



**MANCHESTER HOUSING AND
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**Public Housing and
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher
Applicant Handbook**

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198 Hanover Street, Manchester, New Hampshire 03104-6125
603 624-2100 FAX 603 624-2103 TDD 1 800-545-1833, ext. 590
www.manchesterhousing.org



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MANCHESTER HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority is to provide and sustain affordable, secure, quality living environments for low income families and individuals; to provide personal and economic enrichment and independence opportunities for residents; to act as a catalyst and community partner in developing new low income affordable housing opportunities; and to engage in community revitalization initiatives to improve neighborhoods, promote economic development, increase employment opportunities and broaden the local tax base.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IS AGAINST THE LAW

Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority is committed to ensuring equal housing opportunity in the administration of its housing programs. In the selection of families and in the provision of services, there shall be no discrimination against any person on the basis of age, race, color, sex, creed/religion, familial status, marital status, disability, national origin or sexual orientation.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

MHRA is required to try to provide reasonable accommodation to applicants or any member of an applicant household with a disability. Reasonable accommodation means a modification to buildings or program procedures to help an otherwise eligible applicant with a disability or handicap to utilize MHRA's services or programs.

Examples of reasonable accommodation include: permitting a family to have an assistive animal in a development where animals are usually prohibited; providing large-type documents, a reader or sign language interpreter; making alterations to an MHRA property for a family member with a wheelchair; permitting or scheduling an outside agency to assist an applicant with a disability to meet MHRA's applicant screening criteria.

An applicant family with a member with a disability must be able to meet essential obligations of residency, but there is no requirement that it do so without assistance. If you or a member of your family thinks you might need or want a reasonable accommodation, you may request it at any time during the application process or after admission. This is up to you. If you would prefer not to discuss your situation with MHRA, that is your right.

MANCHESTER HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

INFORMATION GUIDE – PUBLIC HOUSING AND SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS

Thank you for your interest in Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority (MHRA) public housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher programs. These programs were created to assist families in obtaining decent and safe housing at a rent they can afford. Under these programs, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), eligible applicants are offered an apartment in one of various public housing developments or a voucher to seek and rent a privately owned unit.

MHRA owns over 1,200 public housing apartments – for families, the elderly and persons with disabilities – throughout the city. MHRA is the landlord for people living in these units. Public housing residents generally pay 30% of their adjusted monthly income for rent and utilities, though residents receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) pay a set amount established by the NH Division of Health and Human Services. In the public housing program, MHRA is the landlord.

Participants of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program (HCV) are provided with financial assistance to afford an apartment owned by a private landlord. In this

program, MHRA pays part of the rent each month for eligible families, who will be required to pay a portion of adjusted monthly income toward rent and utilities, which is generally about 30% of income.

MHRA has some special programs available for public housing and HCV residents:

Congregate Services Program (CSP) – Public Housing only

Provides a residential environment with supportive services (meals and household tasks) in certain public housing developments to assist the elderly and persons with disabilities to remain independent in their apartments. To be eligible, individuals must be assessed as in need of assistance with at least three (3) Activities of Daily Living (bathing, grooming, meals, etc.).

Supportive Services Program (SSP) – HCV only

Similar to the CSP for public housing, the SSP is available at selected MHRA-managed, Project-Based Voucher sites. To be eligible, individuals must be assessed as in need of assistance with at least two (2) Activities of Daily Living.

Family Self-Sufficiency – HCV only

Offers assessment, training and case management to enrolled HCV participants to help them achieve economic independence. Participants must commit to working toward achieving economic self-sufficiency within five (5) years.

MOD/SRO Program – HCV only

Provides housing for men at Robinson House.

Homeless Program – HCV only

Provides HCV assistance to homeless families and individuals who have been referred into the program by designated referral agencies.

Preservation Voucher – HCV only

These special Housing Choice Vouchers are given to families affected by several different types of owner or HUD actions (collectively referred to as “housing conversions”).

Project Based Voucher – HCV only

These vouchers are issued to specific property owners and provide HCV assistance to a specific number of units in these developments. Unlike the tenant based voucher, the project based voucher is specific to the unit and when the HCV resident moves out of the unit, the resident is no longer assisted under the Project Based Voucher program.

APPLICATION

Who can apply for assistance?

You may apply for MHRA assistance if you meet any of the following definitions of a “family.” The term “family” as used by MHRA means a single person or a group of persons -- two or more persons who intend to share residency and whose income and resources are available to meet the family’s needs. A group of persons may not be denied solely on the basis that they are not related by blood, marriage or operation of law. The term “family” also includes, but is not limited to:

- A family with or without children;
- An elderly family (see page 11);
- A disabled family (see page 11);
- A single person who is, or is not, elderly or a person with disabilities;
- Two or more elderly or disabled persons living together, or one or more elderly or disabled persons living with one or more live-in aides.

What are the income limits for assistance?

