



## Housing Choice Voucher Program 2023 Waiting List Opening Frequently Asked Questions

### Rental Assistance

1. Q: What type of waiting list is opening?  
A: The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program waiting list.
2. Q: What is the HCV program?  
A: The HCV program, also known as Section 8, is a federally funded program to assist low-income households pay their rent (this can also be called rental assistance). Typically, a household who receives this type of assistance will pay about 30% of their income towards rent and the Public Housing Authority (PHA) will pay the rest.
3. Q: What is a Public Housing Authority or PHA?  
A: A PHA is a government agency that is authorized to operate a low-income housing program under the United States Housing Act of 1937 in accordance with 24 CFR § 5.100. The Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA) is a PHA.
4. Q: How do I get assistance with my rent from OCHA?  
A: OCHA administers the HCV program and maintains a waiting list for households who applied for assistance during the open application period. You may apply for OCHA's HCV program waiting list beginning September 18, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. PDT and ending September 29, 2023, at 11:59:59 PDT.

### Application

1. Q: When will the applications be available?  
A: Applications will be available beginning September 18, 2023, 8:00 a.m. PDT and ending September 29, 2023, 11:59:59 p.m. PDT.
2. Q: Can I apply online?  
A: Yes, you may apply by visiting <https://www.waitlistcheck.com/CA1288>.



3. Q: Can I apply using my mobile phone or tablet?  
A: Yes, you can use a mobile device to apply if you have a connection to the internet by visiting <https://www.waitlistcheck.com/CA1288>.
4. Q: Can I apply using a paper application?  
A: Yes, applications can be submitted in the following three ways:
- Online at <https://www.waitlistcheck.com/CA1288>
  - Mail paper application to P.O. Box 11387, Santa Ana, CA 92711. Must be postmarked from September 18, 2023, through September 29, 2023.
  - Email copy of paper application to [OCHA.WaitingList2023@occr.ocgov.com](mailto:OCHA.WaitingList2023@occr.ocgov.com)
5. Q: Are applications available in multiple languages?  
A: Yes, the online application uses a Google Translate drop down menu in the top right-hand corner of the site. The paper applications are available in English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
6. Q: Is there a cost to submit an HCV Program waiting list application?  
A: No. There is no cost to apply. OCHA will never ask for your debit or credit card or any other form of payment to apply for its services. Additionally, please do not provide personal information to anyone claiming he or she can guarantee a spot for you on the waiting list, improve your chances of selection for the waiting list, or ensure that you will receive any OCHA benefits.
7. Q: Where can I get help submitting my application?  
A: Please see our service provider contact list at <https://ochousing.org/page/2023-waiting-list>
8. Q: How do I request a Reasonable Accommodation for assistance with the application?  
A: Individuals with disabilities that require a Reasonable Accommodation to participate in the application process may contact OCHA beginning September 18, 2023, and ending September 29, 2023, at 714-480-2798 Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



9. Q: What information do I need to provide when I apply for the waiting list?  
A: You will need to provide a valid mailing address so that we may contact you in the future. You will need to provide your physical address or physical location, if you are a person experiencing homelessness. You will also need the Social Security number, birthdate, and income amount for at minimum, yourself and your spouse/cohead If you are placed on the waiting list, OCHA will collect information from you and your entire household for eligibility determination.
10. Q: I am being asked to create an online account, do I need to do this?  
A: Yes, an account must be created to submit your application. In addition to submitting your application, you can use your account to check the status of your application.
11. Q: Can I apply online AND submit a paper application?  
A: No, applicants may only submit one application, per household. Duplicate applications will be rejected and will delay the process.
12. Q: If I submit my application on September 18, 2023, at 8:01 a.m. PDT will I be first on the list?  
A: No, applications are **NOT** first come, first served. Applications are ranked by preference. Please see the **Preference** portion of the FAQ for more information.
13. Q: Is OCHA placing every application received on the waiting list?  
A: No, OCHA will only place 12,000 of the applications received on the waiting list.
14. Q: How will OCHA decide which applications to put on the waiting list?  
A: OCHA will rank applications based on whether an applicant qualifies for a Preference and a random selection placement.
15. Q: What if OCHA gets more than 12,000 applications?  
A: OCHA will place the applications that have received a randomly selected number between 1 to 12,000 ranked based on Preference onto the waiting list. See question #17 for more information on the random selection placement process.



