

## Frequently Asked Questions from the 6.23.21 EHV Lunch and Learn

*Updated August 10, 2021*

The Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program is available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Through EHV, HUD is providing 70,000 housing choice vouchers to local Public Housing Authorities including the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) in order to assist individuals and families who are:

- Homeless,
- At risk of homelessness,
- Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or
- Were recently homeless or have a high risk of housing instability.

*What is an Emergency Housing Voucher?*

- The vouchers are housing choice vouchers (HCV) provided by PHA but are dedicated exclusively to those in City of Philadelphia's Homeless system
- Applicants cannot apply to PHA for EHV, and must be directly referred from the City of Philadelphia's Homeless Services System
- Provides extra supports including counseling and housing search assistance

*What if I'm on the HCV Waitlist or want more information about the Emergency Housing Vouchers?*

If you would like more information about EHV or homelessness assistance programs, please contact the City of Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services by using one of the **three** options listed below:

1. Complete an online form: [Contact the Prevention, Diversion & Intake Unit](#)
2. Call the Homelessness Prevention Hotline at (215) 686-7177 and follow the instructions. Due to high call volume, it may take 72 hours to receive a callback.
3. Visit a City-funded intake center: <https://www.phila.gov/services/property-lots-housing/buy-sell-or-rent-a-property/find-housing/find-emergency-housing/>

*How long does an EHV voucher-holder have to find a unit?*

120 days or about 4 months.

*How long are the vouchers in place to subsidize rent? What happens after the 26 months?*

The vouchers for each individual tenant are permanent as long as they remain in compliance with PHA. The 863 EHV vouchers are only eligible to be issued through September 2023.

*Is the voucher time-limited?*

No but voucher assistance may be terminated for non-compliance with PHA's tenant obligations, eviction by the owner or exceeding income limits during tenancy.

*Is there assistance available for security deposits?*

Yes, PHA will pay up to one month of the PHA approved Contract rent. For example, if the contract rent is \$1,000, PHA will provide up to \$1,000 to the owner to assist with the security deposit.

*Will there be a preference for those already on a PHA waiting list?*

No, Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) are administered by PHA but applicants are required to be referred through the City of Philadelphia's Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry process. EHV applications are not directly accessible to the public or accessible through the PHA waitlist, unless referred through Coordinated Entry.

*Will Small Area Fair Market Rents be used?*

PHA's SAFMR payment standard rent schedule will be used for the EHV's.

*What is the Landlord Incentive Program?*

Landlords who participate in the HCV program automatically qualify for the Landlord Incentive program and there are new monetary rewards to HCV owners for joining or adding more units to the program.

**Signing Bonus #1: \$500**

Owner/Property Manager submits a RFTA Between **June 1, 2021 – August 31, 2021**, and with a successful lease signing, PHA will issue a **\$500** signing bonus.

**Signing Bonus #2: \$300**

Owner/Property Manager submits RFTA Between **September 1, 2021 – November 30, 2021**, and with a successful lease signing, PHA will issue a **\$300** signing bonus.

**Signing Bonus #3: \$1000**

Landlords who participate in HCV's **Housing Opportunity Program (HOP)** and successfully rent a unit to an HCV participant in a qualified **opportunity area** are eligible to receive a **\$1,000** signing bonus.

A new HCV Owner Assurance Fund has also been developed to protect property owners from unexpected damages in excess of normal wear and tear. PHA will reimburse property owners who participate in the program up to \$2,500 to help cover repair expenses, net of any security deposit that was withheld by the landlord for damages. Owner Assurance Fund payments are eligible for owners who participate in the HCV program and rent to an HCV participant; they can be accessed only within the first two years of tenancy.

PHA will also provide security deposit assistance up to one month's contract rent for new Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV). This assistance will only be provided one time per EHV holder:

1. Security Deposit payments are only for voucher holders who received an Emergency Housing Voucher ("EHV" listed at top of voucher)
2. The Security Deposit assistance is only available for up to one month of PHA's Approved Contract Rent listed on the HAP Contract. For example, if the Contract Rent is \$1,000 the maximum security deposit assistance is \$1,000

*Does utility allowance funding continue throughout the lease or is it just for deposits?*

No, utility deposit assistance is only provided at move in. PHA provides a utility allowance for tenant paid utilities during the term of the lease. The utility allowance is included in the tenant rent calculation and PHA reduces the tenant rent portion minus the utilities the tenant is required to pay.

