



SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING AUTHORITY

SECTION 8 HOUSING DEPARTMENT

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Section 8 Wait List Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does my rank mean?

A: Your rank on the Section 8 Wait List tells you what position you have on the list compared to all the other applicants on the list.

Q: How is my rank determined?

A: Your rank is based on a random lottery that is conducted to determine the order in which families are placed on the wait list. Then, we apply the Preferences you indicated you qualify for on your application form. Based on the Preferences, you are placed in one of 16 categories and within each category of Preferences, the order is determined by the random lottery number assigned to you.

Q: What are Preferences?

A: Preferences are priority categories that have been developed by the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) to ensure that the most needy are housed first. There are Local Preferences and Secondary Preferences. Local Preferences include Paying more than 50 % of your income for rent; Living in Substandard Housing; or Involuntarily Displaced by Federal or local government action. Secondary Preferences are Working or Living in San Francisco, Veteran of the U.S. Military, and Participating in Welfare to Work Programs.

Q: Can my Rank change?

A: Yes. Your rank changes constantly. Your rank is partially based on the Preferences you claimed on your application form as well as the Preferences claimed by the other applicants on the Wait List. As your Preferences and the Preferences of all the other applicants change, so will your Rank change. It can go either up or down depending on the number and the type of changes.

Q: How many families were selected for the September, 2001 Wait List?

A: All applicants who applied and did not have an outstanding balance owed to the SFHA were selected to be placed on the Wait List. In all, 30,334 families made the list.

Q: How do I know when I will be called?

A: It is difficult to predict how long your wait will be or when you will be called in for final Eligibility Determination. The Section 8 Program issues Vouchers based on the availability of funding.

Q: What happens when I reach the top of the Wait List?

A: When you are within the top 100 to 500 families, you will be sent an appointment to come to our office for final Eligibility Determination. At that time, you will be asked to verify the Preferences you claimed on your application form, sign various documents, provide the SFHA with documents verifying everyone's identification, relationship to head of household and Immigration Status. A security clearance is conducted to verify that the adults in your household do not have a drug or violent criminal background. Lastly, you are issued a Housing Choice Voucher after attending a briefing on how to best use your Voucher.

Q: How does a Voucher help me in paying my rent?

A: The Voucher is simply the SFHA's guarantee that once you find an owner who wishes to rent a unit to you and is willing to participate in the Section 8 Program, that a subsidy will be paid to the owner on your behalf. Generally, you pay 30 % of your income for rent and the SFHA sends the owner a check for the balance.

Q: How much can the Voucher pay towards my rent?

A: The subsidy your family will receive will be based on the lesser of the number of bedrooms your household is qualified for or the number of bedrooms in the unit you choose to live in. The rent on the unit cannot exceed the Payment Standard established for the size of your subsidy household size. You will be informed of the Payment Standard for your household size at the briefing prior to issuance of your Voucher.

See "17 Facts You Should Know About Section 8" for more information on using the Housing Choice Voucher and leasing a unit.

