Common Documents for Public Housing and HCV Applicants

This is an overview of information and documents you may need when applying for the Public Housing or Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

How Does the Application Process Work?

To start, contact your local PHA. Ask how to apply and for the eligibility requirements you need to meet. PHAs may have different forms, but here is some common information and documents you may be asked for.

Pre-Application → Selection from Waiting List → Eligibility Form

The Application Steps

1. **Pre-Application:** Many PHAs, especially those with waiting lists, use a pre-application (also called a preliminary application). You can often fill this out on paper or online. Completing it adds you to a waiting list (or several, if you apply for multiple programs). **Completing a pre-application does not guarantee you are eligible.**
2. **Eligibility Form:** Once selected from the waiting list, you'll complete a full application, also called an eligibility form. This form helps the PHA determine if you qualify for assistance.

Both the pre-application and the eligibility form may ask for details about your household – meaning everyone who will live with you, their ages, and their relationship to you. You may also need to provide information on household member's income and assets. You will also need to submit documents, typically with the eligibility form.

Understanding Waiting Lists



There are often many more people who need housing assistance than there is assistance available. This can lead to long waiting periods, sometimes several years, before you receive help. Some PHAs temporarily close their waiting lists when they get too long. Because of this, you should consider applying for as many programs as you qualify for when a waiting list opens.

Pre-application

Some PHAs may have separate pre-applications for each program while some may be combined. A pre-application asks for basic information to determine if you are eligible for any preferences. These are special considerations that can give your application a higher priority on the waiting list, potentially reducing your waiting time. Common examples of preferences include those for elderly or disabled applicants, veterans, or families experiencing homelessness. Remember, each PHA sets its own specific preferences, so always check their official website or contact them directly to learn more.

It is important to notify the PHA if your contact information changes.

What to Expect on Your Pre-Application

- **Contact information:** For head of household (e.g., phone number, email, address).

  Keep Your Information Updated: It's very important to keep your contact information current with the PHA. If they can't reach you when your name comes to the top of the waiting list, you could lose your chance for housing assistance and be removed from the list.

- **Household Details:**
  - Estimated annual income and number of people
  - Assets
  - If anyone in your household is disabled and needs reasonable accommodations
  - Special circumstances (e.g., veteran, age 62+, full-time student)
- **Current Housing Situation:** Where and how you currently live (e.g., homeless, in a shelter, temporary housing, or living with family/friends).

Eligibility form

When you are selected for rental assistance, the PHA will ask you to complete an eligibility form. You'll also need to provide additional documents to help them determine if you qualify for the program.

Commonly Requested Documents (Remember! PHAs can request different documents.)

- **Identity Verification:** Photo ID (driver's license, state ID, passport), Social Security card, birth certificate, documentation of citizenship or immigration status
- **Household Composition:** Marriage certificate or divorce decree, legal guardianship or custody documents and school enrollment records
- **Income and Benefits:** Two current and consecutive pay stubs, TANF or welfare benefits, unemployment benefits, child support/alimony, Social Security benefits (Retirement, SSI, SSDI)
- **Assets and Expenses:** Most recent bank statement, statements for savings and investment accounts, childcare and medical expenses

Some of the documents make take time to gather, so review the entire form as soon as you receive it.

What's Required for Your Household: Documentation requirements will be unique to your household; you may not need to provide all the requested information listed above.

PHA Guidance: Your PHA can offer assistance with completing forms, as well as answer any questions you have about the application process. Find your local PHA using the link below.

For more Public Housing resident resources, visit Tenant Empowerment resources at https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/public-housing/tenant-empowerment.

For more HCV tenant resources, visit HCV Applicant and Tenant Resources at https://www.hud.gov/helping-americans/housing-choice-vouchers-tenants.

Contact your local PHA at https://www.hud.gov/contactus/public-housing-contacts for more information.

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