*Can current HCV landlords qualify for the Owner Assurance Fund?*

Yes, current HCV landlords are eligible, but it is only available for the first two years of tenancy.

*When will the administration of the vouchers begin?*

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) are administered by PHA and households must be referred through the City of Philadelphia's Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry process (CEABHRS.) Applications will not be available to the public. Accepting direct referrals from Coordinated Entry will help ensure households are able to get assistance quickly and eliminate the administrative burden on the PHA regarding the determination as to whether the family meets the definition of a qualifying individual or family for EHV assistance. The CoC will begin identifying eligible households using the CEABHRS process in July 2021. PHA anticipates to start issuing EHV vouchers to referred households after completed applications are received and screened. If a tenant submits an application (RFTA) to PHA for a unit, the first lease could occur as early as July 2021.

*What happens when your landlord refuses to give you your security deposit back?*

The security deposit is an agreement between the landlord and tenant even if PHA provides assistance. PHA recommends tenants contact Community Legal Services for assistance.

*Do you have any requirements for people to have any ID or legal documentation they'll need to provide?*

PHA and HUD require a government issued Photo ID for each adult household member with exceptions for reasonable accommodations and/or religious reasons.

*What are the age requirements?*

Per HUD, the head of household must be aged 18 or older.

*Are families currently living in high rise PHA sites eligible for the program?*

Generally speaking, no, these person(s) would not be considered homeless.

*Does sex offender status impact criteria? If not, are there any charges that do?*

Per HUD, mandatory prohibitions include:

(1) The PHA must apply the standards HUD established under § 982.553(a)(1)(ii)(C) that prohibit admission if any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing to EHV applicants.

(2) The PHA must apply the standards HUD established under § 982.553(a)(2)(i) that prohibit admission to the program if any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program to EHV applicants.

*Will the paperwork be the same as it was years ago, with need for multiple forms of documentation, evaluations and medical forms to move forward? If so, how is the city going to help people move through those needs quickly and what support will be offered?*

The paperwork required will be PHA standard Housing Choice Voucher application and documentation. The only instance in which evaluations or medical forms would be needed pertains to reasonable accommodation request. Support for the application and for housing search will come from an applicant's existing case managers/supports and/or housing locator/navigators.

Can you clarify all of the supporting documentation that will be needed?

**VERIFICATION OF HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION**

Obtain the following <b>permanent documents</b> for each household member (except where noted):	
Required Verification	Description of Requirements/Acceptable Documents
1. Proof of Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth certificate</li> <li>• Passport</li> <li>• Driver's license</li> <li>• Social Security letter</li> </ul>
2. Photo ID (adults only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, valid government-issued photo ID (i.e., driver's license, passport)</li> </ul>
3. Social Security Number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An original Social Security card issued by the Social Security Administration</li> <li>• Any of the following, provided they show the full Social Security number:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Social Security benefit letter,</li> <li>○ Welfare agency documents,</li> <li>○ Military papers,</li> <li>○ Unemployment insurance documents.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4. <b>DECLARATION OF CITIZENSHIP STATUS FORM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each adult must complete, sign and date the form</li> <li>• For minors, their parent/guardian must complete, sign and date the form on their behalf</li> <li>• For any family member who claims status as an eligible non-citizen who is <b>under the age of 62</b>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Obtain a copy of their Permanent Resident card or other allowable verification of their eligible non-citizen status, <b>AND</b></li> <li>○ Run SAVE verification for the household member.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For any family member claiming status as an eligible non-citizen who is <b>62 or older</b>, obtain verification of their age (do NOT run SAVE).</li> </ul>
5. <b>APPLICATION PAGES 7 &amp; 8: AUTHORIZATION FOR THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each adult must complete, sign and date the form</li> </ul>

*Will PHA be providing the units for the vouchers, or will people have to find their own landlords? If people have to find their own landlords, with the amount of vouchers coming at once, will the city offer any support in landlord coordination?*

Neither PHA nor the City will be providing units. However, PHA has landlord resource information (gosection8.com), has actively increased the pool of participating landlords, and is offering landlord incentives. OHS will provide housing location and navigation services to help with landlord relationships for people who don't have a case manager/service support to assist.

