

## **Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions for Applicants/Participants**

#### **1. What is HAVP?**

The Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) is a rental subsidy program offered by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and funded by New York State. It was created to help individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness secure safe and stable housing.

#### **2. How does the program work?**

HAVP helps make rent affordable by paying the difference between the total rent, up to an allowable cap (“Payment Standard”) and approximately 30% of the household’s adjusted income, which is paid by the household.

#### **3. Who is eligible to apply?**

Households that are eligible for HPD’s HAVP must have a combined income that is less than 50% of Area Median Income (AMI), be homeless or at risk of homelessness, and be referred to HPD by an approved referral partner. Referral partners may include HPD’s Emergency Housing Services the NYC Department of Social Services (DSS) and other agencies.

#### **4. How do I apply for HAVP?**

Once the referring agency partner determines your household meets the criteria to apply for HAVP assistance, they will work with your household to complete an application, including required supporting documents, and submit that application to HPD.

#### **5. What can I expect after I complete my HAVP application?**

After your application has been submitted to HPD, it will be reviewed to ensure that it is complete, and that your household is eligible. If any documents are missing, you will be asked to provide them.

If you are determined eligible for HAVP:

1. You will be notified that you are eligible and that you must watch or listen to a briefing presentation that explains your rights and responsibilities as a future participant in the



HAVP program. You will get instructions on how to access the briefing presentation video on HPD's website or to listen in by phone. If you have additional questions after watching or listening to the briefing presentation you may schedule a call or in-person appointment with HPD staff to go over the information in more detail.

2. Once you have seen the video or listened to the presentation, you must sign a **Certification Statement** that confirms your understanding of the program and its obligations and submit that signed form to HPD.
3. HPD will then issue you a Housing Access Voucher Program **voucher**, which gives you **120 days** to find a unit in New York City.
4. Once you find a unit, you and the landlord will sign and submit an **Owner Package** to HPD. The package will be reviewed by HPD for completeness and to make sure the rent is appropriate.
5. HPD will then inspect the unit to ensure it is safe for your family by using the agency's **Housing Quality Standards (HQS)** inspection checklist.
6. If the unit passes HQS, HPD will issue a **Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)** contract to the landlord to sign, and the landlord and tenant must sign and return the lease with the HAP contract to HPD.
7. HPD will send both you and the landlord a **Rent Breakdown Letter (RBL)** that lists the total rent, the amount of rent you must pay each month (your "Tenant Share" of rent), and HPD's portion of the rent. HPD's initial rent subsidy payment will be sent to the landlord after the RBL is mailed.

Please note that once you are an HAVP program participant, you are required to pay your Tenant Share of rent each month, in the amount listed on your Rent Breakdown Letter.

## **6. How long is an HAVP voucher valid?**

Your HAVP voucher allows you to search for a unit for 120 days. Thirty (30) days before your voucher expires, you may request a 60-day extension if you need more time to find a unit. HPD will then review your request for a voucher extension.

## **7. How much rent does my HAVP voucher cover?**

The [Payment Standard](#) is the highest rent that may be approved by HPD for the bedroom size on the voucher.

A family with an HAVP voucher may rent a unit with more or less bedrooms than listed on their voucher, as long as the rent is reasonable and is not more than the approved payment standard for their voucher size (number of bedrooms on their voucher), and as long as they are not considered overcrowded by HPD. HPD defines overcrowded as more than two people per bedroom or living room.



Utility allowances are subtracted from the tenant's share of rent when the tenant is responsible for paying any utilities. The amount of the utility allowance is subtracted from the payment standard to determine the maximum rent for that unit. The applicable [Payment Standard](#) and utility allowances (effective January 1, 2024) are on the HPD website at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/subsidy-and-payment-standards.page>.

### **8. Can landlords refuse to accept my HAVP voucher?**

Under New York City Human Rights Law, it is illegal for landlords to discriminate against applicants because they have an HAVP voucher or any other type of rental assistance. More information is available here: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/media/source-of-income.page>

If you believe you were denied housing because of your voucher, call 311 and ask for the NYC Commission on Human Rights, or fill out this form to report discrimination: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/about/report-discrimination.page>.

### **9. I have found an apartment and submitted the Owner Package. Now, the unit has to undergo a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection. What is that?**

An HQS inspection ensures that a unit is decent, safe, and sanitary, and meets the minimum physical standards required for subsidized housing.

A unit must pass HQS inspection before HPD can approve it for HAVP assistance.

### **10. Will HPD pay my moving costs?**

No. HPD does not pay any moving fees, real estate broker fees or security deposits. For more information on how to get assistance with moving costs through the Human Resources Administration (HRA), please click [here](#).

### **11. Will my HAVP assistance end?**

HAVP is currently a four-year pilot program, anticipated to run from 2026-2030. The amount of time you may be on the program depends on when you apply and when subsidy payments for your unit begin. While HAVP is authorized for four years, program funding must be approved through the New York State budget process each year. Continued assistance beyond 2030 will depend on future funding decisions in the New York State budget and annual New York State budget appropriations.

### **12. When am I eligible to move to another unit with my HAVP voucher?**

HAVP participants are eligible to move with their HAVP subsidy after their first year in the program. In order to move, you must first request and receive approval from HPD. Once HPD has approved the move, your HAVP voucher can be used to move to another unit within New



York City, or outside New York City within New York State. Please note that HAVP is a New York State program, so cannot be used outside of New York State.

In emergency situations such as domestic violence, a household that has not yet completed a full year in the program may request to move, but this is only in an emergency situation. Emergency requests will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis.



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