16. Q: How does OCHA decide their preferences?  
A: OCHA's preferences are outlined in our Administrative Plan. Please see the **Preference** portion of the FAQ for more information.
17. Q: What does random selection placement mean?  
A: At the close of the waiting list opening period, OCHA software will sort the applicants by the preference selected on the application. Once the applicants are sorted by preference, OCHA's software will conduct an electronic random selection placement. Each application will be randomly assigned a number within their preference category. OCHA will then select the first 12,000 applicants based on the number that was randomly assigned. Please see the **Preference** portion of the FAQ for more information on preference categories.
18. Q: Why does the application ask for my sex and not gender, and why are the options limited to male and female?  
A: The application is based on the required HUD Form 50058 which includes statistical information that HUD uses to monitor and evaluate the HCV program. At this time, the HUD Form 50058 has not been updated. HUD has issued Federal Register Notice 7076-N-05 which details changes that are anticipated to be made to the HUD Form 50058. Those changes have not been made effective, therefore, OCHA must use the statistical fields on the HUD Form 50058 which is limited to male and female.
19. Q: How do I answer the sex question, I do not identify as either male or female?  
A: OCHA asks that you choose the option you most identify with. Please be advised that your response will not impact your eligibility. When the HUD Form 50058 is updated, you will be provided an opportunity to change your selection.
20. Q: Why does the application ask my race, and why are there only five (5) selections available in the paper application?  
A: The application is based on the required HUD Form 50058 which includes statistical information that HUD uses to monitor and evaluate the HCV program. At this time, the HUD Form 50058 has not been updated. HUD has issued Federal Register Notice 7076-N-05 which details changes that are anticipated to be made to the HUD Form 50058. Those changes have



not been made effective, therefore, OCHA must use the statistical fields on the HUD Form 50058 which is limited to the five (5) selections available.

Additionally, while the online application may present additional selections for race, the information transmitted to our software system will be limited to the five (5) selections noted on the paper application.

## Eligibility to Apply

1. Q: Who can apply to be placed on the OCHA HCV program waiting list?  
A: Anyone may apply to be placed on OCHA HCV program waiting list.
2. Q: If I have applied to another PHA's waiting list, may I apply to OCHA's waiting list?  
A: Yes. You may apply to more than one waiting list for more than one PHA.
3. Q: Can I apply for the HCV program waiting list if I have applied before, was previously terminated from the program, or owe OCHA any money?  
A: Yes. You will not be prohibited from applying. However, if you are selected from the waiting list, your application will be reviewed in accordance with OCHA's Administrative Plan, which may include a review of your previous participation in a housing assistance program.
4. Q: Can I apply if I am under 18 years of age?  
A: Applicants under the age of 18 may apply only if they are a legally emancipated minor. Applications received with a head of household who is under 18 and not an emancipated minor will be rejected.
5. Q: Can I apply if I am a single household member, and I am not a legal resident of the United States?  
A: Anyone can apply, but someone in your household must have a legal resident status. If you are placed on the waiting list, OCHA will review your resident status during the eligibility process.
6. Q: Can I apply if I am not a legal resident of the United States, but a household member is?  
A: Yes. The regulations do not allow OCHA to assist individuals without legal resident status, however, OCHA may assist a household that is made up of



members with legal resident status and non-legal resident status. The assistance provided will be prorated based on the number of household members with legal resident status.

For example, in a household of four (4), if three (3) members have legal resident status, OCHA may provide prorated assistance of 75%.

For information about household members, please see question number 14.

