

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program?

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (formerly called “Section 8”) is a federally funded program that subsidizes rents for families who rent units in the private market. It is designed to assist very low-income families who earn 50 percent or less of the Area Median Income (AMI). Income limits are updated annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and can be found here:

<https://www.encinitasca.gov/government/departments/development-services/policy-planning-housing/housing/section-8-housing-choice-voucher-program>

2. Who is eligible?

Highest priority on the waiting list will be given to persons who live or work in the City of Encinitas AND also meet one or more of the following priorities:

- Elderly persons (age 62 and older)
- Disabled persons
- Working families with dependent children
- Homeless
- Displaced by government action
- Veterans

3. How does an application get submitted for the program?

To apply for the Housing Choice Voucher program with the Encinitas Housing Authority, please visit <https://waitlistcheck.com/CA3312> to create an account and submit an application. This account is also used to check on the status of an application.

4. How long is the waiting list?

The wait depends on the amount of funding that the Encinitas Housing Authority receives from HUD and the attrition rate of the program. The current estimated wait is approximately 10 years or longer.

5. How does an applicant check the status of their application?

An applicant may check the status of their application any time by visiting assistancecheck.com. You will need your PIN to create an account. Once this account is created, you will use your username and password to check on the status of your application.

6. Does an applicant need to notify the Encinitas Housing Authority of changes to their application?

Yes. An applicant is required to notify the Encinitas Housing Authority of changes to any of the following: residence and/or mailing address, contact information, household composition, or income. Please log into assistancecheck.com and update your information.

7. What happens if I move while I am on the waiting list?

It is important for you to inform the Encinitas Housing Authority if your address changes while your name is on the waiting list. Please log into assistancecheck.com to update your address.

8. Can an applicant be dropped from the waiting list?

If an applicant is dropped from the waiting list, then the applicant will need to reapply for the rental assistance program. If an applicant responds within 30 days of the drop date, they may be able to be reinstated on the waiting list.

9. What happens when a name reaches the top of the waiting list?

Once an applicant's name reaches the top of the waiting list, the Encinitas Housing Authority will notify the applicant. The notification letter will request updated application information, a Release of Information form, proof of income, and housing status information so the Encinitas Housing Authority can verify and determine program eligibility. Please note that getting to this point in the process does not necessarily mean that a Housing Choice Voucher will be issued as the Encinitas Housing Authority must verify program eligibility.

10. I have been issued a voucher. Now what?

You can begin searching for a unit within the payment standards of the program.

11. How much is the rental assistance subsidy?

Participants in the Housing Choice Voucher program must pay 30 percent, not to exceed 40 percent, of their adjusted monthly income toward the rent.

12. How often is my income reviewed?

A program participant must go through an annual recertification process where the Encinitas Housing Authority is required to verify continued program eligibility. The participant is required to provide current income and asset documentation.

13. How do I report changes in income?

If you have a change in income such as starting a new job, losing a job, or receiving an inheritance, then you must report the change. A program participant will need to log into assistancecheck.com to update their income information.

14. How often is a residential unit inspected?

Inspections are conducted biennially, which means that an inspection will occur at least once every 24 months.

15. What if the unit does not pass inspection?

If your unit does not pass inspection, then the Encinitas Housing Authority will send a letter to the landlord or property manager notifying them that the unit did not pass inspection. A minimum compliance deadline of 30 days is provided to make any necessary repairs, unless the repair is an imminent health and safety hazard at which point the compliance deadline is shortened to 48 hours or less.

16. Are there deductions allowed under the program?

Yes. Federal regulations allow a \$480 deduction for each dependent, and a \$400 deduction for elderly/disabled households.

17. What happens if a rent increase is requested?

The participant and landlord shall send a copy of the requested rent increase at least 60 days prior to the rent rate going into effect to the Encinitas Housing Authority. The Encinitas Housing Authority must approve the increase pursuant to California Tenant Protection Act requirements and Federal rent reasonableness standards. If the increase is determined to be in compliance with these regulations, then the rent increase will be processed and a letter notifying the participant and landlord of applicable payment amounts will be provided.

18. Can I move units?

Yes. However, before moving out of your unit, you must give your property owner a 30-day notice to move and send a copy of the notice to the Encinitas Housing Authority. We advise that you find a new unit before giving notice to move.

19. Can I move to another City or State with my voucher?

Yes, you can move to the jurisdiction of another Housing Authority. If you wish to move to another City or State, you must provide the following to our office:

- 1) A copy of your 30-day notice to move; and
- 2) The complete address of the Housing Authority you would like your file to be transferred to. Once this information is received, the EHA will send all paperwork to the receiving housing agency.

20. What if my landlord asks me to move?

You must promptly send a copy of any notices that you receive from your landlord to the Encinitas Housing Authority. Please contact our office so that we can advise you on next steps. It is very important for you to fulfill your lease obligations and pay your rent each month. If you are eligible to move, the housing authority will provide you with the paperwork that needs to be completed by a new landlord.

21. I'm a landlord and would like to participate in the program. How can I get involved?

Please e-mail housing@encinitasca.gov and provide the following information about your rental unit: number of bedrooms, rent amount, and utilities the tenant will be responsible for. We will add this information to a list that we provide to tenants who are looking for a unit.

In addition, you can find information for Landlords on our website here:

<https://www.encinitasca.gov/government/departments/development-services/policy-planning-housing/housing/section-8-housing-choice-voucher-program>