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<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/pwd/mainstream.cfm>.

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Mainstream Vouchers

What are mainstream program vouchers?

Mainstream program vouchers enable families having a person with disabilities to lease affordable private housing of their choice. Mainstream program vouchers also assist persons with disabilities who often face difficulties in locating suitable and accessible housing on the private market.

What organizations are eligible to apply for mainstream program vouchers funding from HUD?

Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) authorized under state law to develop or operate housing assistance programs may apply. In some instances, nonprofit agencies may also apply for housing vouchers.

How do PHAs apply for voucher funding from HUD?

PHAs respond to notices of funding availability (NOFAs). Each NOFA identifies allocation areas, amount of funds available per area, and the selection criteria for rating and ranking applications.

What families are eligible to apply for mainstream program vouchers?

Only a family that includes a disabled person and is income eligible may receive a mainstream program voucher. Applicants will be selected from the PHA's housing choice voucher waiting list.

How does a PHA determine if a family is income eligible for the mainstream program vouchers?

The PHA compares the family's annual income (gross income) with the HUD-established very low-income limit or low income limit for the area. The family's gross income cannot exceed this limit.

How do families obtain mainstream program vouchers?

Families apply to the local PHA that administers this program. When an eligible family with a disabled person comes to the top of the PHAs housing choice voucher waiting list, the PHA issues a housing choice voucher to the family.

What requirements must a nonprofit entity meet in order to apply for funding?

A nonprofit entity that wishes to apply for the funding available under the mainstream program must have the capacity to:

- Develop an administrative plan and PHA plan.
- Comply with the Section 8 management assessment program (SEMAP) requirements under 24 CFR Part 985.
- Administer housing choice voucher program including all activities such as making determinations as to rent reasonableness, performing housing quality standards (HQS) inspections and enforcement, conducting annual income reexaminations of participant families, as well as otherwise meeting housing choice voucher program requirements under 24 CFR Part 982

Nonprofit disability organizations are encouraged to seek out PHAs in their geographic area to develop cooperative contractual relationships under the mainstream program and to enhance services to families with a disabled person. In addition to contacting local PHAs, nonprofit disability organizations may also wish to contact regional (multi-county), or state-wide PHAs who may be applying for mainstream program funding.

How do families obtain an apartment once they have a voucher?

It is the responsibility of a family to find a unit that meets their needs. If the family finds a unit that meets the housing quality standards, the rent is reasonable, and the unit meets other program requirements, the PHA executes a HAP contract with the property owner. This contract authorizes the PHA to make subsidy payments on behalf of the family. If the family moves out of the unit, the contract with the owner ends and the family can move with continued assistance to another unit

How much rent do vouchers cover?

The PHA pays the owner the difference between 30 percent of family income and PHA determined payment standard or gross rent whichever is lower. The family may choose a unit with a higher rent than the payment standard and pay the owner the difference.

Do families have to lease a unit in the jurisdiction where the PHA issued the voucher?

No. A family may choose a unit anywhere in the United States where there is a PHA that administers a tenant based voucher program. However, the family may only use the voucher to lease a unit in an area where the family is income eligible at admission to the program.

What regulations cover this voucher?

Regulations are found in 24 CFR Part 982.

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