7. Q: What if I am not a legal resident of the United States, but a minor household member is, can I apply?  
A: Yes, if one member of the household has legal resident status, you may apply for assistance.
8. Q: Can I apply if I do not have a permanent physical address?  
A: Yes. You will need to provide an address that you can receive mail and are encouraged to include an email address, if available. You will also need to provide the address of your physical location unless you are experiencing homelessness (see Question #9 below).
9. Q: What if I am experiencing homelessness and don't have an address for my physical location?  
A: If you are staying at a shelter or other transitional location, you may provide that address as your physical address. If you are not sheltered, please provide the address, or approximate address, of where you sleep at night. This information will be used only for OCHA member preference purposes and will not be used or shared for any other purpose. For more information about member preferences, please see the **Preference** portion of the FAQ.
10. Q: Can I apply if I have a violent criminal conviction or a drug-related criminal conviction on my record?  
A: Yes, you can apply. If you are placed on the waiting list, OCHA will review your criminal background during the eligibility process.

In general, OCHA may deny applicants who have convictions of violent criminal activity or drug-related criminal activity within the 5-year period



from the date of application and convictions of drug usage within a 1-year period of the application. However, OCHA will review each applicant’s criminal history on a case-by-case basis.

Lifetime registered sex offenders are prohibited by federal regulation from HCV program participation. Additional details can be found in OCHA’s Administrative Plan. The Administrative Plan can be viewed at [www.ochousing.org](http://www.ochousing.org) under the “Documents and Forms” link.

11. Q: How much annual income can my household have and still qualify for the HCV program?

A: Income limits change annually. Current income limits for the program are listed below:

<u>FAMILY SIZE</u>	<u>INCOME LIMITS</u>	<u>FAMILY SIZE</u>	<u>INCOME LIMITS</u>
1	\$50,250	5	\$77,500
2	\$57,400	6	\$83,250
3	\$64,600	7	\$89,000
4	\$71,750	8+	\$94,750

12. Q: What income do I include in the “total Household income” line on the application?

A: All income from all household members must be included. Combine and include all amounts from wages, military pay, pensions, social security, SSI, welfare, child support, unemployment, business, self-employment, cash, or contributions from other persons.

13. Q: What if I calculate my income incorrectly in the application?

A: If you are placed on the waiting list, your income will be calculated by OCHA staff at eligibility determination. OCHA will not disqualify your application due to an income calculation error.

14. Q: Who should I add as a household member on my application?

A: Include the family member(s) or person(s) that is living with you when you apply. If you are a person experiencing homelessness, include the family member(s) or person(s) that you share space with and consider a part of your household.





## Preferences

1. Q: Is every application received ranked the same?  
A: No, OCHA has identified preferences.
  
2. Q: What are OCHA's preferences?  
A: OCHA has a member preference for individuals who live, work, have been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction. In addition, within the member preference, OCHA has additional preferences. OCHA's preference order is:
  1. Members who are Veterans
  2. Members who are Elderly, Disabled, or Working applicants
  3. Members who are Non-Working applicants
  4. Non-Members who are Veterans
  5. Non-Members who are Elderly, Disabled or Working applicants
  6. Non-Members who are Non-Working applicants
  
3. Q: Who is considered an OCHA member?  
A: An OCHA member is someone who lives, works, (no minimum required number of work hours), has been hired to work in, or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.
  
4. Q: What is OCHA's jurisdiction?  
A: OCHA's jurisdiction includes all 31 cities and unincorporated areas in the County of Orange, except for Anaheim, Garden Grove, and Santa Ana.
  
5. Q: Why are the cities of Anaheim, Garden Grove and Santa Ana not included in OCHA's jurisdiction?  
A: These cities have a citywide PHA that administers the HCV Program for the residents of their respective cities.
  
6. Q: Who qualifies for the Member Veteran preference?  
A: A Member Veteran is an applicant who is currently serving, or has served in the U.S. Armed Forces, Veterans who have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and are eligible to receive Veteran benefits or surviving spouses of Veterans who have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and were eligible to receive Veteran





benefits, **AND** lives, works, has been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.

