**[https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/faq](#_top)**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Application Process**

**Is there any application fee?**

* There is no fee to apply for housing using Housing Connect. You may be charged a non-refundable credit/background check fee.

**Do I have to provide my SSN (Social Security Number) or ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number)?**

* You are not required to provide your Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number in order to submit an application for an affordable housing lottery. You may leave the question blank. Do NOT enter a fake SSN (like "000-00-0000"), because that can slow down application processing.
* If your application is reached and you qualify, you will be asked to undergo a credit check or demonstrate rental history. If you undergo a credit check, you will need to provide an SSN or ITIN.
* Alternatively, you can provide proof of good rental history, which does not require you to provide an SSN or ITIN. In this case, the only forms of personal identification you need to provide are described in the “request for documents” section above (including IDNYC cards, drivers’ licenses, and non-driver state ID cards).

**Can I use my IDNYC card to apply for affordable housing?**

* Yes, if your application is reached and you qualify, you can provide your IDNYC card as an acceptable form of personal ID. To learn more, read the FAQ sections on requested documentation and Social Security / Individual Taxpayer Numbers.

**What should I expect after I apply for an affordable housing opportunity?**

* Visit the About page to learn about the application process and the steps involved. You can also visit the Housing Connect Application Guides section of HPD's website for more information and resources.

**Once I submit my application, can I make a change?**

* Yes. It is very important that you update your household and income information in NYC Housing Connect every time there is a change. The changes will show up on any of your applications where your lottery log number has not yet been reached.
* Important: If your household summary is flagged as incomplete, your application may not be selected for processing or issued a log number.

**Once I submit my application, can I withdraw it?**

Yes. To withdraw an application, log in to NYC Housing Connect. Go to your dashboard, and click on the development. At the bottom of the window, you will see the option to withdraw your application. This action cannot be undone.

**What do I need to provide if I get a request for documents?**

* The request for documents includes all required items to submit. This documentation is necessary to support the household information from your application and confirm that you qualify. These documents generally include but are not limited to personal IDs, pay stubs, tax returns, proof of address, and asset documentation.
* Acceptable forms of personal ID include drivers’ licenses, non-driver state ID cards, and IDNYC cards. Birth certificates or other forms of documentation like a school letter may be necessary for children under 18.
* Make sure to include ALL requested documents in one submission, when you respond to the document request. After submitting your response, the option to submit more documents disappears until after the developer has reviewed.

**I applied to a lottery but didn't get a log number. What happened?**

* Within a few weeks after the lottery application deadline, Housing Connect randomly assigns log numbers to all applicants whose applicant profiles (Household Info) are complete.
* If your Household Info becomes incomplete after you apply but before log numbers are assigned, you will not receive a log number for that lottery. This could happen if you are in the process of making updates to your profile and have not completed them. It could also happen if someone in the household turns 18 but does not have any income or assets.
* Please make sure your Household Info is complete and up to date at all times.

**How do I know if I have been rejected?**

* You can see the status of your applications on your Dashboard.
* When your application is reached in a specific lottery, your Dashboard will show its status as ineligible if your household information (size and income) do not meet the development's requirements.
* If you respond to a request for documents to confirm that you qualify, but the marketing agent's review determines that your household does not meet the guidelines, you will receive a rejection notice. The status will also appear on your Dashboard.
* The most common reasons for rejection are not meeting income or household eligibility requirements. The federal government, HPD, and HDC set minimum and maximum requirements. You may also be disqualified if the household submitted more than one application per household for the development.

**How do I appeal?**

* If you receive and respond to a request for documents, the marketing agent for that development then conducts a review to confirm that you are eligible. If the review finds that you do not meet the requirements for the development, you will receive a rejection notice. This notice will come to your email and appear on your NYC Housing Connect dashboard. The notice will explain why you were rejected.
* If you believe that you were rejected from a lottery in error, follow the instructions in the rejection notice. Act quickly. The notice will tell you how many days you have to submit an appeal. You will submit your appeal and supporting documentation through Housing Connect.
* If your appeal to the marketing agent is not successful, you will receive an appeal rejection notice, with an explanation. This notice arrives via email and on your NYC Housing Connect dashboard. If you still believe you were wrongly rejected, follow the instructions in the notice to submit a complaint, with documentation, to either HPD or HDC. The instructions will provide the correct contact information for that lottery.