Your family may be eligible if your total annual gross family income is not more than the following amounts:

Public Housing

Number in Family	Income Limit		Number in Family	Income Limit
1	41,700		5	64,350
2	47,700		6	69,150
3	53,650		7	73,900
4	59,600		8	78,650

** NOTE: For income limits for the Gallen and Rimmon & Gates developments see the next chart.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher

Number in Family	Income Limit		Number in Family	Income Limit
1	26,900		5	41,550
2	30,750		6	44,600
3	34,600		7	47,700
4	38,450		8	50,750

** NOTE: The income limits above are the maximums for admission into the program, but MHRA is required to ensure that 75% of new vouchers are issued to households at or below 30% of median income, which are as follows:

Number in Family	Income Limit		Number in Family	Income Limit
1	16,150		5	24,900
2	18,450		6	26,750
3	20,750		7	28,600
4	23,050		8	30,450

How do I apply for assistance?

The application process involves two steps:

Step 1: Preliminary application for assistance

The purpose of the application is to allow MHRA to gather information about your household to determine whether you are eligible for assistance and to place your name on the waiting list. The application form contains questions about your household composition, income, current living situation, rental history and housing needs. When you return your completed (and signed) application form, MHRA will date and time stamp it so that you may be placed on the waiting list in the order in which you applied. When filling out the application, we request that you please print; make sure that you have provided all the necessary information about your household; and please be sure to indicate the program(s) you wish to apply for (public housing or HCV or both).

Any family wishing to be placed on the waiting list may:

- Pick up an application form at MHRA's Main Office at 198 Hanover Street, Manchester, New Hampshire;
- Print the form from MHRA's website at www.manchesterhousing.org; or

- Request a form by mail by calling MHRA's main number at (603) 624-2100.

Because MHRA requires original signatures on all forms, we cannot accept electronically (fax, email, etc.) submitted applications.

Application forms are available in an accessible format upon request from a person with a disability.

Using the information provided on the form, MHRA will make a determination of preliminary eligibility. You will receive notification within four (4) weeks to let you know if you have been determined eligible. After this, if any of the information you provided to us changes, you must report these changes – in writing – to us immediately. Please note that failure to report such changes, at any time prior to receiving assistance – or failure to respond to MHRA correspondence – will result in your name being removed from the waiting list.

Step 2: Eligibility Interview

Once your name is nearing the top of the waiting list, you will be contacted by mail to schedule an eligibility interview. Families reach the top of the waiting list according to: the date and time that the completed application is received by MHRA; preferences for which the family qualifies; and the availability of HCV vouchers and/or the appropriate sized public housing unit.

Prior to your interview, you will be mailed a Personal Declaration Application to complete and bring with you to your interview. During the interview, MHRA will collect all information needed to determine if you qualify for assistance. The following is a list of the documentation MHRA will require at the interview:

- Proof of Preference(s)
- Birth certificates for all members of the household
- Social security cards for all members of the household
- Photo ID for anyone 18 years and older
- Photo ID proof of citizenship/eligible immigration status
- Proof of all income
- Proof of all assets
- Proof of deductions (child care, medical deductions for elderly/disabled families)
- Legal documents, if applicable, such as:
 - Custody/guardianship
 - Power of Attorney
 - Documentation of name change (marriage certificate, divorce decree, court order, etc.)
 - Documentation of alimony/child support/child custody (divorce decree, legal separation order, etc.)

All adults in the family are required to attend the eligibility interview.

Where are the public housing and MHRA project-based voucher developments?

MHRA owns and operates several types of housing available for rental:

FAMILY DEVELOPMENTS: Units range from one (1) to five (5) bedrooms. Many families with children live in these developments, but single people, including single people with disabilities, may also live in these developments.

These developments include: Elmwood Gardens, Kelley Falls Apartments, Manseau Manor, and multiple scattered sites throughout Manchester.

DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Eligibility for these developments is limited to families defined as Elderly or Persons with Disabilities -- individuals aged sixty-two (62) or older or who are persons with disabilities; families whose head or spouse is at least sixty-two (62) years of age or a person with disabilities; two or more elderly or persons with disabilities living together or one or more such persons living with one or more live-in-aides.

These developments include the O'Malley, Kalivas, Pariseau, Burns, and Gallen Highrises; our Tarrytown Road development; various scattered sites throughout Manchester; and the Mary Gale Apartments and Brown School apartments (project-based voucher developments – residency limited to HCV income eligibility).

How do I obtain an accessible unit, or a unit with accessible features, because I or a member of my family has a disability?

The application allows you to inform MHRA of your need for an accessible unit or unit with accessible features. If you become disabled while you are on the waiting list, please contact MHRA to request a Reasonable Accommodation form. Complete and sign the form and return it to MHRA's Main Office so your file can be updated to include your reasonable accommodation request.

How long will the interview take?

MHRA tries to give you as much time as you need. You may bring with you anyone you wish, but please note that there are space limitations at MHRA.

WAITING LIST

When your application is received, MHRA will review it and determine if you are eligible to be placed on the waiting list. You will be notified of your eligibility status within four (4) weeks of MHRA's receipt of your application.

How do I report changes to, or update, my application?