7. Q: What does surviving spouse mean?  
A: A surviving spouse means not divorced from, or not remarried prior to or after the death of the Veteran.
8. Q: Who qualifies for the Member Elderly preference?  
A: A Member Elderly applicant is an applicant whose head of household, spouse, or sole member is 62 years of age or older **AND** lives, works, has been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.
9. Q: Who qualifies for the Member Disabled preference?  
A: A Member Disabled applicant is an applicant whose head, spouse, or sole member is receiving Social Security Disability, Supplemental Social Security Income Disability benefits, or any other payments based on the individual's inability to work. Or has a verifiable disabled status for at least a 12-month period or more **AND** lives, works, has been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.
10. Q: Who qualifies for the Member Working preference?  
A: A Member working applicant is a head of household or spouse who has worked a minimum of 20 hours per week for at least 26 weeks or more during the 12 months prior to the initial interview appointment date **AND** lives, works, has been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.
11. Q: Who qualifies for the Member non-Working preference?  
A: A Member non-working household is every other household who lives, works, has been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction but does not fall into the definition of a Veteran, Elderly, Disabled or Working category.
12. Q: Who qualifies for the Non-Member Veteran preference?  
A: A Non-Member Veteran is an applicant who is currently serving, or has served in the U.S. Armed Forces, Veterans who have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and are eligible to receive Veteran benefits or surviving spouses of Veterans who have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and were eligible to receive Veteran



benefits, and **does not** live, work, have been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.

13. Q: Who qualifies for the Non-Member Elderly preference?  
A: A Non-Member Elderly applicant is an applicant whose head of household, spouse, or sole member is 62 years of age or older and **does not** live, work, have been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.
14. Q: Who qualifies for the Non-Member Disabled preference?  
A: A Non-Member Disabled applicant is an applicant whose head, spouse, or sole member is receiving Social Security Disability, Supplemental Social Security Income Disability benefits, or any other payments based on the individual's inability to work. Or has a verifiable disabled status for at least a 12-month period or more and **does not** live, work, have been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.
15. Q: Who qualifies for the Non-Member Working preference?  
A: A Non-Member working applicant is a head of household or spouse who has worked a minimum of 20 hours per week for at least 26 weeks or more during the 12 months prior to the initial interview appointment date and **does not** live, work, have been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction.
16. Q: Who qualifies for the Non-Member non-Working preference?  
A: A Non-Member non-working household is every other household who **does not** live, work, have been hired to work or report to an office in OCHA's jurisdiction and **does not** fall into the definition of a Veteran, Elderly, Disabled or Working category.
17. Q: If I am an Elderly Veteran that lives in OCHA's jurisdiction do I get placed above a non-elderly veteran in OCHA's jurisdiction?  
A: No, you will be placed in the highest preference for which you are eligible. Being eligible for another preference will not improve your placement on the waiting list. See question #2 above for OCHA's preference order.
18. Q: In preference category Elderly, Disabled, Working, is an Elderly applicant placed above a Disabled applicant or a Working applicant?



- A: No, Elderly, Disabled, and Working applicants are all equal within the preference category.
19. Q: Where on the application are the preferences listed?  
A: The preferences are listed at the end of the application under “OCHA preferences” on the online application or “Eligibility and Preferences” on the paper application.
20. Q: If I answer “yes” to all the preference questions, will my application be placed at the top of the waiting list?  
A: No, additionally, intentionally selecting “yes” to all preference questions may cause your application to be inactive for making false or fraudulent statements.
21. Q: If I answer “yes” to the Member Veteran preference question and I am not A Member Veteran will my application be placed at the top of the waiting list?  
A: If you intentionally select “yes” to a preference you do not qualify for it may cause your application to be inactive for making false or fraudulent statements.
22. Q: What happens if I am no longer eligible for the preference I selected when I applied?  
A: Please let us know if your circumstances change. You may use the Waiting List Change Form found on our website to report your change.
23. Q: How will you verify that I selected the correct preference when I completed the application?  
A: You will be required to provide evidence that you qualified for the selected preference at the time of eligibility determination. The evidence will need to confirm that you met the selected preference at the time you submitted your application. Please keep this evidence to verify your preference selection. Failure to provide the information at the time of eligibility determination may result in your application being made inactive.