**Why am I seeing an error message when I try to submit my appeal?**

* Please try shortening the text you have included in "Reason for Appeal" textbox. You may include as many attachments as you'd like, but the appeal can only be submitted if the description in the "Reason for Appeal" textbox has fewer than 100 characters.

**What is a Marketing Agent?**

* Marketing Agents are people responsible for leasing or selling affordable housing. They work for the housing developer or owner. Sometimes the Marketing Agent is part of the developer’s company. HPD and HDC monitor the leasing and sales processes.

**What if I don't want to apply online?**

* If you don't want to apply online, you have the option of submitting a paper application. You may have an application mailed to you. Refer to the details of any open lottery to learn more about having a paper application mailed to you and where complete applications must be sent.
* Submit ONLY one application per household. You will be disqualified if more than one application is received per lottery for your household. If you submit an application online, you may NOT submit an application via mail. If you submit an application via mail, you may NOT submit an application online.

**Income and Assets**

**How is income calculated?**

* The developer/managing agent will calculate income using annual gross income. You must indicate ALL sources of income for ALL household members who will be living in the unit for which you are applying.
* Your annual gross income includes all sources of employment income and other income such as social security for each member of your household. Space is provided on the application to indicate each source of income. Please complete this section very carefully to ensure that the developer/managing agent has all information that may affect your eligibility.
* For self-employed applicants, net income (Gross Income minus Expenses/Other Deductions) is analyzed. Such applicants must have at least two complete years in the same self-employed field.
* Every applicant's income will be considered in evaluating eligibility and used to document a continuing need for housing assistance. Furthermore, please note that all sources of income must be documented and verified.

**What are the asset limits?**

* There is a limit to the amount of total assets an applicant household may have and still remain eligible for affordable housing.
* Household assets include financial assets such as savings accounts, checking accounts, trusts, investment assets (stocks, bonds, etc.), cash savings, miscellaneous investment holdings, etc. (Balances in specifically designated retirement funds and college savings accounts are not subject to the asset limit, but are counted when calculating income from assets.)
* The entire market value of any interest in real property is subject to the asset limit (e.g. residential, commercial, land, shares in a co-op, etc.). For other capital investments, only the applicant’s equity in the investment is subject to the asset limit.
* The household asset limit for rental units is equal to the maximum income limit for a four (4)-person household at the area median income (AMI) level for which the unit is designated.
* The household asset limit for all homeownership units is equal to the HUD maximum income limit for a four (4)-person household at 175% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
* View this year's asset limits.
* For the full policies, see HPD-HDC Marketing Handbook, Section 5-5 B and C.

**Why do I have to give so much information about my finances?**

* It is important that HDC/HPD-financed units are rented or sold to applicants that qualify under the program requirements. In order to ensure fairness to all applicants, the developer/managing agent needs to certify that an applicant's income falls within the income guidelines. All information is confidential and the developer/managing agents handle this information with the utmost discretion. Providing required information such as employment information, bank accounts, assets and Social Security Numbers (SSN)/Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) is necessary for the developer/Marketing Agent to fully review and approve you for an affordable unit.

**What is Area Median Income (AMI)?**

* Area Median Income (AMI) is the median income levels as modified by household size for the New York metropolitan statistical area as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD.) For 2021, the AMI is $107,400 for a three-person family in the New York Metropolitan Statistical Area and $83,600 for a single person.
* For more information visit <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/area-median-income.page>.

**My minor (under 18) child receives SSI. How do I enter this income?**

* Enter the SSI for your child (under 18 years old) under your own income as an adult in the household.

**Can I apply my Section 8 voucher/certificate or other rental subsidy to affordable housing in NYC Housing Connect?**

* Yes. Vouchers and rental subsidies such as Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (HPD or NYCHA), City FHEPS, ISS, Medicaid Waiver, and VASH are all accepted. Minimum income requirements do not apply if you have a voucher or a rental subsidy. However, rent should be within maximum limits allowed by your voucher or rental assistance program.
* This means that your household will not be disqualified for being under income if your household has a voucher that would cover your rent. This is true even if your household's income is less than the eligible income you see on a lottery advertisement.
* Please note that if your application is reached for a development, the marketing agent will contact you for proof of the subsidy and the amount of rent it covers. If you do not know the maximum rents covered by your rental assistance program, contact the agency that allocated your certificate or voucher.

