system to determine program eligibility and the amount of your housing assistance payment. If AHA determines you are eligible, your name will be put on a waiting list. Once your name is reached on the waiting list, AHA will contact you in writing for a voucher appointment to determine your continued eligibility for the Section 8 Program.

The preference system is as follows: See Chapter 4 of Section 8 Administrative Plan

- Involuntary Displacement
- Upward Mobility (Employment, Education or Economic Development Self-Sufficiency)
- Elderly (62 yrs. of age or older) and/or Disabled

**Q. If I or a family member has a criminal record, will I/they be accepted into the Section 8 Program?**

A. See Chapter 17 of Section 8 Administrative Plan. AHA must perform criminal background checks on **all** applicants 18 years of age or older. Approval or denial of an applicant with previous criminal activity depends on the nature of the offense. Admission into the Section 8 Program is at the discretion of the Authority.

**Q. How much time is allowed to find a unit with a voucher?**

A. See Chapter 7.5 of Section 8 Administrative Plan. Section 8 vouchers are active for 60 consecutive calendar days from the date of issuance. House hold must submit a Request for Tenancy Form (RFTA) within that 60 day period.

**Q. How much will my rent be per month?**

A. See Chapter 9 of Section 8 Administrative Plan. Your tenant rent is based on your total adjusted gross income for your household. You will typically pay 30% of your monthly adjusted income towards your rent and utilities. However, if the gross rent (rent and utilities) exceeds the Payment Standards, you may have to pay a greater amount of your income towards your rent and utilities.

**Q. What should I do if there is a change to my address, family composition, or housing situation after I have submitted my application?**

A. You can update your contact information, family composition, or housing situation at any time by coming into the office and filling out a change report or mailing any changes to AHA office at 1840 University Blvd SE Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106, Attn: Intake.

**Q. Can a landlord increase or decrease the contract rent amount?**

A. See Chapter 13.5 of Section 8 Administrative Plan. A landlord can **request** a rental increase or decrease after 1 year of the first year of the initial lease expires. Landlords **must** submit a request to increase or decrease the rental amount in writing to AHA inspections department at least 60 days prior to the effective date of the expiration of the lease or the tenant's recertification date.

**Q. How quickly will an initial inspection be scheduled?**

A. See Chapter 12 of Section 8 Administrative Plan. HQS inspections are performed to determine if the unit and property meet federal minimum Housing Quality Standards and minimum local safety building code standards. AHA will conduct an initial move in inspection for each unit as part of the tenancy approval process. AHA will notify the Head of Household of the initial inspection within in 3 days of the receipt and acceptance of the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA). AHA will then notify the Head of Household and the Own/Landlord of the date and time of the scheduled inspection within 7-10 days, both Head of Household and the Landlord or their representatives *must* be present at the time of their inspection.

**Q. What is the difference between a 30 Day Notice, Mutual Recession, and an Eviction?**

A. A 30 Day Notice is a written notice of lease termination 30 days in advance. The household *must* give a copy of the written notice to AHA prior to relocation voucher documents being process and issued.

A Mutual Recession is an agreement between the tenant and the landlord releasing the tenant from the lease contract prior to the expiration of the lease. Possession of a mutual recession is not a guarantee of relocation and may be rejected if the tenant exceeds one move per year. The Mutual Recession does not release the tenant from any financial obligation set forth by the landlord.

An Eviction is when the landlord takes legal court action using a judgment to vacate the tenant from their unit.

**Q. Can I choose to leave Albuquerque and take my Section 8 HCV with me to rent a place in a different city?**

A. Eligible participants in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher tenant-based rental assistance program may voluntarily choose to move out to rent a place in a different city. They may choose to use the portability procedure to transfer their Section 8 Voucher rental assistance benefits to a different Public Housing Authority (PHA) in a different community, so that they may choose to rent a privately owned residence in any of the 50 United States plus the District of Columbia (DC), Puerto Rico (PR) or the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI).

**Q. Does AHA serve section 8 HCV tenants who rent in the City of Rio Rancho as well outside the Albuquerque city limits in Bernalillo County?**

A. Yes.