



Housing Choice Voucher Program Waitlists

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who can apply to the Housing Choice Voucher Program?

The MHA HCVP helps low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities afford safe, decent housing in the private market throughout Mobile City and Mobile County. To be eligible for the program, a family must be either very low income (50% of area median income); OR low-income (80% of area median income). Additionally, per HUD regulations, MHA must ensure that 75 percent of its admissions in each fiscal year are families whose incomes are at or below the extremely low-income (ELI) limit.

Please see **Attachment 1** for the *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2021 Income Limits for the Mobile County Metropolitan Service Area*.

How does the Housing Choice Voucher Program work?

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) takes families from the waiting list and determines eligibility, and the amount of assistance families will receive. Eligible families are issued a Voucher and a Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA). The family then searches for a unit that suits their needs. The property owner must agree to rent under the Housing Choice Voucher Program and the selected unit must pass an HUD HCV Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection.

How long does it take to get to the top of the list?

The amount of time that an applicant waits for assistance cannot be predicted and is based on the following conditions:

- The number of applications ranked higher than your application based on local preferences. Local preferences are outlined in the HCVP Administrative Plan.
- Funding Availability – there must be funds available to issue vouchers to eligible families.

What happens when I get to the top of the list?

When your name reaches the top of the waiting list, MHA will send you a notice by mail and e-mail. This notice will give you a date and time to meet with MHA for an eligibility interview.



How long is the Voucher good for?

The initial voucher term is 60 days. 30-day extensions may be requested; however, no voucher may exceed 120 days. An additional 30-day extension may be requested as a Reasonable Accommodation for persons with disabilities.

How can I update or check the status of my application?

Applicants currently on the waiting list may update, change their contact information and family composition (i.e., the number of adults and children in their household) and view the status of their housing application using a computer, smart phone, or tablet without having to call or come into the HCVP office.

Can I use my voucher outside of Mobile?

A family that has been issued a Housing Choice Voucher by MHA may use that voucher to lease a unit anywhere in the United States where there is a Public Housing Authority (PHA) that administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Applicants are not eligible for portability if the family lived outside of Mobile County when they initially applied for HCV assistance; when a resident outside of Mobile County receives a voucher administered by MHA, they must use that voucher within County limits for the first year – only at the end of this 12-month period may a request to port-out be made.

How much do tenants pay for rent?

HCVP and the landlord will negotiate the monthly rent for the housing unit. HCVP then pays the housing assistance payment directly to the landlord on behalf of the participating family. If applicable, the family is responsible for paying the difference between the rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the HCVP. Tenants residing in voucher units pay 30% of their income for rent and utilities.

What is the Project-Based Voucher Program?

HCVP programs contract with private property owners to rent some or all the units in their housing developments to low-income families. MHA previously issued a Request for Proposals for its current project-based voucher developments. Private developers and housing owners



applied for the designation and were awarded vouchers based on the scoring criteria. In addition, the MHA expects to procure new development with project-based units. Both new and existing project-based unit wait lists will be processed through the online Application Portal.

Commitment to Nondiscrimination

The MHA will not discriminate based on race, color, sex, religion, creed, nationality or ethnic origin, age, family or marital status, sexual orientation, handicap, or disability, nor deny any family or individual the opportunity to apply for assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher Program.



Attachment 1 - 2021 Income Limits

[Mobile Count Metropolitan Service Area¹](#)

FY 2021 Income Limit Area	Median Family Income Explanation	FY 2021 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mobile, AL MSA	\$58,200	Very Low (50%) Income Limits (\$) Explanation	20,450	23,400	26,300	29,200	31,550	33,900	36,250	38,550
		Extremely Low-Income Limits (\$) * Explanation	12,880	17,420	21,960	26,500	31,040	33,900*	36,250*	38,550*
		Low (80%) Income Limits (\$) Explanation	32,700	37,400	42,050	46,700	50,450	54,200	57,950	61,650

NOTE: Mobile County is part of the **Mobile, AL MSA**, so all information presented here applies to all the **Mobile, AL MSA**. The **Mobile, AL MSA** contains the following areas: Mobile County, AL.

¹Source: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2021/2021summary.odn>. Accessed 6.23.2021.



* The FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act changed the definition of extremely low-income to be the greater of 30/50ths (60 percent) of the Section 8 very low-income limit or the poverty guideline as [established by the Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#), provided that this amount is not greater than the Section 8 50% very low-income limit. Consequently, the extremely low-income limits may equal the very low (50%) income limits.

Income Limit areas are based on FY 2021 Fair Market Rent (FMR) areas. For information on FMRs, please see our associated FY 2021 [Fair Market Rent documentation system](#).