



ORLANDO HOUSING AUTHORITY

Public Housing Program Frequently Asked Questions

July 25, 2024

WHAT IS PUBLIC HOUSING?

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established a Public Housing program to provide decent, safe, affordable rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. The Orlando Housing Authority is one of the agencies created to provide such housing.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Public housing is limited to low-income families and individuals. To be eligible, the applicant must be:

- 18 years or older (or emancipated as an adult by court actions),
- income-eligible, and
- must be a U.S. citizen or a non-citizen with eligible immigration status.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply for the public housing program, households may complete a pre-application online at the Orlando Housing Authority's website at www.orlandohousing.org when the waiting list is open.

- Click on the "Apply for Public Housing" link
- Fill out the pre-application entirely and accurately;
- Once the pre-application is complete, the computer will generate a confirmation number to acknowledge the successful submission of the pre-application.

CAN A DISABLED HOUSEHOLD RECEIVE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

Yes, a disabled household may request reasonable accommodation. The decision to approve or deny a request for reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis. It considers the individual's disability and needs and the nature of the program or activity they seek to participate in.

The Orlando Housing Authority (OHA) does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, age, or marital status. OHA is committed to ensuring that its policies and procedures do not deny individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in or benefit from OHA's programs, services, and activities.



WHEN WILL THE PRE-APPLICANT BE NOTIFIED?

Pre-applications go into a computer database. A pre-applicant's name is drawn from the database once their name reaches the top of the waiting list. Information on the pre-application is verified when the pre-applicant's name reaches the top of the waiting list. The waiting list is maintained by the need

for a specific bedroom size. For example, there is a list of households that need a zero-bedroom unit, a one-bedroom unit, etc. The largest number of bedrooms is a six-bedroom unit. The Orlando Housing Authority (OHA) will contact the pre-applicant. If the applicant can apply for housing assistance, their name will be placed on an applicant waiting list.

CAN AN APPLICANT BE DENIED ADMISSION?

In addition to HUD-mandated reasons for denial of admission outlined in 24 CFR § 5.236, the Orlando Housing Authority utilizes its authority, including the requirements at 24 CFR 5 Subparts I and J, to deny admission to an applicant who has been involved in criminal activity involving drugs and violent behavior. Applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Within HUD regulations and statutes, there are two explicit bans on occupancy based on criminal activity. Housing Authorities must establish a lifetime ban on admission to the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Programs for:

1. Individuals found to have manufactured or produced methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing (24 CFR § 960.204, 24 CFR § 982.553); and
2. Sex offenders are subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a sex offender registration program (24 CFR § 960.204, 24 CFR § 982.553).

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR ME TO GET AN APARTMENT?

When there are vacancies in public housing, we select applicants from the Waiting List to fill those vacancies. The public housing waiting list is maintained based on the number of bedrooms a household needs. For example, there is a One-Bedroom Waiting List, a Two-Bedroom Waiting List, etc. When we have a vacancy in a one-bedroom unit, we offer that unit to households on the One-Bedroom Waiting List.

It is difficult to determine when there will be vacancies. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how long a household must wait for a public housing unit.

HOW DO PRE-APPLICANTS CHECK THE STATUS OR MAKE ONLINE UPDATES?

There is a pre-applicant portal where pre-applicants can check the pre-application online. The "Applicant Portal" was designed to 1) Allow waiting list pre-applicants to check their status and update information on the pre-application waiting list without contacting the Housing Authority. 2) Reduce the number of calls coming into the Housing Authority.

Who is the Applicant User? The Applicant User is the person for whom the Applicant Portal is designed. It allows the applicant to view their record on the waiting list and make any family or personal changes they need to make. To become an Applicant User, an applicant must first create an account on the system. To do so, click the Create an Account link on the login Screen.

The applicant will then enter information in the fields provided, such as their username, password, email address if they have one, the last four digits of their Social Security Number, birth date, last name, and the code at the bottom. This information is used to verify that the applicant is in the

system. If the system creates the account automatically, the applicant may immediately log in. If not, the applicant must wait for approval by the administrator.

The online check of pre-applicants' status on the waiting list will state that the applicant's pre-application is "Active or Withdrawn." The position on the waiting list will change as pre-applicants update their preferences. For example, a household with a disabled member may decide not to select the disabled preference. As the disability progresses, the same household may update their information and request the disabled preference. The computer will automatically update the preference. This online change will re-order every pre-application on the waiting list. Therefore, the waiting list may change daily.

