



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) **Mainstream Voucher Program Eligibility Criteria**

The Mainstream Voucher Program is a sub-set of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program for eligible disabled families. It enables families with persons with disabilities who often face difficulties in locating suitable and accessible housing to lease affordable private housing of their choice.

What are the eligibility criteria for the Mainstream Voucher?

For purposes of eligibility for this program, the following definitions apply:

- **Eligible Family:** A family composed of one or more non-elderly persons with disabilities, which may include additional members who are not non-elderly persons with disabilities. A family where the sole member is an emancipated minor is not an eligible family.
- **Non-elderly person with disabilities:** A person 18 years of age or older and less than 62 years of age, and who has a disability, as defined in 42 U.S.C. 423; is determined, pursuant to HUD regulations, to have a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that:
 - Is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration;
 - Substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently, and;
 - Is of such a nature that the ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions; or
 - Has a developmental disability as defined in 42 U.S.C. 6001.

I can't afford to live on my own and live with different friends from time to time. Can I be assisted quickly?

- RHA has adopted a preference for our Housing Choice Voucher waiting list for individuals and families that include a non-elderly person with disabilities who are transitioning out of an institution or other segregated setting, at serious risk of institutionalization, currently experiencing homelessness, or previously experienced homelessness and currently a client in a supportive housing or rapid rehousing project, or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Is there anything else that can disqualify me assuming I qualify based on the above definitions?

- Housing assistance is available only to individuals who are U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals (herein referred to as citizens and nationals), or non-citizens that have eligible immigration status. At least one family member must be a citizen, national, or non-citizen with eligible immigration status in order for the family to qualify for any level of assistance.

Be Income Eligible:

- Your family's income cannot exceed the income limitation established by HUD for Rutland County. Income limits can be found here: <https://www.rhvt.org>

What if the eligible family member is turning 62 soon, would my family still be eligible for the voucher?

- The qualifying family member of the household (which may be yourself) must be age 18 to 61 at the time your household is officially admitted into the Mainstream Voucher Program. If the qualifying family member turns 62 after being admitted to the program, the family will remain eligible for the Mainstream Voucher Program as long as the family continues to comply with program requirements. “Admitted to the program” means that all of the following must occur before the qualifying family member turns 62 AND:
 - You have been placed on the wait-list, pulled off of the wait-list, determined eligible, issued a voucher and located a housing unit;
 - Completed a Request for Lease Approval, RHA has approved the rent amount, unit passed HQS inspection, you have signed a lease, and RHA has signed a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with your landlord. HAP, is the subsidy amount the RHA will pay the landlord towards rent.

What happens if the qualifying family member for the Mainstream Voucher Program leaves the household?

- If the qualifying member leaves the household prior to the household being formally admitted to the program, and there is no other qualifying member of the household, the family will no longer be eligible. If the qualifying member leaves the household after being admitted to the Mainstream Voucher Program, the household may continue to be subsidized.

What are the household income limits for this program?

- The income limits are set by HUD and based on household size in the area. The Mainstream Voucher Program is meant to serve families who are Very-Low-Income (at or below 50% of the area median income of the Rutland area).
- General information about the Housing Choice Voucher Program is available here: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet

Do I have to go to RHA to apply?

- No, you do not need to come to RHA to apply. The preliminary application is an online form, and can be found on our website: <https://www.rhavt.org/>. If you need assistance or want to request an accommodation, please contact RHA at (802) 775-2926, extension 219 or via email at hhinckley@rhavt.org and we will respond. Please leave a voice mail message with your name and best way to reach you (phone number or email address) so we can respond to you promptly. Original signed applications *must* be returned via United States Post Office or hand delivered to the office of the Rutland Housing Authority, 5 Tremont Street, Rutland, VT 05701. Electronic copies, faxes, etc. *will not be accepted*. Please note that some documents require that you sign them in front of a Notary. Notary services are available at our office. Please bring proper identification.

Do I need to turn in any paperwork?

- You will be required to provide documentation evidencing disability, age, any preference claimed and any documentation the RHA needs to determine your eligibility for the program.

I need help filling out the application- what can I do?

- Please contact your case manager, if you have one, or another provider of support services if you would like help filling out the application. Anyone with whom you feel comfortable may help

you. Depending on your needs, we will find a way to help you fill out the application, TTD/TTY Relay 711.

What could make me ineligible for the Mainstream HCV program?

- Some of the statuses that would make you ineligible to be part of the household are any member of the household has been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last 5 years for drug-related criminal activity.
- RHA will admit an otherwise-eligible family who was evicted from federally-assisted housing within the past 5 years for drug-related criminal activity, if RHA is able to verify that the household member who engaged in the criminal activity has completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by RHA, or the person who committed the crime, is no longer living in the household.
- RHA determines that any household member is currently engaged (any use during the previous six months) in the use of illegal drugs.
- Any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the production or manufacture of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.
- Any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.
- Any household member is currently engaged in, or has engaged in any of the following criminal activities, within the past five years, the family will be denied assistance:
 - Drug related activity.
 - Violent criminal activity.
 - Criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of other and proximate residents and/or may threaten property management or RHA staff (additional details may be found in the Rutland Housing Authority Section 8 Administrative Plan).
- The family does not provide information that RHA or HUD determines necessary.
- The family does not provide complete and true information.
- Any family member has been evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last five years.
- Any family member has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act in connection with any federal housing program.
- The family owes rent or other amounts to any PHA in connection with Section 8 or other public housing assistance under the 1937 Act, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.
- The family has not reimbursed any PHA for amounts paid to an owner under a HAP contract for rent, damages to the unit, or other amounts owed by the family under the lease, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt prior to being selected from the waiting list.
- The family has breached the terms of a repayment agreement entered into with any Housing Authority, unless the family repays the full amount of the debt covered in the repayment agreement prior to being selected from the waiting list.
- A family member has engaged in or threatened violent or abusive behavior toward PHA personnel.

Because every applicant is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and some details are too complex to provide in a FAQ. This FAQ was created to provide you with the most important information on program definition and eligibility.