24. Q: What happens if I select the wrong preference by mistake when I complete the application?
- A: If you select the wrong preference by mistake and you are placed on the waiting list, at the time of eligibility determination your application may be made inactive, and your name removed from the waiting list. Please take time to review the preference categories and questions in full and respond as accurately as possible.

### After Application Submission

1. Q: How do you determine if a mailed paper application was submitted on time?
- A: Paper applications must be postmarked by United States Postal Service from September 18, 2023, and ending September 29, 2023. An application postmarked outside of these dates will be rejected. You may retain proof of mailing such as using a Certificate of Mailing with the United States Postal Service. Applications are to be mailed to P.O. Box 11387, Santa Ana CA 92711. OCHA staff will not sign for a mailed application. Do not use a mailing service that requires a signature or Certified Mail.
2. Q: I received an e-mail that my application has been received. Does that mean I am on the waiting list?
- A: No. A confirmation e-mail is sent when an application has been received and placed into the random selection pool. This does not guarantee a place on the waiting list, nor does it guarantee you will receive a voucher. E-mails will be sent to the e-mail address you provided on your online application if you are randomly selected as one of the 12,000 applicants that will be placed on OCHA's waiting list. A letter will also be sent to all applicants, including those applicants who submitted a paper application.
3. Q: If I am not selected to be placed on OCHA's waiting list, what happens next?
- A: If you are not selected to be placed on OCHA's waiting list, OCHA will send you a confirmation notice that you were not selected for the waiting list. While OCHA will be unable to serve you from our waiting list, you may visit [www.ochousing.org](http://www.ochousing.org) or call 2-1-1 for other affordable housing opportunities for which you may be eligible.



4. Q: How long will it take until I receive rental assistance?  
A: Once the waiting list is closed, OCHA will need to verify applicant data and certify the waiting list. The certification process may take several months. Once the certification process has been completed, a notification letter and/or email will be sent to all applicants who were placed on the 2023 waiting list confirming their position number and approximate waiting time.
  
5. Q: When will I find out where I am at on the waiting list?  
A: You can expect to receive a letter and/or e-mail from OCHA once the list has been certified. The letter will confirm your position on the waiting list and provide you with an approximate wait time. The certification process may take approximately three months.
  
6. Q: How long do I have to wait before I am called in to complete the eligibility process and receive a voucher?  
A: Several factors will determine how long the wait will be. Some of these factors include your preference category and your random placement within the preference category. For example, U.S. Veterans will all be contacted earlier than a non-working family.
  
7. Q: If selected for the waiting list, do I automatically qualify for housing?  
A: No. If selected, you will be placed on the waiting list and will be contacted once your name reaches the top of the list for the eligibility process. This eligibility screening process will determine if you meet the basic eligibility requirements of the program.
  
8. Q: If there are changes the Head of Household, after application is submitted (i.e. become elderly/disabled) does that change placement on waiting list?  
A: The Head of Household is responsible to report any changes using the "Waiting List Change Form" available online at [www.ochousing.org](http://www.ochousing.org) under the Documents and Forms link. OCHA staff will determine if the change results in a change of preference. If the reporting does result in a change of preference, the applicant will be placed at the bottom of the preference category they are now eligible for. A letter will be sent to the applicant to confirm any change in status and position number, if applicable.



9. Q: I am going to move. How will OCHA notify me of my status?  
A: If you have changes in address or other circumstances, please submit a “Waiting List Change Form” to OCHA. This will help ensure that OCHA can reach you. The form is available at [www.ochousing.org](http://www.ochousing.org) under the “Documents and Forms” link or at the OCHA office.
10. Q: What happens to the application if the Head of Household can no longer use the application or is no longer interested in maintaining the application while waiting for rental assistance?  
A: Please notify OCHA of this event. If there are any other adults listed on the application, they may be eligible to assume the application.
11. Q: How do I find out where I am at on the waiting list, if selected?  
A: You can check your status at any time by visiting [www.waitlistcheck.com](http://www.waitlistcheck.com) You will need your social security number and 4-digit year of birth to log-in.