

# FAQ - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



The following FAQ guide provides information to answer the most common questions you may receive from applicants and/or current residents.

If you receive a question you are unable to answer, please reach out to us at [waitlistPHO@housingforhouston.com](mailto:waitlistPHO@housingforhouston.com), call Customer Service at 713-260-0500, or visit the HHA Administration Office.

## GENERAL

### *What is public housing?*

Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low- and moderate-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, apartments and high-rise apartments for elderly families. These units are owned by Houston Housing Authority (HHA) and managed by Property Management Companies.

### *What's new about the 2023 public housing waitlist?*

There are several important differences:

- The waitlist is accessible in the following languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Swahili, and Mandarin.
- Selection from the wait list is by random lottery selection. The lottery is a computerized random draw that consists of entries consistent with the applicable bedroom size and applicable housing requirements.
- Each applicant will use **one** single waitlist application and may select all indicated HHA sites available.

# FAQ - GENERAL

## *How do I apply?*

Applicants may apply online with most electronic devices (i.e. computer, tablet, smartphone, etc.) If an applicant does not have access to an electronic device, they may complete a paper application at our main office at 2640 Fountain View Dr., 77057 or any of the HHA sites listed below:

- **CUNEY HOMES:** 3260 Truxillo, 77004
- **EWING:** 1815 Ewing, 77004
- **KENNEDY PLACE:** 3100 Gillespie, 77020
- **INDEPENDENCE HEIGHTS:** 302 Crosstimbers, 77022
- **HEATHERBROOK:** 2000 Tidwell, 77093
- **LINCOLN PARK:** 790 W. Little York, 77091
- **BELLERIVE:** 7225 Bellerive, 77036
- **IRVINTON VILLAGE:** 2901 Fulton, 77009
- **KELLY VILLAGE:** 3118 Green, 77020
- **LYERLY:** 75 Lyerly, 77022

## *How long will the waitlist be open?*

HHA will open the waitlist on January 15, 2023, and it is scheduled to close on February 15, 2023. HHA will provide public notice ahead of the waitlist closure.

## *Who can apply for the waitlist and what are the requirements?*

HHA's public housing waitlist is open to anyone who meets the following criteria:

- Low-income families, individuals, seniors, veterans and people with disabilities
- U.S. citizen or those eligible for immigration status
- Household income must be between 30-80% of the area median income
- All head of household applicants must be 18 years or older

# FAQ - GENERAL

*Do I need an email address to apply?*

No, however, we encourage applicants to share an email address as it provides the fastest delivery of all notifications and updates related to their application.

*Do applicants need to live in Houston to apply?*

No, non-Houston applicants are welcome to apply.

*Is there an application fee for the waitlist?*

No, there is no cost to apply for public housing.

*Will non-English applications be available?*

The application portal allows users to select English, Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Swahili. If you prefer an alternative language, you may call the 504 hotline at 713-260-0353 or email [LEP@housingforhouston.com](mailto:LEP@housingforhouston.com) to request translation assistance. If you require additional accommodation assistance to complete the application, you may utilize a designee or email [504ADA@housingforhouston.com](mailto:504ADA@housingforhouston.com). For hearing-impaired assistance, please call 711 TTY.

*Will accessible applications be available for applicants with disabilities?*

Yes, HHA staff members are available at all application stations to assist and provide accommodations as needed, in person.

# FAQ - GENERAL

*If I'm unable to complete the application myself, can someone apply on my behalf?*

Yes, applicants may designate a proxy, such as a caseworker or family member, to complete the application and manage updates/follow-up on your behalf.

*Does HHA public housing provide emergency housing?*

No, HHA does not offer emergency housing in its public housing program. If you need emergency housing, we encourage contacting 211.

# FAQ - ELIGIBILITY

## ELIGIBILITY

*Does a single-member household qualify for public housing?*

Yes, a single-member household is considered a family.

*I'm employed and have an income, do I qualify for assistance?*

Yes, employed and unemployed applicants qualify for assistance.

*Do I have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify for assistance?*

No, but you must have eligible immigration status. At the time of the eligibility interview, all household members will be required to declare their citizenship status and provide proof of identity. Non-citizens with eligible immigration status will be required to provide proof of eligible immigration status.

*What would disqualify me from receiving housing assistance?*

There are many reasons why an application may be denied at selection, including, but not limited to

- Failed criminal background check
- Previous debt owed to another federal program
- Income over the federally-mandated income limits
- Failure to appear for scheduled appointments
- Failure to provide necessary documents or information for us to determine eligibility

All denials are based on the policies and regulations found in our Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) for public housing. The HHA is prohibited by federal law from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, familial status, and disability.

# FAQ - ELIGIBILITY

*If my application was removed or denied, may I appeal the decision?*

Yes, if your application is denied for cause, families may appeal the decision by requesting an Informal Review. The process for requesting an Informal Review is written on the application denial letter. If the family was removed from the waitlist for failing to respond, there is no right to an informal review. However, the family may request to be reinstated due to extenuating circumstances.

Please contact the HHA Public Housing department at [waitlistPHO@housingforhouston.com](mailto:waitlistPHO@housingforhouston.com) regarding the documentation and proof required to receive this type of reinstatement.