*Are people in shelter prioritized in any way for these vouchers, or will it be determined by vulnerability score?*

It depends on the Coordinated Entry System's prioritization, which is determined and approved by the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board. Current policy can be found on the City's website (<http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelesservices.org/about/cea-bhrs.>)

*Will there be any special allocations for groups or organizations?*

There will be no allocations to specific organizations. Philadelphia is reliant on the implementation and use of the vulnerability index and determination tools, which can look at additional criteria to ensure equity for historically under represented populations.

*How will the CoC and PHA address Equal Opportunity concerns?*

In administering the EHV program, PHA must follow all applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements at 24 CFR 5.105(a) and 24 CFR 982.53, including but not limited to the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act, HUD's Equal Access Rule, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

These requirements prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status.

PHA will also comply with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (see 28 CFR 35.160 and 28 CFR 36.303).

*Does the CoC have a role in determining priorities for these specific vouchers?*

The CoC Roadmap to Homes board votes to determine any additional prioritization and strategy needed to guide the administration of vouchers based on HUD's EHV requirements, local data, and community feedback.

PHA and the CoC's commitment to administering the EHV's in accordance with all program requirements is documented through a Memorandum of Understanding.

An individual or family must meet one of four eligibility categories:

- Homeless
- Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.
- At risk of homelessness

Verification that the individual or family meets one of these four eligibility categories is conducted by the CoC that makes direct referrals to the PHA. The CoC must provide supporting documentation to the PHA of the referring agency's verification that the family meets one of the four eligible categories for EHV assistance.

The PHA is also strongly encouraged to consult with its CoC and its other homeless services/victim services referral partners in establishing which activities it will undertake in support of EHV's and any parameters or requirements regarding the application of those activities.

*Will clients that are already placed in the homeless services system be eligible for this voucher?*

Previously homeless participants who are placed in Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, or Permanent Supportive Housing through the homeless housing system would be eligible under the EHV eligibility category of "recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability." This includes persons in temporary/respite/emergency beds at Permanent Supportive Housing sites, who may also be eligible if they are literally homeless per HUD's definition.

*Are individuals fleeing domestic violence, but not in a shelter, eligible?*

They could potentially be eligible based on HUD's eligibility criteria. People who are fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking are strongly encouraged to reach out to Philadelphia's Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-866-723-3014 for assistance. The DV agencies are a part of the Continuum of Care and the coordinated entry system.

*Are Rapid Rehousing clients considered "at risk" of homelessness, towards the end of their program?*

They may qualify under the "at-risk" eligibility criteria, or EHV eligibility criteria of "recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability."

*Will individuals in safe havens, Journey of Hope and recovery housing be eligible?*

All participants in Safe Havens and Journey of Hope could be eligible because they are literally homeless. People in recovery housing could be eligible if they are in programs serving people who are literally homeless; or if they meet the "at risk" of homeless part of HUD's definition. However, EHV may not be appropriate for every household. EHV do not come with supportive services. Those with severe Substance Use Disorder and/or Mental Health needs may be better suited for Permanent Supportive Housing. Best option for each person is based on assessment, need and eligibility.

*Will nursing home residents be eligible for vouchers?*

No, people currently in nursing homes are considered housed. EHV vouchers are targeted to people in the homeless system.

*Can you make the raw data available from the survey?*

Yes, and OHS will have another community meeting to discuss the survey results in mid to late July 2021.

*Will you be sharing the results from the survey?*

Yes, on the City's website.

*How is the EHV prioritization developed and designed?*

In Philadelphia Continuum of Care (CoC), community feedback and surveys have been conducted to assess the gaps and needs around prioritization pertaining to the EHV program. The CoC Roadmap to Homes board will then review and consider this information and vote to determine if any additional prioritization and strategy is needed to guide the administration of these vouchers based on HUD EHV requirements, community feedback and data from community surveys. The current prioritization for EHV will follow the CEA-BHRS prioritization process. Further information can be found in the [CEA-BHRS policy and procedures](#).

