

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Housing Choice Voucher Program

### **Q.1. What is the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program?**

A.1. The HCV program is a federally funded rental housing assistance program in existence since 1975 that serves over 2 million households nationwide and 3,700 households in Arlington, Texas. The HCV program is administered by public housing agencies and anyone can apply. The program is designed to help qualified persons reside in safe, decent, sanitary housing. Through the HCV program, eligible participants pay approximately 30% of their household's income for rent. The local housing authority pays a portion of the rent with payments directed to the owner. For more information about the HCV program, [click here](#)

### **Q.2. What is the eligibility criterion for admission to the Housing Choice Voucher program?**

A.2. To be eligible to participate in the HCV program, applicants must meet the Income Limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) applicable to the jurisdiction and to the number of persons that will reside in the HCV assisted dwelling unit. For the Arlington, TX, table of Income Limits, [click here](#)

To participate in the HCV program, applicant's household income must be at or less than 30% of Area Median Income commensurate to the number of persons that will reside in your household. For example, in 2015 a household consisting of four (4) persons would meet the income eligibility criteria if the combined gross annual income in their household is \$24,250 or less. In addition to household income, the AHA reviews the criminal background, if any, for all household members age 17 and older. Persons that have committed a felony, or are listed as a Registered Sex Offender, or have used, sold, distributed or manufactured methamphetamines are not eligible to participate in the HCV program.

### **Q.3. When can I apply for the Housing Choice Voucher Program?**

A.3. The AHA will resume accepting applications on June 18, 2015, starting at 9:00 am, and will continue to accept applications until June 24, 2015, at 11:00 am. During this open enrollment period, applications will be received on-line, 24 hours per day. The AHA anticipates that it will receive thousands of applications during this period, which will provide a sufficient supply of applicants. The AHA will suspend accepting applications after the open enrollment period ends until such time that it determines it necessary and appropriate to resume accepting applications in the future. The AHA anticipates that it will resume accepting applications annually and will issue a public notice in advance of any open enrollment. To apply, applicants can go to [www.arlingtonhousing.us](http://www.arlingtonhousing.us). Instructions and a link will be provided on the main page.

### **Q.4. I am already on the waiting list. Do I need to apply again?**

A.4. Yes. All active applications from the waiting list will be terminated effective June 15, 2015. Interested persons, including previous applicants, must apply during the June 18 to June 24, 2015, Open Enrollment period to be considered. The Arlington Housing Authority is migrating to a more frequent open enrollment process where open enrollment will occur annually. It is anticipated that an annual open enrollment process will provide a more efficient and more effective administrative process for applicants and staff.

### **Q.5. The application process requires applicants to have an email address. I don't have an email address. How can I get one?**

A.5. Applicants may obtain and utilize an email address from any Internet provider. Google, Yahoo, and many other Internet providers are available for use. As a help to applicants who need an email account, [click here](#) for Google email. The AHA does not endorse any Internet provider.

The software utilized by the AHA provides applicants access to the AHA's applicant portal, via the Internet, to check the status of their HCV application or to update the information on their application from the convenience of their home 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The AHA will send notices, invitation appointment letters and other information to applicants by email.

**Q.6. How are applicants selected from the waiting list?**

A.6. The AHA is responsible to maintain the waiting list for its HCV program. The AHA adopted local preferences as criteria for the selection of applications from its waiting list; 1) a residency preference, and 2) a working preference. Preferences are used as criteria to prioritize, sort and select applicants from the waiting list. The AHA defines the 'residency' preference as applicants that either live or work in Arlington. The 'working' preference is defined as persons that are employed. The 'working' preference is also awarded to persons with a disability and to the elderly (age 62 and older).

The AHA's selection procedures are summarized as follows; after June 24, 2015, the end of the current open enrollment period, the AHA will place applications received on the waiting list as follows:

1. Each application received will be assigned a position on the waiting list by random number assignment.
2. The AHA will sort the waiting list by local preferences as follows:
  - a. Applicants that qualify for both the residency and the working preference will rise to the top of the waiting list.
  - b. Applicants that qualify for the residency preference but not the working preference will rise to the second position on the waiting list
  - c. Applicants that qualify for the working preference but not the residency preference will rise to the third position on the waiting list
  - d. Applicants that do not qualify for either the residency or working preference will be in the fourth position on the waiting list.
3. The AHA will select applicants from the waiting list as funding becomes available to assist additional households in the HCV program.

**Q.7. Can I apply for housing assistance in Arlington if I do not live or work in Arlington?**

A.7. The HCV program is a federally funded program and anyone can apply. Applicants that live in Arlington or are employed in Arlington qualify for a local preference (see details in Q&A #6 above). Applicants who do not qualify for a local preference may be eligible for assistance; however, applicants meeting the local preferences will be served first. Be advised that almost every jurisdiction (city or county) is served by a public housing agency. Residents of that jurisdiction may apply to the public housing agency that serves their jurisdiction during their open enrollment period. NOTE - applicants selected for HCV assistance that do not reside in the jurisdiction in which they applied are required to reside in the jurisdiction providing the assistance for at least the first year.