CAN AN APPLICANT SUBMIT A PRE-APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC HOUSING AND THE SECTION 8/HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM AT THE SAME TIME?

If the public housing and Section 8 waiting lists are open simultaneously, the pre-applicant may apply for either or both programs. However, the Orlando Housing Authority's Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting list closed in June 2021.

WHAT ARE THE OHA'S SELECTION PREFERENCES?

- Disabled Individuals/Families – a family whose head of household or spouse is a disabled individual.
- Employed – The OHA is a Moving to Work agency. Therefore, emphasis will be placed on admitting families that are employed. The head of household, spouse, or co-head must be employed full-time for at least six (6) continuous months for a minimum of 28 hours or more per week. An interruption of four (4) weeks or less is not considered a break in continuity. If the head of household, spouse, or co-head cannot work because they are at least age 62 or have a disability, they will qualify for this preference.
- Former OHA Homeownership Program Participant – Former public housing resident or Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher tenant participant who acquired a home, met the requirements of the OHA homeownership program, including homeownership training, and lost that home due to insufficient income.
- Graduates of Verified Transitional Housing Programs—Graduates of Transitional Housing Programs are defined as homeless individuals or families who enter into a lease or occupancy agreement solely to participate in a program whose terms include program activities for a specified time.
- Orange County Resident – Preference will be given to applicants and pre-applicants who live, work, or have a verified offer for employment in Orange County.
- Honorably Discharged Veteran – Preference will be given to applicants who verify that they have been honorably discharged from any military branch.

SPECIAL PREFERENCES

- The Orlando Housing Authority (OHA) will give special preference to current housing choice voucher participants and public housing residents from other jurisdictions who are displaced due to the impacts of a federally declared natural disaster due to a hurricane. Any applicant who is a victim of a Federally-declared natural disaster due to a hurricane will lose this preference on April 1 of the year after the date the hurricane is declared a Federal disaster. The President/CEO can extend the expiration date at her discretion.
- Special preference will be given to an individual/family in a Federal/State Witness Protection program. The family must be part of a Witness Protection program, or the HUD Office or law enforcement agency must have informed the OHA that the family is part of a similar program.

The Orlando Housing Authority applies all preferences and rankings within the two (2) income targeting tiers of Extremely Low Income (ELI) (less than thirty percent (30%) of median) and Low Income (LI) (between thirty percent (30%) and eighty percent (80%) of median) and, then overlaid with two (2) more tiers (less than eighty-five percent (85%) of the average income of all covered developments) and (more than one hundred fifty percent (115%) of the average income of all covered developments).

DOES THE ORLANDO HOUSING AUTHORITY PROVIDE EMERGENCY HOUSING?

No. The Emergency Housing Voucher Program for Unhoused households ended September 30, 2023.

WILL I HAVE TO SIGN A LEASE?

If the applicant accepts an apartment, they must sign a lease with the Orlando Housing Authority and pay a security deposit. The security deposit is based on the bedroom size. For example, the security deposit for a zero or one-bedroom apartment is \$100. A two-bedroom unit security deposit is \$200, etc.

HOW IS RENT DETERMINED?

The tenant's rent is the public housing program's Total Tenant Payment (TTP). The rent is thirty percent (30%) of the family's anticipated gross annual income, less a utility allowance.

WHAT ARE THE 2024 INCOME LIMITS?

Area Median Income	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons
30%	\$20,300	\$23,200	\$26,100	\$31,200	\$36,580
50%	\$33,800	\$38,600	\$43,450	\$48,250	\$52,150
80%	\$54,050	\$61,800	\$69,500	\$77,200	\$83,400

HOW LONG CAN I STAY IN PUBLIC HOUSING?

Public Housing residents may remain in the program if they comply with the lease and remain eligible.

MAY PERSONS WHO ARE NOT ON THE LEASE LIVE IN PUBLIC HOUSING?

No. All persons occupying the unit must be pre-approved by the Housing Authority.

MAY PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS OWN PETS?

Yes. However, the Housing Authority has breed, size, and weight restrictions. Authorization must be received in writing before moving a pet into the unit. Pets must be registered with the Housing Authority. An up-to-date shot record and proof that the pet is neutered/spayed are required to register the pet.

HOW MUCH IS THE PET DEPOSIT

The pet deposit is \$100.