



## Am I eligible for housing assistance? Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing Programs

Every RHA program has slightly different requirements for eligibility, but being low income is the first. HUD sets the income limits for the county or metropolitan area, in our case, Washoe County. Assistance is targeted for those who earn 30-50% of the Area Median Income. You can find current income limits at [huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html](http://huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html).

After thinking about income, a household is also evaluated to ensure U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. We then look to see if applicants qualify as elderly, a person with a disability, or as a family, and also review criminal and rental histories.

The RHA receives about 3,000 applications each year for housing assistance and as vacancies become available, we're able to schedule nearly 1,000 of those applicants for interviews.



Some applicants are parents who cannot afford rent on a full-time wage, and certainly not on disability income. Their children struggle in school because their families move often. Some applicants are young people trying to further their education, balancing work, parenthood, supporting their own parents, or homelessness. Some applicants are people with disabilities whose work opportunities are scarce. Some applicants are aging Nevadans who live on fixed incomes.

There's a constant and rising need for housing in Washoe County and the waitlists are a somber reminder of the unmet need for safe, stable, affordable housing. Between all waitlists and through natural attrition, about 350 new households move into public housing or into the housing choice voucher programs each year.

Though the waitlists are constantly moving, hundreds of people remain on them awaiting relief. If more landlords accepted Housing Choice Vouchers, the RHA could more easily assist people each year.

## How do waitlists work and what is a preference?

Waitlists are opened and closed periodically throughout the year for different of programs. RHA may be able to open a waitlist for a 2 bedroom/1 bath unit, but not for a studio. Or, we may open a waitlist for a Public Housing 1 bedroom/1 bathroom, but only for senior applicants. It all depends on our projected availability. We don't want to create false hope by keeping waitlists open all the time.

Applicants may apply for more than one waitlist at a time, so it's difficult to predict how long they may be on a list before receiving assistance.

Some applicants, however, move up on the lists faster depending on their need. Individuals who are disabled, those who are seniors, families or are veterans, all get points for "preference". Those who are already Washoe County residents or who are homeless/displaced can also get preference and move up the list faster. Additionally, those in a rental agreement with a landlord who will accept a voucher also receive preference. Preference doesn't guarantee admission to the program; it's merely used to establish the order of placement on the waiting list.

