

Harbor Homes, Inc.  
Mainstream Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program  
Applicant Handbook

45 High Street, Nashua, NH 03060  
Phone (603) 882-3616  
[www.harborhomes.org](http://www.harborhomes.org)



## **Housing Discrimination Is Against The Law:**

Harbor Homes, Inc. (HHI) is committed to ensuring equal housing opportunity in the administration of its housing programs. In the selection of families and in the provision of services, or in any manner, there shall be no discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, handicap, age, sexual preference, familial status, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

## **Reasonable Accommodation:**

HHI is required to try to provide a reasonable accommodation to applicants or any member of an applicant's household with a disability. A reasonable accommodation means a modification to program procedures to help an otherwise eligible applicant with a disability or handicap to utilize HHI's services. Examples of a reasonable accommodation include but are not limited to: providing large-type documents; providing a reader or sign language interpreter; permitting an outside agency or family member to assist with the application process.

To ensure that a reasonable accommodation can be made the applicant must contact Harbor Homes, Inc. no later than 48 business hours before the opening of the waitlist. It is up to the applicant to request a reasonable accommodation. If they prefer not to discuss their situation with HHI, that is their right.

HHI may request the applicant to have a doctor submit a written statement indicating that the applicant needs a reasonable accommodation due to their disability.

**Note:** The building is handicapped accessible.

## **Information Guide- Mainstream Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher:**

Thank you for your interest in Harbor Homes, Inc. Mainstream Housing Choice Voucher Program. This program was created to assist disabled families in obtaining decent and safe housing at a rent they can afford. Under this program in accordance with the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), eligible applicants are offered a voucher to seek and rent a privately owned unit.

HHI has a total of 75 Mainstream Housing Choice Vouchers. Participants of this program are provided with financial assistance to afford an apartment owned by a private landlord. In this program, HHI pays part of the rent each month for eligible families, who will be required to pay 30% of their adjusted monthly income toward rent and utilities.

## Eligibility Criteria for the Section 8 Mainstream Housing Voucher Program:

Your family may be eligible if your total annual gross family income is not more than the following amounts:

1 Person.....	\$33,600
2 People.....	\$38,400
3 People.....	\$43,200
4 People.....	\$48,000
5 People.....	\$51,850
6 People.....	\$55,700
7 People.....	\$59,550
8 People.....	\$63,400

The Mainstream Program requires that as a condition of eligibility, the Head, Co-Head, Spouse or Sole family member have a verifiable disability as defined by HUD program requirements. In order to meet HUD'S definition of disability **all three** of the following requirements must be met:

**Disabled:** A person having a physical or mental impairment which:

1. Is expected to be long-continued and indefinite in duration.
2. Substantially impedes his/her ability to live independently.
3. Is of such a nature that such disability could be improved by more suitable living conditions.

### How do I apply for assistance?

You can only apply for assistance when the waitlist is open. The applicant must be present and have a photo ID and Social Security card to complete a pre-application as the forms are not allowed to leave the building. If the applicant is under guardianship the guardian will be permitted to fill out the pre-application for the applicant. The guardian must be present with a photo ID along with proof of guardianship.

The application process involves two steps:

#### Step 1: Preliminary application for assistance

The purpose of the pre-application is to allow HHI to gather information about your household to determine whether you are eligible for assistance and to place your name on the waiting list. The pre-application contains questions about your household composition, income, contact information, eligibility requirements and preferences.

Application forms are available in an accessible format upon request due to the applicant's disability.

Using the information provided on the form, HHI will make a determination of preliminary eligibility. You will receive notification within four (4) weeks to let you know if you have been determined eligible. If any of the information you provided to us changes, you must report such changes, in writing to us immediately. Please note that failure to report such changes, at any time prior to receiving assistance or failure to respond to HHI correspondence, will result in your name being removed from the waitlist.

## **Step 2: Eligibility Interview**

Once your name is nearing the top of the waitlist, you will be contacted by mail to schedule an eligibility interview. Families reach the top of the waitlist according to: the date and time HHI handed the pre-application to the applicant to complete, and preference(s) for which the family qualifies.