# FAQ - APPLICATION PROCESS

## APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

### *What happens after I apply?*

Once you submit your application online, you will receive an email, text message, or acknowledgment letter via USPS providing a reference number and confirmation that your application has been received.

### *How do I update my personal information, such as contact info, household size, income, etc.?*

You may update your application information at any time, by logging into our online portal and saving any changes. It is essential that you update your contact information if it changes, and renew your application once a year to indicate whether you are still interested in our public housing program. Applicants can also visit the HHA Administration Office for assistance or contact Customer Service at 713-260-0500.

### *What is the selection process for applicants?*

The lottery system is used to select applicants for the Public Housing program and is designed to ensure that all eligible applicants have an equal chance of being selected. The system is based on a combination of the applicant's preferences, bedroom size, household size, and income. Individuals and families who meet the eligibility requirements will be subject to a criminal background check at the time of selection.

### *How will you notify applicants who are selected to join the waitlist?*

Once an applicant is chosen for housing, the applicant will be notified via email and/or USPS. It is important that you maintain accurate contact information and update your application as necessary.

# FAQ - APPLICATION PROCESS

*If I'm selected for the waitlist, when can I expect to be placed in housing?*

There is no definitive time an applicant will be selected for housing because it is based on a number of factors such as unit availability, household income, applicant preferences, etc. Houston currently faces one of the nation's most severe affordable housing shortages, which directly affects the wait time for housing placement.

*Does the date when my application was submitted affect my spot in the lottery?*

No, the order in which entries are received will not affect your chance of being selected for the wait list or your placement on it. Every completed entry submitted according to the application portal instructions will be entered into the lottery. Selection will be based on a random computerized drawing so all applicants have an equal chance of being chosen for affordable housing.

*What information do I need to apply?*

- Household Info: names, social security number (SSN) or ITIN, birth dates, etc.
- Total family income
- Your contact info: current address, phone number, email
- For housing preference selection, an applicant will be required to provide support documentation (e.g. shelter organization, caseworker name & contact info, etc.)

**Disclaimer:** *You may apply for multiple Public Housing sites that are available. However, as a head of household or household member, you can only be listed on one application. For example, if you applied for Public Housing as a Head of Household or were listed as a household member on an application, you cannot be listed on another application as a family member. An applicant cannot be listed on multiple applications with different individuals and/or family members. If your name is placed on multiple applications, you will be removed from the wait list, and your application(s) will not be considered for Public Housing.*



# FAQ - APPLICATION PROCESS

## *Once I apply, what is the application process?*

The application process follows the steps below:

*Note: this is only intended as a summary of the process and may not be all-inclusive*

- **Pre-application** - Fill out a pre-application in order to be placed on the waitlist.
- **Waitlist** - The individual or family is placed on the wait list according to preference, location, bedroom size, and accessibility needs.
- **Selection** - The selection process corresponds to the apartment vacancy rate. Applicants are chosen based on a random lottery selection according to preferences, location, bedroom size, accessibility needs, household size, income, and program availability. Once an individual or family has been selected by the HHA, they will be notified by email and/or mail. It is important that you maintain accurate contact information and update your application as necessary through the online portal. In your selection letter, you will also be advised of the next steps needed in order to continue the application process. If you do not respond to the selection notification, your file will be closed after 14 business days.
- **Standard Screening** - Once an applicant is selected for housing, the process involves an in-depth examination of the applicant's history in order to determine their suitability for HHA Public Housing. HHA will conduct a criminal background check on all household members. Additional screening related to federal program rental history, including evictions and debt owed, will also be conducted. Based on this screening, HHA may deny admission to any applicant whose habits and practices may have a detrimental effect on other residents or on the public housing environment. These standard screening procedures are intended to protect the safety of our current residents and property.
- **Interview & Placement** - Once an applicant passes the preliminary screening, they will receive an offer letter for the applicable community.
  - An HHA designee will schedule a time and date for an interview for every family who passes standard screening, or who has been reinstated by the hearing officer.
  - At the interview, the staff member will then determine what documents will be needed, such as income verification, bank statements, marriage license, proof of citizenship, etc.
  - The HHA designee will give the applicant a checklist of items needed with a deadline date to return their paperwork.
  - If there are any documents required by the agency that an applicant does not bring with them at the time of the interview, they will be given a reasonable amount of time to return with these documents.
  - Once all paperwork has been returned and verified, and the applicant is found eligible, the file will be placed in a "ready" pool.
  - Applicants will then be offered vacancies as they become available.

# FAQ - APPLICATION PROCESS

## *How much will my rent be?*

All rent is calculated on a per-household basis and is determined by the HHA in accordance with HUD regulations, and the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy. Residents at Tax Credit properties may have additional regulatory compliance that is required in rent calculations. Residents generally pay 30% of their adjusted monthly income in rent.

## *Which locations are available to apply?*

- CUNEY HOMES: 3260 Truxillo, 77004
- EWING: 1815 Ewing, 77004
- KENNEDY PLACE: 3100 Gillespie, 77020
- INDEPENDENCE HEIGHTS: 302 Crosstimbers, 77022
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