

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Rental Assistance Program – The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, commonly referred to as Section 8, is a United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities to access to housing in the private market. In the HCV program, the participant is free to choose any housing unit that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

The Housing Authority of the County of San Diego (County Housing Authority) assists approximately 10,700 low-income households with rent, providing participants the opportunity to live in affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing. The County Housing Authority administers the HCV program within the unincorporated areas of the county, and the cities of Chula Vista, Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Escondido, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Poway, San Marcos, Santee, Solana Beach, and Vista.

Federal regulations require that at least 75% of newly admitted households must have an income at or below 30% of area median income (AMI) and up to 25% of newly admitted households may have an income up to 50% AMI. The County Housing Authority has established local preferences for waiting list applicants. Highest-priority applicants are those who have a live or work residency preference in the Housing Authority jurisdiction and are one or more of the following: working families, elderly, person with disabilities, families with dependent children, families experiencing homelessness, Veterans, or surviving spouses of Veterans.

Additionally, the County Housing Authority has seven special local preferences that are superior to the above local preferences. Those preferences include: 1) Housing Authority Public Housing residents who must move due to being the victim of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking; 2) Housing Authority Public Housing residents who must move out of their units for a significant period of time in order for repairs to be made to their Housing Authority Public Housing unit(s); 3) Housing Authority Public Housing residents who are eligible for a reasonable accommodation and for whom a right sized unit is unavailable; 4) eligible homeless applicants who have been referred by the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness agency members and either meet the definition of homelessness and referral criteria as determined by County Housing Authority or County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), Housing and Community Development Services (HCDS) programs or who are exiting federally-assisted, locally-assisted, or State-assisted County Housing Authority/HCDS-administered housing programs with no other permanent housing placement options; 5) eligible non-elderly disabled applicants who, have been referred by HHSA, and who are homeless or exiting an institution or segregated setting; 6) eligible households referred by county departments for persons fleeing domestic violence or sex trafficking in the San Diego region, or for elderly families experiencing housing insecurity; and 7) currently assisted County Housing Authority Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) families whose assistance is at risk of termination due to lack of program funding..

The Rental Assistance division establishes eligibility, computes participant rent portions and housing authority assistance payments, provides for inspections of units for compliance with federal housing quality standards, prepares contracts and correspondence, manages housing assistance payment contracts and monitors assisted families for program compliance.

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program – The purpose of this program is to provide rental assistance under a supportive housing program for homeless Veterans. The program combines housing choice voucher rental assistance for homeless Veterans and their families with case management and clinical services provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The County Housing Authority received an additional allocation of 50 VASH vouchers effective March 1, 2025, bringing our total allocation to 1,004. Issuance and utilization of VASH vouchers is contingent upon case referrals from the VA.

Special Admission Housing Choice Vouchers – These Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers were made available for 307 families residing of four project-based HUD-assisted affordable housing complexes. Owners of the four complexes fulfilled their obligations to HUD, eliminating their requirement to maintain rents at an affordable level. The County Housing Authority accepted HUD invitation to administer Special Admissions Vouchers (also known as “preservation vouchers”) to ensure that housing for 307 families remained affordable. The Special Admissions Vouchers provide rental assistance to qualifying tenants, allowing them to remain in place or to relocate within the County Housing Authority jurisdiction. A total of 102 preservation rental assistance vouchers were made available in 2011 for families residing at the Mission Terrace Apartments located in Escondido, California; 105 preservation vouchers were made available in 2012 for the Rampton Arms Apartments located in Santee, California; 76 preservation rental assistance vouchers made available in 2013 for families residing at the Los Robles De Cortez development located in Vista, California; and 24 preservation rental assistance vouchers made available in 2014 for families residing at the Rancho De Cortez development located in Vista, California.

Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program – This voluntary program encourages HCV program participants to make progress towards economic independence and self-sufficiency. The FSS program encourages participating families to set education and employment-related goals to increase their career advancement opportunities and reduce their dependency on welfare assistance and rental subsidies. An additional incentive for participation in the FSS program is the FSS escrow account in which funds are deposited in an escrow account as a participant’s earned income increases over base family contribution levels. The program has approximately 95 active participants. The term of the FSS contract is generally five years but may be extended for an additional two years for good cause. At the end of the contract, if FSS participants have met all of their goals, they will be awarded the funds that have been deposited into their escrow accounts during their program participation. Funding for the FSS Coordinator is provided by HUD on an annual basis for a performance period of 12 months. The County Housing Authority will continue to apply for funding to promote the development of local strategies and coordinate with public and private resources to enable participating families to increase earned income and financial literacy.

Resident Opportunity for Self-Sufficiency Program – This program provides service coordination to assist residents of the four County owned Public Housing sites connect with resources in the community to meet their needs. Services may enable participants to increase earned income, reduce or eliminate the need for welfare assistance, progress towards achieving economic independence, or improve the living conditions of elderly or disabled residents. The program has approximately 32 active participants.

Moderate Rehabilitation Program – The purpose of the Moderate Rehabilitation program is to support the upgrade of substandard rental housing and to provide rental subsidy assistance for low-income families that occupy these units. In prior years, the program initially provided funding for the rehabilitation of privately-owned, sub-standard rental units. Once rental units were rehabilitated by their property owners to HUD standards, property owners entered into 15-year contracts with the County Housing Authority to establish rents and set aside a number of rental units for eligible low-income families. While HUD has ceased new funding to rehabilitate units under this program, the existing 32 rental units are under contract, which are renewed annually, to provide project-based rental assistance funds for eligible occupancy of these units. In FY 2021-22, the Villa Lakeshore Apartments converted 28 units from Moderate Rehabilitation to Project-Based Vouchers through the Rental Assistance Demonstration process, and in FY 2022-23, the Park Villa Apartments converted to Project-Based Rental Assistance Vouchers administered directly by HUD.

Mainstream Program – The purpose of the Mainstream Program is to provide rental assistance to support persons with disabilities to rent affordable housing in private housing. The County Housing Authority administers 230 mainstream vouchers designated for disabled families.

Family Unification Program (FUP) – The purpose of the Family Unification Program (FUP) is to provide Housing Choice Vouchers to two targeted populations: families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in either placing children in out-of-home care or delaying the reunification of children to the home after being placed in out-of-home care and eligible youth between 18-24 years of age who have left foster care or will leave foster care within 120 days and are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The County Housing Authority currently administers 37 FUP vouchers in partnership with the Department of Child and Family Well Being (CFWB). CFWB provides referrals of eligible families and youths, as well as supportive services, while the County Housing Authority provides rental assistance. The County Housing Authority currently has 86 FUP vouchers allocated to families.

Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program – The purpose of the Emergency Housing Voucher Program (EHV) is to provide Housing Choice Vouchers to individuals and families who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness; fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or were recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability. The County Housing Authority received an initial allocation of 264 EHV vouchers. The County Housing Authority partnered with the Continuum of Care to assist qualifying families through a direct referral process. Funding allocation is projected to cover assistance through CY 2026. Approximately 140 households currently remain in the EHV program. In March 2025, HUD informed housing authorities that it would distribute a final allocation of remaining EHV funds and that no further funding would be provided.

HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Programs – The County is the recipient of federal funding from HUD for the HOME program, which can be used for rental subsidy assistance. Funding for the HOME program is provided to administer tenant-based rental assistance programs designed to assist the special needs groups. Through an agreement with the County, the County Housing Authority administers rental assistance programs including: the Transition Aged Youth (TAY) program for young adults at risk of homelessness and the Family Reunification Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SAT) for families that are participating in the County's substance abuse recovery programs and are reunifying with their children. Funding for these programs is reimbursed from the County.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program – The County is the recipient of federal funding from HUD for the HOPWA program to provide housing and housing-related services for persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families. The County is the Administrative entity for the HOPWA program which funds a tenant-based rental assistance program. Through an agreement with the County, the County Housing Authority plans to serve approximately 130 participants living with HIV/AIDS. Funding for this program is reimbursed from the County.