**What does "paid by the City of New York" mean?**

* One of the profile questions is, "Are you an employee of the City of New York? This means you are paid by the City of New York."
* You should answer "Yes" to this question if you are a municipal employee and your paycheck comes from the City of New York. For example, you may work for the NYC Department of Education, FDNY, or the Human Resources Administration.
* If you answer "Yes" to this question and your application comes up for processing, your employment with the City of New York will be verified as part of the eligibility review.

**People with Disabilities**

**What is a reasonable accommodation?**

* Federal law prohibits discriminations against people with disabilities in housing. A reasonable accommodation is a change, adaptation, or modification to a policy, program, service, or workplace which will allow a qualified person with a disability to participate fully in a program. Examples of reasonable accommodations include the addition of a ramp to allow a wheelchair user to enter the building; allowing a service animal in a building that has a no pet policy.

**What is a disability set-aside unit?**

Many developments must create and designate specific affordable housing units for people with mobility, vision, and hearing disabilities. These are called "disability set-aside units" and they are designed according to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS).

* A mobility set-aside unit means that the floor plan and certain features are designed to be accessible to someone with a mobility disability. Once a household is approved for a unit set aside for people with disabilities, they have an opportunity to let the building owner know of any additional and specific accommodations they need (i.e., removable under-counter cabinets, etc.).
* Vision/hearing units are wired to support alarm systems to serve people with hearing and visual disabilities. Similarly, additional features may be requested as needed (i.e. talking or braille appliances, etc.), once an applicant is approved for a unit.

**I have a disability, but it does not affect my mobility, vision, or hearing. Can I still apply?**

* At this time, our disability set asides are reserved for people with mobility, visual and hearing disabilities, and tied to federal funding and compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Applicants who do not have a mobility, visual or hearing disability can still apply for affordable housing in the general affordable housing lottery and request reasonable accommodations from the owner if alterations to the unit are needed.

**Do I Qualify?**

**Do I have to go through a credit check?**

Not necessarily. If the developer or marketing agent has confirmed that you qualify and there is a unit available, there is one more step: You can choose to (1) show that you have paid your full rent for the past 12 months or (2) have your credit reviewed.

Option 1: Rent payment history. You will need to provide:

* Proof of the amount you are supposed to pay in rent monthly, like your lease, a notarized affidavit from the building owner or manager, etc.

AND

* Proof that you have paid the full rent each month for the last 12 months. For example:
* Formal rent receipts
* Evidence of monthly withdrawals, payments, or transfers, e.g., bank statements
* Money order receipts or copies
* Canceled checks
* Landlord’s written record of rent payments, i.e., rent ledger

If the evidence of rent payments that you provide is incomplete or difficult to verify, you may provide your written consent to the marketing agent to contact your current/previous building owner or manager for a rent ledger.

Option 2: Agree to a credit review.

* Has another building manager, owner, real estate broker, or other building representative run a credit and/or background check for you within the last 30 days?
* Yes: bring your copy of the credit and/or background check. You could avoid an additional credit check and fee.
* No: be prepared to pay a non-refundable credit/background check fee. All credit and background check fees may not exceed $20 per application.

**What are the criteria for students applying for affordable housing?**

* Student Loans/Grants are not considered income. Furthermore, for a unit with tax credits, a household cannot be made up entirely of full-time students unless the household qualifies for an exception under Federal law.

**Can I apply for affordable housing with HPD if I have a voucher or rental subsidy?**

* Yes. Vouchers and rental subsidies such as Section 8 (HPD or NYCHA), CityFHEPS, ISS, TBI, Medicaid Waiver, and VASH are all accepted. Minimum income requirements do not apply if you have a voucher or a rental subsidy. However, rent should be within maximum limits allowed by your voucher or rental assistance program.

**I do not live in New York City. Can I apply through Housing Connect?**

Yes, non-New York City residents can apply, however, preference is given to current New York City residents. New York City is defined as the five boroughs: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

What are the preferences?

