

## Section 8 Frequently Asked Questions:

- **What is Section 8?**
  - Section 8 is a housing voucher program that provides a rental assistance subsidy to private landlords for low-income households who have received a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher.
- **Where do I apply for Section 8?**
  - You can apply by calling your local housing authority and asking for a Massachusetts Section 8 Centralized Waiting List Application, sometimes it's called the "CWL".
  - You can apply online: <https://www.affordablehousing.com/masscwl>
  - When you apply to the CWL you are applying for a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, click here to learn more about the voucher program:  
[https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing\\_choice\\_voucher\\_program\\_section\\_8](https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8)
- **How long is the waitlist?**
  - Current waitlist time is about 10 years from the time your Section 8 application is submitted.
- **Is Section 8 the same as public housing?**
  - No, this is a common misconception. Section 8 is a program seen across the country. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) oversees the program. There are also public housing programs run by HUD **but** the HUD Section 8 program works with units owned by private landlords as opposed to public housing units, which can be owned and run by either state or federal government agencies such as HUD or DHCD, for example.
- **How long can I be in the program?**
  - Participants can continue to be on the program if income meets requirements and other program requirements are met.
- **Does the tenant's voucher have to be from the town they are renting in?**
  - No, Section 8 vouchers are portable. If the participant decides to move, the housing authority that the participant is working with will choose to either continue to administer the voucher or port it out to the housing authority in the city where the participant will reside in.
- **Can a landlord refuse to rent the unit to a section 8 participant?**
  - Under Mass law it is illegal to refuse to rent because you are a Section 8 participant.
  - A landlord can only refuse to rent to a Section 8 participant if the reasons are unrelated to the Section 8 voucher. Please follow the link for more information on tenant and landlord rights: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/the-attorney-generals-guide-to-landlord-and-tenant-rights>

- **What are the requirements for a landlord to participate in the program?**
  - The unit must pass the housing quality standards before its leased to a Section 8 participant. Please see links below for more details.
    - [Housing Quality Standards - HCV | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)
    - [A Landlord's Guide to Section 8 in Massachusetts - MassLandlords.net](#)
  
- **Can I refer a family member/friend/neighbor/current tenant to apply to the program?**
  - Anyone can apply that meets income requirements. Please keep in mind that the current waitlist time is 10 years.
  - Please apply using the link below or call your local housing authority for an application:
    - <https://www.affordablehousing.com/masscw/>
  
- **How do rental payments work?**
  - PHA will provide a rental subsidy based on the tenant's income. A tenants rental portion is between 30% and 40% of their household's adjusted income.
  - Generally, in the case that a tenant has zero income, the PHA will authorize a subsidy payment covering the full amount of the monthly rent.
  - Every month the landlords receive a payment from the PHA and the tenant, equaling the contract rent.