*Are people who are physically sleeping on the street given greater priority than people inside of physical structure in the CEA-BHRS system?*

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) are required to be referred through the City of Philadelphia's Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry (CEA-BHRS) process, regardless if someone is sheltered or unsheltered. EHV's are one of several resources that communities can use to house individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or have unstable housing. Depending on a person's assessed needs, they are ideally matched to the best type of housing and services needed. In the current prioritization, people who are unsheltered are prioritized over those who are sheltered.

### *How do people get on the COC Board?*

Currently, there are no vacant seats. When board seats need to be filled, a community election is held. Seats are two-year terms with the option of extending for a 3rd term. The process entails community announcements about the need to fill board positions, nominations from across the Philadelphia community are submitted and the Nominating Committee (comprised of current Board members) convenes to review all nominations and narrow the candidates to those most qualified to fill the open Board seats. Roadmap to Homes community members then vote from the listed candidates to become board members.

Everyone is encouraged to become part of the Roadmap to Homes (RtH) community to help make homeless rare, brief and non-recurring, and be part of the committees. In addition, to vote in community elections, you must be part of the RTH community as well. Sign up to become a member of the Roadmap to Homes (RtH) community! <https://phila.us12.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=48732a6251c09f25e0086d47a&id=1ec2f9e383>

To learn more: <http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelesservices.org/roadmap-to-homes/>

### *Will a person qualify if they're homeless but are currently incarcerated?*

A person who is currently incarcerated may be eligible under the HUD category of “at risk of homelessness.” People exiting prisons and jails who are at-risk of homelessness due to their low incomes and lack of sufficient resources or social supports are eligible for these vouchers. A person must be part of the homeless coordinated entry system to be invited to apply.

### *What is the best method to get a participant assessed for EHV or other assistance?*

EHV applications are not directly available to the public or accessible through the PHA waitlist.

People who are facing homelessness and may be eligible for EHV are encouraged to contact the Office of Homeless Services, Prevention, Diversion, and Intake staff in one of the following ways for assistance with their housing situation:

1. Go Online. Complete an online form: <https://form.jotform.com/210246152646046>
2. Call. The Homelessness Prevention Hotline is (215) 686-7177. Follow the instructions. Due to high call volume, it may take 72 hours to receive a callback.
3. Come see us in person at an access point: <https://www.phila.gov/services/property-lots-housing/buy-sell-or-rent-a-property/find-housing/find-emergency-housing/>

Facing eviction? For Emergency Rental Assistance visit [www.phlrentassist.org](http://www.phlrentassist.org) or call 215-320-7880. Apply online at [www.phlrentassist.org](http://www.phlrentassist.org). People without access to a computer, please call 311.

People who are experiencing domestic violence are encouraged to call the citywide, 24-hour Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline (1-866-723-3014) anytime for crisis intervention, safety

planning, resources and referrals. All calls are free, confidential and anonymous. Hotline counselors can help connect you with free services in the Philadelphia area, including emergency housing, legal services, behavioral health services and other resources. More information here: <https://www.womenagainstabuse.org/get-help/pdvh>

*How will the VI-SPDAT be used?*

The VI-SPDAT is currently part of the housing assessment and VI-SPDAT score is a prioritization factor in CEA-BHRS. The CoC Board, as noted earlier, will be voting to determine if any additional prioritization and strategy is needed to guide the administration of these vouchers based on HUD EHV requirements, community feedback and data from community surveys.

*Are transfers eligible for this?*

Transfer requests from households in TH, RRH or PSH would fall into the HUD eligible category of "recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability."

*How will people be notified they are eligible for an Emergency Housing Voucher?*

An email will go out to an eligible household's case manager/supports/mobile assessor.

*What about people living couch to couch?*

People living from couch to couch may be eligible. The EHV program uses the definition of "at-risk of homelessness" outlined at 24 CFR 578.3. An outline of this definition is available at [https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AtRiskofHomelessnessDefinition\\_Criteria.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AtRiskofHomelessnessDefinition_Criteria.pdf)