

## **Section 8 Article- What is Section 8/The Housing Choice Voucher Program?**

The Housing Choice Voucher Program or as it is more commonly known as, Section 8, is a federally funded rental housing voucher program that is granted to eligible households including low-income families, seniors, and persons with disabilities to assist with monthly housing costs. Monthly housing costs for renters include rent and utilities, this voucher program assists with the rental share portion. The federal agency that runs this program is The Department of Housing and Urban Development. Tenants receiving a voucher generally pay 30-40% of their income towards housing and the balance is covered by a housing authority or other subsidizing agency.

These vouchers can be mobile, or project based. A mobile Section 8 voucher moves with you and allows you to use your voucher anywhere in the country that meets the program requirements. A project-based voucher means that the voucher stays with the housing unit. If it is affordable when you move in, it will be affordable for the next person when you move out. Eligibility for a housing voucher is determined by the Public Housing Agency (PHA), the Newburyport Housing Authority is the Public Housing Agency for Newburyport. The PHA determines eligibility for housing vouchers based on the total annual gross income and family size and is only available to US citizens and specified categories of non-citizens. The income limits for housing vouchers are set by The Department of Housing and Urban Development. If a person is found eligible for a voucher, they are put on a waiting list, if applicable, once your name has reached the top of the list, the PHA will contact you and issue you a voucher.

Voucher holders are responsible for finding their own housing or finding a housing counselor to assist them. The housing unit has to be inspected before the voucher holder can move in. They also have to determine if the requested rent is reasonable. HUD has a list of Fair Market Rents that they set. A voucher holder must find housing that is within 110% of the Fair Market Rent of the area. If the unit is approved, the voucher holder and their family, if applicable, can move in. The head of household and PHA are both responsible for paying their rent shares. The PHAs portion of the rent is a direct contract with the landlord and is called a Housing Assistance Payment. Landlords cannot deny voucher holders on the basis of having a voucher as a source of income is protected class under the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968.

The Amesbury Housing Authority, Salisbury Housing Authority, Newburyport Housing Authority, and West Newbury Housing Authority currently administers Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. There is a waiting list for these vouchers, but local preference is given to Newburyport residents. Additional priorities and preferences may be available under the current Newburyport Housing Authority Section 8 Administrative Plan. Interested applicants can apply through the Centralized Waiting List from the

Massachusetts National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. For more information please go to <https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/housing-authority/apply-for-housing/pages/section-8-housing-choice-vouchers>.

If you are interested in housing and want to take part in our activities or if you simply want to learn more about the issue, please get in touch at [jmeers@ywcaneburyport.org](mailto:jmeers@ywcaneburyport.org). We are excited for you to join us on this journey from housing to home. We are always asking who is still missing from our coalition. If you are that missing piece, please join us for our next meeting. Our coalition meets on the third Thursday of every month.

*My name is [Monica Keel](#) and I am a Program Associate with CHAPA and support the Greater Newburyport Housing Choice Coalition.*

Sources: [https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing\\_choice\\_voucher\\_program\\_section\\_8](https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8)

<https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/housing-authority/apply-for-housing/pages/section-8-housing-choice-vouchers>