

HOW TO: Apply for Section 8 Housing



What is Section 8 Housing?

Section 8 housing in Missouri is a voucher program. It helps families and individuals with lower incomes in Missouri pay for their rent. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides the money for this program, and local Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) manage it. Section 8, also called "housing choice vouchers," is designed to help folks afford good, safe, and clean homes in the private market.

What are the eligibility requirements?

To qualify the applicant must:

- Be a US Citizen or have eligible immigration status
- Be a Missouri resident
- Have income below 50% of the area median income (below 30% preferred)
- Have a clear Section 8 record
- Have a clear drug-related criminal record

What are the rules?

Section 8 rules include:

- Finding housing within 60 days
- Finding housing with reasonable rent

- Finding housing that meets the housing quality standards set by HUD
- Being able to pay at least 30% of rent & utility costs
- Following HUD & landlord rules
- Ensure you keep in contact with the housing authority with your contact information. This includes letting them know if you move addresses, so that they can reach you when they need.

How do I apply?

To receive assistance with housing, a person needs to apply through their local PHA. The PHA will then determine their eligibility, and each PHA has its own specific application process.

You can find the contact information for your local PHA [here](#).

How long until I know if I will receive a voucher?

In different cities, PHAs do things in their own way. For example, in Kansas City, there's a waiting list. Because many people apply, it usually takes individuals 1 to 3 years to get off the list. In Saint Louis, they use a lottery for the waiting list, so the time can be different. It's important for people to find out how their city handles it.

When You Reach The Top of the Waiting List

1. Applicant will receive a letter in the mail.
2. Applicant has to attend an interview with the local PHA.
3. Applicant must demonstrate they still qualify (due to typically long waiting lists).
4. Applicant provides income and residency documentation.
5. Applicant receives an invitation to an orientation session explaining local rules, programs, and requirements.

Troubleshooting

- Past mistakes, such as breaking important rules, don't automatically disqualify individuals from receiving housing assistance or living in public housing.
- Generally, the mistake should be more than 5 years old, but exceptions may apply. They can check with HUD or the local PHA for more information.
- However, if the mistake involves making a specific drug or being on a list of serious actions, eligibility for housing help may be affected.
- Certain Developments Vouchers for people with disabilities are available.
 - A person can apply by contacting their local PHA.
 - Visit HUD's website to learn [more](#).
- When someone is moving out of an apartment, they should make sure to get their deposit back.
- If the deposit is not returned or only part of it is given, they should contact the landlord and ask for a detailed list of deductions.
- If there's been an eviction or charges from a previous public housing situation, they should ask the old landlord for a breakdown of damages or fees. If the landlord can't provide it, they have to take it off the person's history.
- If the applicant's first application is rejected, they can appeal. This could lead to the housing people making an exception.
 - The applicant might consider trying to show why giving a waiver would be a "reasonable accommodation", or why a past issue on their record is due to a disability. In MO, many mental health diagnoses and substance use disorders are disabilities under HUDs definitions.
- If someone needs legal help regarding housing, they can contact the Missouri Legal Services program in their area.
 - Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
 - 314-534-4200
 - Mid-Missouri Legal Services
 - 800-568-4931
 - Legal Aid of Western Missouri
 - 816-474-750
 - Legal Services of Southern Missouri
 - (800) 444-4863



Print List

1. "How to: Apply for Section 8 Housing" Guide
2. Contact information for your local PHA

Full Links/Reference (in order of appearance)

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PHA Contact Information by State and City:

https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/PHA_Contact_Report_MO.pdf

Page 2

HUD's Information for Disabled Persons

https://www.hud.gov/topics/information_for_disabled_persons

Helpful links

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri Get Help

Page:

<https://lsem.org/get-help-now/>

Mid-Missouri Legal Services How to Apply Page:

<https://www.mmls.org/how-to-apply/>

Legal Aid of western Missouri Get Help Page:

<https://lawmo.org/get-legal-help/>

Legal Services of Southern Missouri Get Help

Page:

<https://www.lsosm.org/applicants/>

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