

Rental Assistance Vouchers Bulletin



Rental Assistance is government funding that subsidizes a tenant's contribution toward their rent. People can use **rental assistance vouchers** to secure affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing in single-family homes, condominiums, townhouses or apartments.

The recipients of this subsidy locate their own rental housing and sign a lease with the property owner. The landlord must sign an agreement accepting the terms of the voucher program that includes meeting basic health and safety standards and submitting to an inspection of the property. The rents must be within the published Fair Market Rental (FMR) rates for that community.

Fair Market Rent (FMR) refers to the "**published rate standards**" to be the cost of moderate rental units in a specific geographic area.

The tenant pays their share of the rent (usually 30% of their adjusted gross income) directly to the landlord. The agency administering the rental subsidy pays the balance of the rent directly to the property owner. For example, if the monthly rent is \$1,000 and the household's total income of social security and earnings is \$900, the renter pays \$300

or 30% of their gross income. The Rental Assistance Voucher pays the balance of \$700 (\$1,000 rent less the \$300 tenant's contribution).

Anyone meeting the financial guidelines may apply for this assistance. Consequently, there is a great demand for this type of rental subsidy. There are multiple places where someone can apply. For example, John contacted the Board of Social Services in his county for information. He was on a waiting list and recently received a voucher. After reading an article in the newspaper, Susan's family helped her to apply for vouchers through the Public Housing Authority in her town. Lou worked with his DDD Support Coordinator to develop an individual budget and secure a housing subsidy for his rent from the Supportive Housing Connection.

Affordable Housing refers to housing with rents that are at or below the "**Fair Market Rent.**" determined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or another government agency. People with low and moderate income can benefit from these public or private sector housing.

What are NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Funded SHC Vouchers?

NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) funds rental assistance that is administered by the Supportive Housing Connection (SHC). SHC also conducts referrals to housing units, inspects participating housing units and provides resident inquiry resolution services for tenants and landlords as needed. The goal of the SHC is to provide access to affordable housing for New

New Jersey residents with special needs by consolidating NJ Department of Human Services' (NJ DHS) rental subsidy resources into one location for convenient and efficient management.

At the time of this publication, there is no waiting list for those who qualify for these DDD funded housing vouchers administered by The SHC. Annual availability is dependent upon appropriation of funds in the state's fiscal year budget and criteria established by DDD. These vouchers are considered "Bridge" funding until another voucher becomes available. People must agree to apply for other local, state or federal housing assistance such as Housing Choice Vouchers.

How Do I Apply for DDD Vouchers?

To receive this subsidy, the person must be eligible for DDD services, have active Medicaid, and a current NJCAT assessment. A SHC housing voucher provides rental assistance only. It does not provide funding for services and supports. The support coordinator can help an individual identify whether his/her budget can purchase sufficient supports to live more independently before a request for housing assistance is made. To be considered for an SHC housing voucher, an individual must have an assigned Support Coordinator. After being determined eligible for NJ DDD services, contact your Support Coordinator to make application for a SHC Housing Voucher.

For more information about DDD funded subsidies, call the Housing Subsidy Unit at 732.968.4344 or the Supportive Housing Connection at 1.844.216.6988. For more information, go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/resources/community/>

What Other Housing Vouchers Are Available in New Jersey?

To help people with low incomes, there are several types of rental assistance programs. Vouchers have different names, regulations and places to access them. For instance, **Public Housing Authorities (PHAs)** are agencies that most often manage public housing and administer rental assistance vouchers. If a rental subsidy voucher is not readily available, the applicant is placed on a waiting list. When the waiting list becomes too long, the entity administering the vouchers can decide to close the waiting list until additional vouchers become available.

Eligibility for a rental assistance voucher is based upon the family size, annual household gross income, assets and citizenship status. The tenant must also report changes to income and household membership. If determined no longer financially eligible, the family could lose the subsidy.

What are Housing Choice Vouchers?

Housing Choice Vouchers refer to federally funding rental assistance that is typically distributed through Public Housing Authorities or the NJ Department of Community Affairs. A tenant can use a Housing Choice Voucher in a rental unit of their choosing. The property owner must be willing to accept the voucher, meet physical property conditions and adhere to fair market rent guidelines. **For more information, go to the Housing Choice Voucher Fact Sheet: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet**



Project-based vouchers are assigned to specific properties and are not transferable if the tenant moves to another location.

Tenant-based vouchers are assigned to the person and are transferable if the person moves.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can an individual with a disability utilize a rental assistance voucher to rent housing from another family member?

No. An individual cannot use rental subsidies in living arrangements where the owner of the housing is related to the individual. If the property owner is a parent, grandparent or sibling, the individual cannot use a rental voucher to pay the rent. These rules may apply even when relatives establish ownership through a Limited Liability Company (LLC).

Can I pay rent on an apartment that costs more than published Fair Market Rent and pay the difference myself?

No. Housing assistance requires that the monthly rent does not exceed the published Fair Market Rent (FMR).

Can the family contribute towards the rent, if the individual with a disability cannot afford to make the payment?

No. A person receiving Social Security benefits may jeopardize their eligibility by receiving income from another source such as a relative.

What Are State Rental Assistance (S-RAP) Vouchers?

New Jersey's State Rental Assistance Program (S-RAP) refers to the New Jersey funded rental assistance.

To qualify, a person must meet the financial eligibility criteria and have New Jersey as the primary residence for six months or more. At present, the application process is closed and a waiting list for S-RAP exists. When the application process is reopened, public notices will be published to announce the process to apply.

How Do I Apply for a Housing Choice or S-RAP Voucher?

Public Housing Authorities/Agencies (PHA) usually accept applications and issue these vouchers. They can also determine local preferences favoring certain groups of people to receive vouchers. For instance, the PHA could decide to give preference to people with disabilities or to those who are homeless. These eligible people could be determined to receive priority to receive available vouchers ahead of others on the waiting list. Applicants can be placed on several voucher waiting lists. Currently, most voucher waiting lists in New Jersey are closed.

Contact NJ Department of Community Affairs at 609.292.4080 to see if any waiting lists are open to apply.

Contact PHAs to locate low-income housing or waiting lists for rental assistance vouchers. For a list of New Jersey's public housing entities please visit https://www.hud.gov/states/new_jersey/renting/hawebites



New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities



The Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey (SHA) is a statewide, nonprofit membership organization, founded in 1998, whose mission is to promote and maintain a strong supportive housing industry in New Jersey serving people with special needs. SHA engages in education, advocacy and networking for and on behalf of its over 100 members. www.shanj.org

The Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey expresses its deepest gratitude to the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities for the grant funding to develop a variety of housing resources. More information about supportive housing can be found on our website including in the housing guide entitled *The Journey to Community Housing with Supports - A Road Map for Individuals and Their Families in New Jersey*. <http://www.shanj.org/housing-hub>

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July, 2018