The City is committed to widening opportunities for affordable housing for all New Yorkers. Please note that all applicants, regardless of preference, must meet the income, employment, and other eligibility criteria set for each property for which they are applying.

Preference is given to applicants that meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Persons with Mobility, Hearing, and/or Vision Disabilities

Federal disability statutes give preference to five percent (5%) of units for households applicants with a household member who has a mobility disability. Another two percent (2%) of units receive preference for households with a household member who has a hearing or vision disability.

2. Current Community Board Residents (CB)

For developments financed by the City, current residents of the Community District or Community Board (CB) in which the property is located receive a preference for fifty percent (50%) of the units. The community preference was established to provide greater housing opportunities for long-time residents of New York City neighborhoods where HPD/HDC have made a significant investment in housing. This preference does not apply to developments that do not receive City financing, e.g., those that only receive a tax exemption.

To learn which CB you live in, visit:

NYC Community Boards

3. Municipal Employees

The City recognizes that many New York City municipal employees are required to live within the five boroughs and can often find it very difficult to obtain affordable housing. The municipal employee preference makes five percent (5%) of the units in HPD- or HDC-financed developments available to current municipal employees. Down Payment Assistance for homeownership applicants is also available. HPD/HDC will also work with its partners to provide homeownership counseling and education to municipal employees interested in becoming homeowners.

To qualify for the municipal employee preference, you must be paid by the City of New York. City employees will be screened to ensure that no conflict of interest exists. If you are unsure whether you may have a conflict of interest, check with your agency.

4. Project-specific Preferences

As part of the agreements set forth for a specific development, additional preferences may apply. Such preferences may include, but are not limited to, preferences for Seniors or Veterans. These preferences are listed in the advertisement for the development.

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**This means that your household will not be disqualified for being under income if your household has a voucher that would cover your rent.** This is true even if your household's income is less than the eligible income you see on a lottery advertisement.

Please note that if your application is reached for a development, the marketing agent will contact you for proof of the subsidy and the amount of rent it covers. If you do not know the

maximum rents covered by your rental assistance program, contact the agency that allocated your certificate or voucher.

**I have an Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV). How do I enter this in Housing Connect?**

If you have an Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV):

1. Go to the Household section of your profile.

2. When you get to the question, "Does anyone in your household receive rental assistance that will move with them to a new apartment?" **Answer "yes."**

To the question about rental assistance type, **check the box for either "Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher from HPD" or "Section 8 voucher from NYCHA."** Your answer depends on which agency administered your voucher.

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) are Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) funded through the American Rescue Plan and offered through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**About this Website**

**Who maintains NYC Housing Connect? What security measures are in place to protect my personal data?**

The NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development maintain the website. The website has been accredited under the Citywide Information Security Program which ensures the overall security of the City's data and information, including your data in NYC Housing Connect.

**Why do I receive emails in relation to this website?**

By creating an account on NYC Housing Connect you agree to notices in relation to website activities, including but not limited to: new projects open for application, updated website features, advice on how to fill out an application, and upcoming developments.

**HELP**

**How do I contact NYC Housing Connect?**

* Do you have a question or feedback for us? Please send a message to nychousingconnect@hpd.nyc.gov. Your comments will assist us in improving the site.
* We value your feedback, and we do our best to answer questions in a timely manner. Unfortunately, we may not be able to respond to all messages.
* You may also call our applicant hotline at 212-863-7990. We answer calls from 9am to 5pm on weekdays, and respond to voicemails left at other times.

**Can I log in with my account from the original (old) Housing Connect website?**

* No, please create a new account in the new Housing Connect (this website). Your old account information does not carry over to this new website.

**When I try to apply for a project, I see an error message that says “There was an issue completing the address. Please try again later.” What should I do?**

* Your Housing Connect profile might not be complete. Before you apply for a development, please go to "My Household" and make sure you have entered all required information. Be sure to check that the Household Summary section and the profiles for every household member are complete.

**I am not able to log in, and I see a message saying that I am locked out. What can I do?**

* The system will lock you out if you have tried to log in too many times unsuccessfully. Wait least 15 minutes, then click “forgot password” and follow the instructions to reset your password.
* Don’t forget that your username is not your email. Your username is an alphanumeric handle you created when you first registered.