**Q.8. Is the working preference available to the elderly or persons that have a disability?**

A.8. Yes. The AHA adopted a working preference as criteria for the selection of applications from its HCV program waiting list. This preference is adopted on the basis of the Board of Commissioners' philosophy that the housing voucher resource is available to help those who are willing to help themselves. The working preference is a criterion that sorts the waiting list by applicants who are working from applicants who are not working. Applicants meeting this local preference (i.e.; applicants that are employed) are selected before applicants that are not employed. Applicants whose head of household or spouse is elderly (age 62 or older) or applicants whose head of household or spouse is disabled (applicants that qualify for and receive social security disability income) are awarded the working preference. This is a reasonable accommodation to the elderly and persons with disabilities. Applicants that are working, including applicants that are elderly and applicants with a disability, are ranked higher on the HCV waiting list than applicants who are not working or not elderly or not disabled. For the purpose of maintaining the HCV waiting list, the AHA treats applicants that are disabled or elderly the same as applicants that are working. Applicants that are working, or elderly, or disabled are served before applicants that are not working. While the working preference is the second preference, the first preference is issued to persons that live or work in Arlington.

**Q.9. How long do I need to wait before I receive assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher program?**

A.9. There is no predetermined waiting period to receive housing assistance. Each public housing agency is allocated a prescribed amount of rental housing assistance funding by HUD annually. The amount of funding is directly related to the maximum number of households that can be assisted. The AHA utilizes all allocated funding for their intended purposes annually serving the maximum number of persons that HCV funding will allow. The HCV program is in great demand. There are a greater number of persons that apply for HCV assistance than the AHA has resources to assist. As a result, applications are placed on the waiting list until such time that funding becomes available. In Arlington, typically between 25 to 40 HCV participants exit the program monthly. The AHA selects applicants from the HCV waiting list to replace the participants who exit the program to maintain the HCV program operations at 100%.

**Q.10. As a result of a physical disability, I am homebound and I do not have access to a computer or the Internet. How can I apply for assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher program during the open enrollment period?**

A.10. As a reasonable accommodation to persons with similar circumstances, you may have your advocate make application for you via the Internet or you may contact the AHA by telephone at 817-276-6722 during the open enrollment period. An AHA representative will assist you to submit an application.

**Q.11. How can I check the status of my application and update the information on my application?**

A.11. When you submitted your application, you were issued a receipt and you were instructed to print a copy of this receipt for your records. The receipt contains a unique PIN number, valuable information, and instructions on updating your application. Have your receipt available when you log on to the Internet.

1. In your web browser, type [www.assistancecheck.com](http://www.assistancecheck.com)
2. Answer the questions that appear on the screen
3. Follow the instructions given

4. Enter your last name (as it appears on your application), date of birth, social security number, and the PIN number as shown on your receipt
5. After you log into *AssistanceCheck* the first time, you will become a registered user on the Applicant Portal. While in *AssistanceCheck* you can check the status of your application and make updates to the information on your application, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. *[Remember to record and save your AssistanceCheck username, password, and PIN number for future reference]*

**Q.12. I misplaced my receipt and PIN number. How can I get my PIN number?**

A.12. Applicants that applied during the open enrollment period (June 18 – June 24, 2015) may obtain a copy of their application and PIN number as follows:

1. Go to [www.waitlistcheck.com/TX433](http://www.waitlistcheck.com/TX433)
2. Log into *Waitlist Check*
3. Enter the applicant's name, date of birth, and social security number
4. View and print the application which will contain a unique PIN number
5. Go to [www.assistancecheck.com](http://www.assistancecheck.com)
6. Log into *AssistanceCheck* for Applicants using your unique PIN number
7. Use *AssistanceCheck* to access your application, make changes, and check the status of your application

**Q.13. Can I apply after the enrollment period ends?**

A.13. No. The AHA is only able to accept applications during the open enrollment period. Prior to accepting applications for the HCV program, the AHA posts notices in the Star Telegram newspaper, issues a press release, and posts information on its website as a public announcement of its plan to resume accepting applications. In 2015, the AHA will accept applications between June 18, 2015, starting at 9:00 am, and ending June 24, 2015, at 11:00 am. The AHA will issue a public notice when it determines it necessary and appropriate to resume accepting applications in the future. The AHA anticipates that open enrollment will occur annually.

**Q.14. How much does it cost to have my name added to the waiting list?**

A.14. There is no cost to apply or to receive rental housing assistance.