



## Waitlist Opening for Mainstream Voucher Program

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### ***What is a Mainstream Voucher?***

Mainstream Vouchers are tenant-based vouchers that serve households that include a non-elderly person (at least 18 years of age and less than 62 years of age) with a disability.

#### ***How many Mainstream Vouchers are available?***

OHA has 37 vouchers.

#### ***Am I eligible for a mainstream voucher?***

You, or another person in your household, may be eligible if:

- You or someone in your household is at least 18 years of age and less than 62 years of age with a documented disability.

In addition, you, or another person in your household, must be:

- transitioning out of an institutional or other segregated setting; or
- at serious risk of institutionalization; or
- homeless or at risk of being homeless; or
- in a Transitional/Supportive Housing Program.

#### ***What does transitioning out of an institutional or other segregated setting mean?***

Institutional or other segregated settings: include, but are not limited to:

1. congregate settings populated exclusively or primarily with individuals with disabilities;
2. congregate settings characterized by regimentation in daily activities, lack of privacy or autonomy, policies limiting visitors, or limits on individuals' ability to engage freely in community activities and to manage their own activities of daily living; or
3. settings that provide for daytime activities primarily with other individuals with disabilities.

#### ***What does being at serious risk of institutionalization mean?***

It includes an individual with a disability who, as a result, of a public entity's failure to provide community services or its cut to such services will likely cause a decline in health, safety, or welfare that would lead to the individual's eventual placement in an institution.

This includes individuals experiencing lack of access to supportive services for independent living, long waiting lists for or lack of access to housing combined with community based services, individuals currently living under poor housing conditions or homeless with barriers to geographic mobility, and/or currently living alone but requiring supportive services for independent living.

A person cannot be considered at serious risk of institutionalization unless the person has a disability. An individual may be designated as at serious risk of institutionalization either by a health and human services agency, by a community-based organization, or by self-identification.



## **Who is considered Homeless?**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has four categories of homelessness:

1. Literally homeless (shelter, unsheltered, in a place not meant for human habitation)
2. At risk of homelessness (losing their housing within 14 days and have no subsequent housing identified);
3. Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth under other Federal programs;
4. Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence.

## **Who is considered at risk of homelessness?**

An individual or family who:

1. Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place; or
2. Meets one of the following conditions:
  - Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the pre-application for homelessness prevention assistance;
  - Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
  - Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days of the date of pre-application for assistance;
  - Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
  - Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons, or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 people per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;
  - Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
  - Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

## **How do I submit my pre-application?**

If you believe you/your family meet the program requirements, you may be added to the wait list by submitting a pre-application. Pre-Applications will be accepted online ONLY beginning Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 12:01 am to Thursday, February 18, 2021, 11:59 pm.

1. Complete the pre-application online. Go to [www.oakha.org](http://www.oakha.org) or <https://myohaportal.oakha.org/> Note: There is no fee for completing the pre-application
2. Submit a completed pre-application by the Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 11:59 pm deadline.
3. Save the online pre-application number; you will receive an email confirming completion of your pre-application.

Verification of your age, disability, and homelessness or residence in an eligible institution or congregate setting will be requested by OHA upon receipt of your pre-application. The pre-application will not be considered a complete application until all verification documents are received by OHA.

## ***I'm not eligible, but I still need housing. What should I do?***

Currently, all other Oakland Housing Authority waitlists are closed. Please check our website at [www.oakha.org](http://www.oakha.org) periodically as all waitlist openings are advertised on our website.

You can also contact <http://211alamedacounty.org/> which is a County resource agency for Health, Housing and Human services. You can also subscribe to [alerts@affordablehousingonline.com](mailto:alerts@affordablehousingonline.com) which notifies you when a Section 8 wait list opens anywhere in the country. Satellite Affordable Housing Associates in Berkeley has a notification list you can sign up for at [www.sahahomes.org/apply](http://www.sahahomes.org/apply). Similarly, East Bay Area Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) has an annual Marketing List. Their 2020 Marketing List Opening has been postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic. You can subscribe to their newsletter for announcements: <https://ebaldc.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe/post?u=d1920b066203a42642f981b-ba&id=9a68e771b8>

## ***Is the online pre-application available in other languages?***

Yes. The pre-application and other required documents are available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and English.

## ***What if I need help with or have questions about my pre-application?***

Please contact OHA at (510) 587-2100 – Monday through Friday between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. For TTY/TDD please call (510)832-0633.

## ***How will OHA determine who will be added to the waiting list?***

Waitlist placement will be based on a computerized random selection (lottery)

## ***Is there a lottery?***

Yes. The pre-application will open on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 12:01 AM. Pre-applications must be submitted online by 11:59 PM on Thursday, February 18, 2021. A lottery will be conducted for all applications received by the deadline. Only the top 300 applications will be placed on the waiting list for consideration. If additional applications are needed, we reserve the right to process the next applications in lottery order.

## ***What is the process once my pre-application has been submitted?***

A lottery will determine which eligible applicants will be added to our waitlist and in which order. You'll receive a notice from OHA either if you have made it to the waitlist or not. All applicants that made it to the waitlist will be requested to submit documentation in support of verification of your age, disability, and homelessness or residence in an eligible institution or congregate setting. The pre-application will not be considered complete until all verification documents are received by OHA.

## ***Will my chances be better if I apply more than once?***

No, every household has the opportunity to apply only once. Duplicate pre-applications will be removed from the lottery.

## ***If I am added to the waiting list, what happens next?***

Applicants will be pulled from the waiting list when Mainstream Vouchers are available based on their placement on the waiting list. When an applicant is pulled from the waiting list, OHA will conduct a screening for eligibility which includes income eligibility and criminal background screening. Once eligibility is confirmed, applicant households are invited to a briefing where they will receive information about the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Applicants receive their vouchers at the briefing, and are then responsible for identifying an eligible rental unit in the city of Oakland where they can use the voucher.

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### ***How do I inform OHA if my address changes after I submit my pre-application?***

If you have already completed a Waiting Pre-Application your application will go through a lottery process for placement on one or more Waitlists, based on the program(s) to which you applied. Status is not provided by telephone. OHA will communicate with Applicants via email or mail about their pre-application status. Applicants may return to the Applicant Portal (<http://myohaportal.oakha.org/>) to report any changes to address, contact details, and etc.

### ***Will households with undocumented family members be eligible?***

Yes, as long as at least one family member has eligible residency or legal citizenship status.