



Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is an Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV)?

The Housing Authority of the City and County of San Francisco (Authority) has been awarded 906 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs). The Housing Authority is partnering with the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) to implement this program. This gives us an exciting opportunity to move more San Franciscans experiencing and facing homelessness into permanent housing.

Tenants who receive EHVs:

- Typically pay 30% of your income on rent. You do not have to have any income to qualify, but you do have to have an income that is not more than 50% of the area median income (see Question 4)
- Live in a unit on the private rental market. The rest of the rent is paid for by the Housing Authority, up to fair market rent
- Keep the voucher for the long term, as long as you remain in compliance with HUD regulations

2. I need emergency housing tonight. Is this program for me?

These vouchers are called "emergency" vouchers because they are funded through the COVID-related American Rescue Plan. The vouchers are for long-term rental assistance, not emergency temporary assistance. It can take several months between application and move-in. If you are currently experiencing homelessness and are interested in accessing other resources in the Homelessness Response System, please visit our [How to Get Services page](#).

3. Am I eligible for an EHV?

EHVs are for **individuals and families** who:

- ✓ Are experiencing one of the following:
 - Currently experiencing homelessness. For example, you live in a car, outside, in a shelter, in a transitional housing program.
 - At risk of experiencing homelessness. For example, you have had to move around multiple times in the last few months, you are staying in someone else's home temporarily due to economic hardship, or you are staying at a hotel or motel that you pay for out of pocket.
 - Recently experiencing homelessness. For example, you were experiencing homelessness, then moved into a subsidized program such as Rapid Rehousing or Permanent Supportive Housing, and you need to have long-term assistance.

- Fleeting or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.
- ✓ Are at least 18 years old
- ✓ Have at least one household member who is a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen (i.e. permanent resident, refugee, asylee, etc).
 - If a household is mixed-immigration status, family members who do not have an SSN or eligible immigration status may still be able to live in the unit. Only those with eligible citizenship or immigration status are subsidized. This will result in a higher (pro-rated) rent for the family based on eligible family members.
- ✓ Have a total household income that does not exceed 50% of the area median income (see table below)
- ✓ Not be subject to a lifetime sex offender status on a state registry
- ✓ Not have a conviction for producing methamphetamines in publicly funded housing. A history for other convictions does not necessarily disqualify you from the voucher.

In addition to these eligibility criteria set by HUD, San Francisco has identified goals to prioritize who the vouchers go to, due to the limited number available and our efforts to distribute them equitably. Not everyone who is eligible for a voucher will have the opportunity to apply.

4. What if I have an income or some assets?

Many tenants using Housing Choice Vouchers including the EHV have some income from working, public benefits, or other sources. You do not need to have any income to be eligible. To qualify, applicants must show documented income within 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI). In San Francisco, the below income limits apply in FY2021:

Family Size	50% AMI
1	\$63,950
2	\$73,100
3	\$82,250
4	\$91,350
5	\$98,700
6	\$106,000
7	\$113,300
8+	\$120,600

You are still eligible if you have some assets -- owning a vehicle or jewelry or having some savings does not make you ineligible for the program.

5. How do I apply?

The first step is to take the HSH Eligibility Screener to be screened for the application fair.

- HSH is opening up an Eligibility Screener for an EHV application fair
- To be screened for eligibility for the program please fill out the HSH Eligibility Screener below and submit your contact information **between December 15th 2020 and January 20st 2021**
- After the HSH Eligibility Screener closes, staff from the HSH will reach out to a limited number of people. The list is not first-come, first-serve. People who are eligible and meet local priorities will be randomly selected in rounds, starting with people currently experiencing homelessness.
- If you are contacted, HSH will confirm your eligibility and invite you to complete an application in-person starting in February 2022.
If you are not contacted for this voucher opportunity, you can let HSH know if you want to be contacted about future opportunities when you complete the screener.

6. Will the voucher pay all of the rent?

If you lease up in a unit with an EHV, you will typically pay 30% of your household income toward rent, and the Housing Authority will pay the difference. If your income changes, your rent due will be changed to reflect that.

7. Are EHV's time-limited?

No. If you are approved for a voucher, you can keep it for as many years as you continue to qualify for the program.

8. How long will it take between getting approved for a voucher and moving in?

After you submit an application and all supporting documents, it will take 2-4 weeks to find out if you are approved. Applicants who are approved for a voucher will have up to 120 days (approximately four months) to search for housing and enter a lease agreement. Tenants will have access to support from HSH nonprofit partners throughout the entire housing search process, and reasonable accommodation and exemptions to this time limit may be available.

9. Can I use the voucher in another city or county?

Yes, the voucher can be moved (or “ported”) to a different county if needed, after going through a standardized process through the Housing Authority. If you are approved for a voucher, you can look for a unit in another area if you would like, and fill out a request to port form.

10. Does the voucher pay for other expenses?

HSH and partners are also funding other expenses such as security deposits, move-in expenses, furniture other basics, which are not covered directly through the EHV program but are critical to successful move-in.

11. Are undocumented households eligible for EHV's?

The EHV program requires at least one member of the household to be a U.S. citizen or a noncitizen with eligible immigration status to receive assistance.