Any change to your address, contact information, income, housing needs or family composition (for example, if there is an addition of household members to the family) must be reported – in writing – to MHRA immediately to avoid delays in processing your application and so that you may receive appropriate assistance for your family. Send any changes to MHRA at 198 Hanover Street, Manchester, NH 03104.

How is my application processed and maintained on the waiting list?

Applications are placed on the waiting list in the order they are received according to the preferences for which they qualify. Applicants who do not claim a preference will be ranked in order by date and time of application only. Applicants are required to verify any preferences claimed at the eligibility interview.

What are the preferences?

There are several preference categories that MHRA will consider to determine placement on the waiting list. You may claim as many preferences as apply to you. Please do not hesitate to contact MHRA if you are unsure about any of these categories, as any preferences that you claim will be verified by MHRA.

- Non-Housing Assistance Recipient: Applies if no one in the household currently receives any local, state or federal housing assistance;
- Veteran: Applies to:

Head of household or spouse who was honorably discharged from the Armed Services of the United States and served at least six (6) months on active duty during a period of war or conflict listed on next page, or who is 100% disabled due to a service related injury;

Law enforcement officers or firefighters who suffered 100% disability due to a service-related injury;

Spouse with dependent children of a veteran of the armed forces killed in a war/conflict if the spouse was dependent on the armed services veteran at the time of death and is eligible as a family at time of application;

Spouse with dependent children of a law enforcement officer or firefighter killed in the line of duty if the spouse was dependent on the law enforcement officer or firefighter at the time

of death and is eligible as a family at time of application.

Veteran Preference Wars or Conflicts

World War I
World War II
Korean Conflict
Vietnam Era
Lebanon
Grenada
Persian Gulf War
Operation Enduring Freedom
Operation Iraqi Freedom

- Resident of Manchester: Applies to applicant families living, working or who have been notified that they are hired to work in Manchester. This preference also applies to applicants aged 62 or older, or who are a person with disabilities and have a son, daughter or parent living in Manchester as well as applicants who at one time lived in Manchester and can provide documentation of same.
- Displaced: Applies to families who are being displaced from their current residence due to government action or fire that was not caused by their own negligence.
- Targeted Funding Programs: These programs apply only to families who are eligible and have been placed on the regular waiting list. When a specific type of funding becomes available, MHRA will

review the waiting list for the first available family meeting the targeted funding criteria. MHRA has the following Targeted Programs:

Public Housing

Congregate Services Program (CSP)

HCV

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)

Robinson House (MOD/SRO)

Homeless Program (referral from designated agencies only)

Project-Based Vouchers (PBV)

Preservation Voucher Program (PV)

Supportive Services Program (SSP)

ELIGIBILITY

What happens when my application reaches the top of the waiting list?

When your application reaches the top of the waiting list MHRA will notify you by mail to come in for your eligibility interview (see page 6). It is important that you bring all documents and verification papers that pertain to your household with you to your interview.

MHRA will conduct criminal background checks of all household member aged 17 or older. MHRA will also verify the information you provided on your personal declaration application including any preferences claimed, income, citizenship and immigration status. MHRA may also conduct landlord reference checks for applicants to public housing.

What happens if my application is denied?

You will be notified, in writing, of the reason for the denial and you will be offered an opportunity to request an informal review. Requests for informal reviews must be received in writing no later than 14 days from the date of MHRA's notification of denial.

Upon receipt of a request for a review, MHRA will schedule the informal review and notify you in writing of the date and time of the appointment. During the review, you will have the opportunity to present objections to MHRA's decision

and to present new information for MHRA's consideration.

Applicants may use an attorney or other representative, at the applicant's own expense, to assist in the review process.

MHRA will notify the applicant, in writing, of MHRA's final decision and an explanation for the decision.

ACCEPTING A UNIT/LEASING

What happens after I am determined eligible?

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher -- You will be given a housing assistance voucher as soon as your name comes to the top of the waiting list and a voucher becomes available. Once the voucher has been issued, you will have 60 days to find a decent, safe, sanitary unit, which MHRA will inspect to make sure that it meets our standards. HCV applicants should be aware that landlords do not have to participate in the HCV program, and that they may perform their own background checks to determine your ability to pay the rent, credit, rental history, utility history, etc. You will enter into a private lease with the landlord and will have to abide by the terms of that lease. MHRA cannot guarantee that you will find affordable housing and locating a unit to rent is your responsibility, although MHRA maintains a list of available units throughout the city.

Public Housing – Once your name comes to the top of the waiting list and an appropriately sized unit becomes available, you will be offered the unit. Applicants can decline to accept two units if they wish. However, should they refuse a third offer, the applicant family may be removed from the waiting list or moved to the bottom of the waiting list. If you accept a unit offer, you must sign the lease and related forms and the unit will be inspected. You will also receive various informational pieces, including MHRA’s grievance procedure, pet policy and other important documents related to your occupancy. You will be expected to report any changes in the household, as during the application process. Your household situation will be reviewed at least annually during the recertification process as well as at any time your situation changes. These reviews could result in a change to your monthly rent amount.

Should you have any questions about the information contained in this handbook, or any questions that are not answered here, please contact Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority at (603) 624-2100.