Bringing Families Home Program – The County is the recipient of state funds from a grant program to administer short term rental assistance to house child-welfare involved families experiencing homelessness, who have identified lack of housing as a primary barrier to reunifying with their children. Through an agreement with the County, the County Housing Authority administers rental assistance and reimburses the County the administrative cost to operate the program. The program is funded by a grant awarded to the County from the California Department of Social Services. There are 42 participants in the program.

Local Rental Subsidy Program Tenant-Based Rental Assistance – The County has contracted with the County Housing Authority to provide up to two years of tenant-based rental assistance for households exiting the hotel/motel program and/or emergency shelter site(s). A contracted service provider provides ongoing case management and support to ensure housing stability. There are 124 households who have been permanently housed with the voucher.

OTHER HOUSING PROGRAM

Santee Successor Housing Agency – All redevelopment agencies in California were dissolved based on the passage of ABX1 26 (Dissolution Law) February 1, 2012. Under the Dissolution Law, the rights, powers, duties, and obligations of each redevelopment agency transferred to a successor agency. The successor agency and an oversight board are responsible for carrying out the final obligations of the former agency and distributing uncommitted liquid assets to the affected taxing agencies through the County Auditor and Controller. The Dissolution Law also required that the city or county of the former redevelopment agency either elect to retain the redevelopment agency housing assets and functions or designate a local housing authority to receive the redevelopment agency housing assets and functions.

The Santee City Council designated the Housing Authority of the County of San Diego (County Housing Authority) to assume the housing assets and functions of its redevelopment agency, the Community Development Commission of the City of Santee (Santee CDC). The Santee Successor Agency then authorized the transfer of the Santee CDC housing assets, and the Santee Oversight Board ratified the housing asset transfer on December 17, 2012. On December 11, 2013, the City of Santee and Santee CDC executed various documents assigning assets to the County Housing Authority.

Four Santee CDC assets fall within the scope of the transfer contemplated by the Dissolution Law. These assets include three affordable housing development loans and one single-family residential rehabilitation loan. On May 21, 2014, the County Housing Authority Board of Commissioners accepted these four assets, contingent upon being provided the full case file for each listed asset and the remittance of the program administrative funding, as required by law, commencing July 1, 2014. On February 6, 2018, the County Housing Authority received the final installment of program administrative funding payment from the City of Santee, which fulfilled the conditions to allow for the transfer of the four assets to the Housing Authority.

The County Housing Authority continues to monitor these assets in the former development area to ensure compliance during the period of affordability imposed on the property (generally 55 years after the date that the property was funded).

PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMS

The County Housing Authority owns and operates 121 low-rent, federally regulated Public Housing units in the City of Chula Vista. As mandated by federal regulations, admissions are limited to families with incomes at or below 50% of the area median income. The tenants pay 30% of their monthly adjusted income for rent and utilities and HUD provides funding for operations and capital improvements. The County Housing Authority contracts with a property management company for the operation of these properties on behalf of the County Housing Authority. The public housing properties include:

- Melrose Manor: 24 two- and three-bedroom family units, including two units for mobility- impaired persons.
- Town Centre Manor: 59 one-bedroom units for the elderly and/or disabled, including six units for mobility-impaired persons.
- Dorothy Street Manor: 22 three-bedroom family units, including two units for mobility-impaired persons.
- L Street Manor: 16 three-bedroom family units, including two units for mobility-impaired persons.

OTHER PUBLIC HOUSING

Firebird Manor – The Firebird Manor development was built with funding provided by the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Economic and Community Development, the County Housing Authority, Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program, the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development, and the former San Marcos Redevelopment Agency. Firebird Manor, completed in 1997, is a farmworker housing complex with 38 units located in the City of San Marcos. This development provides three-, four-, and five-bedroom rental units for agricultural workers, including two units for the disabled. Funding subsidies for the operation of this housing is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture. The County Housing Authority contracts with a property management company for the operation of these properties on behalf of the Housing Authority.