If a household is mixed-immigration status, family members who do not have an SSN or eligible immigration status may still be able to live in the unit. Only those with eligible citizenship or immigration status are subsidized. This will result in a higher (pro-rated) rent for the family based on eligible family members.

The voucher holder must have citizenship or eligible immigration status, but does not need to be over 18 (i.e. households with parents who are undocumented and children with citizenship are eligible). If you are unsure of eligibility, please continue through the application process and you will be informed upon completion of the application.

12. What if I have a conviction on my record?

The only two HUD-mandated prohibitions are:

- Conviction of methamphetamine production in public housing
- Lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program

The Housing Authority conducts a criminal background check for all applicants, but a conviction history does not necessarily disqualify you. The Housing Authority will review applicants with convictions in the last 12 months on a case-by-case basis and may deny applicants whose background indicates a threat to the health and safety of residents. Arrest records or police reports will not be used as the sole basis for denying admission.

13. Am I eligible if I owe money to HUD or have been evicted from public housing in the past?

Yes, unlike other Housing Choice Vouchers, the EHV program does not preclude people who have past-due rent to HUD or have been evicted, with individual circumstances reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Housing Authority.

14. I am a survivor of violence and I am concerned about my privacy.

HSH and the Housing Authority are working with Victim Service Providers to ensure privacy and confidentiality for survivor applicants, and we establish extra mechanisms to keep your personal information and application confidential.

15. What documents do I need to apply?

When completing the EHV application you will need to provide documentation for the identity, income, and assets for all household members. Your application can begin processing without all of your documents if you do not have some ready, but if you do not provide all of the required documentation within a certain time frame (3-6 months) you risk losing the voucher, so it's important to get your documents in as soon as possible. Please see the list of documentation needed to submit a full application, available on the HSH EHV program website.

16. Does the Housing Authority pull households from its current waitlist for the EHV program?

No, the Housing Authority will only accept referrals for EHV's directly from HSH (the Coordinated Entry System or Designated Partner Referral agencies). Do not contact the Housing Authority to apply for the EHV program.

17. What if I am told I am ineligible, but I think I should be? What if I am denied a voucher, but I think I qualify?

If you are determined to be ineligible by an HSH Designated Referral Partner, but you believe you qualify for an EHV, you can appeal to HSH by emailing HousingChoiceVouchers@sfgov.org. Remember, even if you are eligible you might not be able to apply due to the limited number available and HSH's commitment to meeting our equity goals.

If you are found to be eligible and apply, but are denied a voucher, you have the right to appeal to the Housing Authority. You will have 15 days to submit an appeal and provide additional documentation explaining your situation.



Definitions and Acronyms

At-risk of homelessness

- (1) An individual or family who:
- (i) Has an annual income below 30 percent of median family income for the area, as determined by HUD;
 - (ii) Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “Homeless” definition; and
 - (iii) Meets one of the following conditions:
 - (A) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
 - (B) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
 - (C) Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days of the date of application for assistance;
 - (D) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
 - (E) Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons, or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 people per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;
 - (F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
 - (G) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan.
- (2) A child or youth who does not qualify as “homeless” under this section, but qualifies as “homeless” under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, the Head Start Act, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, the Public Health Service Act, the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966; or
- (3) A child or youth who does not qualify as “homeless” under this section, but qualifies as “homeless” under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of that child or youth is living with her or him.

Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence

This category is composed of any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.

This includes cases where a HUD-assisted tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if they remain within the same dwelling unit, or in the case of sexual assault, the HUD-assisted tenant reasonably believes there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if they remain within the same dwelling unit that they are currently occupying, or the sexual assault occurred on the premise during the 90- day period preceding the date of the request for transfer.

- Domestic violence includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by:
 - a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim (the term “spouse or intimate partner of the victim” includes a person who is or has

been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of the relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship),

- a person with whom the victim shares a child in common,
 - a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner
 - a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or
 - any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.
- Dating violence means violence committed by a person:
 - Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
 - Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: 1. The length of the relationship; 2. The type of relationship; and 3. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
 - Sexual assault means any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, Tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.
 - Stalking means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to: (1) Fear for the person's individual safety or the safety of others; or (2) Suffer substantial emotional distress.
 - Human trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking, as outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). These are defined as:
 - Sex trafficking means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; (and)
 - Labor trafficking means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Homeless

(1) An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- (i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
- (ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
- (iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

(2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

- (i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and
 - (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing.
- (3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
- (i) Are defined as homeless under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, the Head Start Act, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, the Public Health Service Act, the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966; or the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
 - (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
 - (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities; chronic physical health or mental health conditions; substance addiction; histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect); the presence of a child or youth with a disability; or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment.

Recently Homeless

individuals and families who have previously been classified by a member agency of the CoC as homeless but are not currently homeless as a result of homeless assistance (financial assistance or services), temporary rental assistance or some type of other assistance, and where the CoC or its designee determines that the loss of such assistance would result in a return to homelessness or the family having a high risk of housing instability. Examples of households that may be defined as recently homeless by the CoC include, but are not limited to, participants in rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.

Acronyms

EHV	Emergency Housing Voucher
HCV	Housing Choice Voucher
HSH	San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
PHA	Public Housing Authority
SFHA	San Francisco Housing Authority
VSP	Victim Service Provider