When you arrive for your appointment you will be given an application to complete before the interview. During the interview, HHI will collect all information needed to determine if you qualify for assistance. The following is a list of the documentation HHI will require at the interview:

1. Identification for all household members. This includes driver's license, proof of citizenship and/or state ID cards for household members over the age of 18, and birth certificates for all household members.
2. Social Security cards for all family members.
3. Documentation of disability.
4. Proof of residency (if not stated on the license).
5. Proof of income and assets.
6. Proof of Preference(s)
7. Legal Documents, if applicable, such as:
  - Custody/Guardianship
  - Power of Attorney
  - Documentation of alimony/child support/child custody

Anyone in the family that is 18 years of age or older is required to attend the eligibility interview.

### **How long will the interview take?**

HHI tries to give you as much time needed. You may bring with you anyone you wish.

### **How do I report changes to, or update, my application?**

Any change to your address, contact information, income, housing needs or family composition must be reported, in writing, to HHI immediately to avoid delays in processing your application. Send any changes to Harbor Homes, Inc. at 45 High Street, in Nashua, NH 03060 to the attention of Sharon Brodeur.

## **How is my application process and maintained on the waiting list?**

Applications are placed on the waiting list in the order of the date and time stamp of the application and according to preferences for which they qualify. Applicants who do not claim a preference will be ranked only by the date and time stamp. Applicants are required to verify any preferences claimed at the eligibility interview.

## **What are preferences?**

Applicants may only apply for a Preference when the waiting list is open. Applicants may claim as many preferences that apply to them. Each preference is one point and they are cumulative to determine placement on the waitlist. There are three preferences that HHI will consider to determine placement on the waiting list. Please do not hesitate to contact HHI if you are unsure about any of the preferences, as any preference that is claimed will be verified by HHI.

**Local Preference:** Currently lives in the Greater Nashua Area (Amherst, Greenville, Merrimack, Brookline, Hollis, Milford, Hudson, Mason, Wilton or Nashua). HHI will verify this by using a bank statement, license or utility bill with the address on it.

**Homeless Veterans Preference:** Applicants claiming a Veteran's Preference must provide a copy of the discharge documents of the Veteran for whom the Preference is claimed. The Veteran's Preference is only applicable to Veterans who were discharged under circumstances other than dishonorable. Homeless is defined using the HUD definition, specifically, those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence.

**Homeless Families with Children Preference:** Homeless is defined using the HUD definition, specifically, those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence.

## **What happens when my application reaches the top of the waiting list?**

When the applicant's application reaches the top of the waiting list, HHI will notify the applicant by mail to come in for the eligibility interview. It is important that the applicant bring all documents and verification papers that pertain to the applicant's household with them to the interview.

HHI will conduct criminal background checks of all household members aged 18 or older. HHI will also verify the information that was provided on the application including any preferences claiming, income, assets and citizenship and immigration status. HHI will also verify that all household members have not been evicted nor have any outstanding balances with any Housing Authority's including HHI.

## **What happens if my application is denied?**

HHI will give an applicant prompt notice of a decision denying assistance to the applicant. The notice will contain a brief statement of the reasons for HHI's decision. The notice will also state that the applicant may request an informal review of the decision and describe how to obtain an

informal review. The request must be in writing and presented to HHI's office located at 45 High Street, in Nashua, NH 03060 within 10 days of the notice of denial.

### **What happens after I am determined eligible?**

The applicant will be contacted by mail to attend a briefing, at the briefing a Housing Choice Voucher will be given. Once the voucher has been issued, the voucher holder will have 60 days to find a decent, safe, sanitary unit, which HHI will inspect to make sure that it meets the Housing Quality Standards. Housing Choice Voucher applicants should be aware that landlords do not have to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program, and that they may perform their own background checks to determine the ability to pay the rent, credit, rental history, utility history, etc. The voucher holder will enter into a private lease with the landlord and will have to abide by the terms of the lease. HHI cannot guarantee that the voucher holder finds affordable housing and locating a unit to rent is the voucher holder's responsibility, although at the briefing, HHI will give a list of landlords that currently are accepting the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

**Should you have any questions about the information contained in this handbook, or any questions that are not answered here, please contact Harbor Homes, Inc. at (603) 882-3616 Ext. 1143.**