

Renters FAQs

Q: Can I keep HUD Section 8 assistance if I move?

A: It depends on what type of Section 8 assistance you have. If you have a Housing Choice Voucher, you have “portability” and may move to another housing community that accepts vouchers and continue receiving assistance based on your income. If you are occupying an apartment in a housing community that has a Project-based Section 8 contract on the property and you decide to leave, you will not have Section 8 assistance to take with you because the assistance is tied directly to the unit at that property.

Q: What is a PHA, and what is its role?

A: PHA is an acronym for Public Housing Authority. A PHA is a local (county or city) agency that assists people in the districts they serve with housing services. PHAs often provide services that include (but are not limited to):

- Information on where to find lower-income and assisted housing.
- Monitoring and administration of the Housing Choice Voucher program in a specific geographic area.
- Physical inspections of lower-income housing to ensure safe and sanitary conditions are being maintained.

Q: What is an HFA and what is its role?

A: HFA is an acronym for Housing Finance Agency. HFAs are authorities chartered by a state's government to assist that state's residents with their affordable housing needs. Characteristics of HFAs vary widely throughout the country, but most of them are independent agencies that operate under the direction of a board appointed by the governor.

HFAs administer a large variety of affordable housing and community development programs within their respective states. Services include:

- Providing affordable mortgages for first-time homebuyers.
- Financing the development and/or rehabilitation of low- and moderate-income apartments.
- Administering and monitoring of both federal and state housing programs (such as the Federal Section 8 program in partnership with the Housing Credit program (formerly known as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, or LIHTC).

Q: What is HUD and what is its role?

A: HUD is an acronym for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD is responsible for programs that deal with the nation's housing needs,

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Fair Housing and improvement of communities on a national level. HUD also encourages the improvement of the private sector housing industry in an effort to create affordable housing across the country.

HUD administers:

- Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance
- Rental assistance for lower-income families (such as Section 8, Housing Choice Voucher program)
- Programs that protect homebuyers and renters against housing discrimination

Q: What is portability?

A: Because HUD wants to broaden housing choices for families and continue assistance, voucher holders can transfer or “port” their subsidy with them if they move as long as there is a housing agency administering a Housing Choice Voucher program in that area.

Potential benefits of portability include:

- Relocation for job opportunities
- Selection of the best school districts
- Closer proximity to other family members
- Greater access to public services, child care providers and/or shopping

Contact your local voucher housing agency to inquire about portability with your voucher.

Q: What is the number for Fair Housing?

A: 804-367-8500

Q: What is Virginia Housing’s role in Housing Credit properties in Virginia?

A: Virginia Housing is the Housing Credit agency in Virginia responsible for administering this federal program, including allocating the credits to developers and monitoring for file and on-site physical compliance.

Q: Where can I find affordable housing?

A: We highly recommend you consult the Virginia Housing Search website [VirginiaHousingSearch.com](https://www.virginiahousingsearch.com). This resource identifies affordable rental housing in each community throughout the state and includes apartment sizes, addresses and contact information.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions about rental vouchers administered by Virginia Housing?

A: For information on the Housing Choice Voucher program (HCVP), please call Virginia Housing customer service toll free at 1-800-835-6598.

