

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Mainstream Voucher Program

Office of Housing Voucher Programs, Memphis Housing Authority

In Partnership with Community Alliance for the Homeless

What is a Mainstream Voucher?

A Mainstream Voucher is a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) with a focus on assisting non-elderly persons with disabilities. The housing choice voucher program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHAs). The PHAs receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program.

A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the family's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. This unit may include the family's present residence. Rental units must meet minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by the PHA.

A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Under certain circumstances, if authorized by the PHA, a family may use its voucher to purchase a modest home.

For the Mainstream Voucher application, the Memphis Housing Authority (MHA) was encouraged to establish formal partnerships with multiple health and human service agencies or organizations with a demonstrated capacity to coordinate voluntary services and supports to enable individuals to live independently in the community. **Community Alliance for the Homeless (CAFTH) was able to establish a partnership with MHA to use these vouchers as move-on vouchers for individuals or families who no longer need the services of a PSH unit but still need the subsidy.** CoC agencies will be able to aid MHA in utilizing these units by providing referrals, assisting with a timely transition to a unit, and providing the opportunity to access any supportive and supports during the transition to the HCV.

Mainstream Voucher Eligibility Requirements

For Mainstream Vouchers prioritized and facilitated through CAFTH, the individual or family must meet the below qualifications:

1. Currently living in a HUD-funded PSH unit.
2. A documented expressed wish to *move-on* to other housing
3. A history of on-time rental payments in the past year
4. Minimal to zero lease violations in the last year
5. Agree to accept at least three case management contacts once transitioned to a HCV.

MHA HCV Eligibility Requirements

MHA will admit only applicants who are qualified according to all the following criteria:

- Have income at or below HUD-specified income limits. [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart F](#)
- Provide documentation of Social Security numbers for all household members, or certify that they do not have Social Security numbers. [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart B](#)
- Qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigrant status of family members. [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart E](#)
- Fulfill all initial and on-going eligibility requirements.
- Are in compliance with MHA's criminal background policy as stated below.

Criminal Background Policy:
[24 CFR 5.903](#); [24 CFR 5.905\(d\)](#)

MHA may conduct a criminal background check on all adult household members, 18 years of age or older, at new admission and adult additions to the household. MHA will prohibit admission to any applicant household member (1) who has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing or (2) who is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex-offender registration program.

MHA will also deny admission and may terminate assistance under the following circumstances:

1. Any household member has been convicted of drug-related or violent criminal activity, within the past five (5) years.
2. Any household member has been convicted of non-violent criminal activities, within the past five (5) years that may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. A household member has a pattern of arrests for engaging in criminal activity within the past five (5) years. MHA has reasonable cause to believe that the household member's pattern of criminal activity may threaten the health or safety of the owner, property management staff or MHA employees or their contractors and agents. Arrest records will not be the sole reason for denial or termination of assistance.

3. MHA has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's use of illegal drugs or alcohol abuse may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons.
4. Households who fail to meet HUD's social security number disclosure and verification requirements.
5. A household member who has been identified as ineligible due to outstanding debt or termination of assistance as provided in HUD's EIV verification system. In this case, HUD regulations regarding contesting EIV data will apply. Outstanding debts owed to MHA or other PHAs must be paid in full before admittance to the HCV program.

Referring an Individual/Family for a Mainstream Voucher

The referring agency must agree to the following:

1. Assist all applicants with the paperwork, application process, and landlord navigation
2. Provide at least one case management attempt a month by phone or in person for a minimum of one year, with conclusion of case management attempts based on the stability of the client and their likelihood to maintain housing without additional support.
3. Be accessible as a contact for landlords and assist in providing interventions with landlords and clients to prevent eviction.
4. Provide assistance with reasonable accommodations as needed.
5. Document case management attempts in a client's case file.

To refer a family or individual:

1. Fill out the Mainstream Voucher Application (Found on CAFTH.org)
2. Fill out the HUD-form 9886, Authorization for Release of Information (Found on CAFTH.org)
3. Fill out the corresponding Mainstream Assessment form (Found on CAFTH.org) which must include the client's signature.
4. Please email all three forms to our Continuum of Care Coordinator, Kirsten Hipkins; kirsten@cafth.org

From there, MHA will email the referring agency of the applicant's appointment time to fill out additional paperwork surrounding MHA eligibility criteria. **MHA will then make the final eligibility determination.**

Order of Priority

Once we are getting close to running out of available vouchers, CAFTH will set up an order of priority. But for now, individuals/families who are wishing to leave their PSH unit for a HCV will be served on a first-come, first-serve basis.

***Application procedures are expected to change slightly during implementation. Thank you for your patience and flexibility!**