

Housing Search Q&A

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz , also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

Jun 2021

Where to look for a place to rent:

- ✓ Visit our website for the Rental Referral list and links to more online resources
- ✓ Read rental ads in the newspaper every day.
- ✓ Contact property management companies that have many places for rent.
- ✓ Visit neighborhoods where you would like to live and look for "For Rent" signs

How to Find a Place to Rent with Your Voucher

How do I begin my housing search?

Your search for a place to rent is as important as a job search. You will get more information at the Briefing when you get a voucher, but here are some things to consider:

- ✓ Start early and search every day. It takes a focused effort to find a place to rent. You may only have 60 days.
- ✓ Gather landlord and job references to present to a landlord you'd like to rent from.
- ✓ Present yourself well. Dress neatly when you go to look at a rental, and show the landlord that you would make a good tenant by paying the rent on time and taking care of the place.
- ✓ Bring the landlord information packet we gave you to show to the landlord or property manager.
- ✓ Use our **Rental Property Search Form** to document every rental you look at, and the outcome of your application in case you need to request a voucher extension.

How much time do I have to find a place?

Usually you have 60 days from the date you got a voucher or vacated your unit to find a place to rent.

Do not make any commitment to rent until you have received your voucher and understand the terms and conditions. Remember that if funding is cut, **if you are searching for a rental your voucher could be frozen** for months or longer. Please do not wait until the expiration date to find a place to live!

Can I just stay where I am?

Absolutely! If you have just received a voucher, we encourage you to consider "leasing in place," or using your voucher to rent the home you already live in. You still have the option of moving later.

Start the process of renting with your voucher right away. If your landlord is not interested, or if your home does not pass inspection, you will need time to search for another place to rent.

If you already have a voucher and are interested in moving, read our Transfer Q&A for more details.



Questions? Call our Info Line at 454-5955
or visit us online at www.hacosantacruz.org.



2160 41st Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010 Open M-TH 8-5, Closed Fridays
For our business office or para información in español: 831 454-9455
Program rules are subject to change. Use this as general guidance only.

TDD: 831 475-1146

Housing Search Q&A cont'd

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More About Finding a Place to Rent with Your Voucher

What should I do when I find a place to rent?

When you find a place to rent, you and the landlord must complete the Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) and return it to us.

If the landlord has any questions about the program, he/she can visit the Landlord section of our website call our Info Line.

We will review the RTA and, if needed, negotiate the total rent with the landlord.

We will also schedule an inspection. The unit must be vacant, and the power must be on, for us to inspect it. See our Inspection Q&A.

The landlord may conduct his/her own screening, charge you a market-rate security deposit, and use his/her own lease.

We recommend that you do not move in until the unit passes inspection, the lease is signed, and the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract is approved, or you could be responsible for the full rent amount.

What happens if I don't find a place to rent?

You have a limited time, usually 60 days, to find a place to rent. If you cannot find a rental, you may request an extension in writing. Otherwise, your voucher will expire and be issued to another family.

Do not wait until your voucher has expired to request an extension! You must make your request at least 7 days before the voucher expires.

There is no guarantee that your request for an extension will be approved. Our policy for extensions may change at any time. However, in general, extensions may be approved if:

- ✓ You have conducted a housing search and have a list of rentals you contacted to document your search, or:
- ✓ You are a person with disabilities and your doctor verifies that your disability prevented you from searching for housing or arranging help to find housing.

Can a landlord refuse to rent to me because I have a Housing Choice Voucher?

Yes. There is no law against refusing to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program.

However, federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race or color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or family status (including children.) Call our Info Line for information on how to file a discrimination complaint.



Need More Info?

Visit our website or call our Info Line for more resources, including:

- ✓ Family Contact List
- ✓ Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA)
- ✓ Extension Request Form
- ✓ Inspection Q&A
- ✓ New Landlord Q&A

Info Line: 831 454-5955

Website: www.hacosantacruz.org