Housing Choice Voucher & Property-Based Waitlist Opening

April 15-April 21

Partner Toolkit

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# About This Toolkit

Home Forward, Oregon’s largest public housing authority, will begin accepting applications for its Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and Property-based waitlists **from Tuesday, April 15 at 9:00 a.m. until Monday, April 21 at 11:59 p.m. (Pacific time).** These critical programs, funded by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provide rent assistance for individuals with low incomes, making rents deeply affordable and keeping families stably housed.

In addition, Home Forward will open its Applicant Helpline at **503-415-8050** Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. while the application period is open (April 15-21). Please read through this toolkit for ways you can assist community members in applying for the waitlists.

**Supporting community members in applying**

We would love your support in coaching your clients and community members in applying for the waitlists and answering questions! Coaching would include helping applicants register an account through Rent Café (the application portal), set up an email address (if they don’t have one), fill out the application, answer questions and reset a password (if they already have a Rent Café account).

If you are interested in coaching your clients or other community members in applying, please email [waitlistportalhelp@homeforward.org](mailto:waitlistportalhelp@homeforward.org) to indicate your interest. We highly encourage all partners to attend one of **three** upcoming webinar trainings being hosted by Home Forward. The trainings will provide an overview of the process and how you can support people. Each training will be 1.5 hours long and will include the same content in each training. All times are local (Pacific time).

* **Thursday, March 20 at 2 p.m.**

***Register here:*** <https://homeforward.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DinA3OkzSsugsoXKGVh_ZQ#/registration>

* **Tuesday, April 1 at 2:30 p.m.**

***Register here:*** <https://homeforward.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QESzDtbIQVK5zKWTrRzr8A#/registration>

* **Tuesday, April 8 at 1 p.m.**

***Register here:*** <https://homeforward.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MGxaggLJTESDXKxjjuL_iw>

**Spread the word!**

Included in this toolkit is information about the HCV and property-based waitlist openings, an applicant checklist, template email, social media posts and more.

**Waitlist website**

Home Forward has created a dedicated webpage for the 2025 waitlist opening at [**homeforward.org/waitlists**](http://homeforward.org/waitlists). Included on this page over the next few weeks will be resources for applying for the waitlist, frequently asked questions, video tutorials and more. Remember to check back often for new resources and information!

**Was this toolkit forwarded to you?**

Please join the [Home Forward Partners](https://app.e2ma.net/app2/audience/signup/2012113/1971117/) email list for more updates and information about resources, trainings and more. **Thank you for helping make the most of this important moment!**

# About the Waitlists

HCVs and property-based rent assistance programs are very popular. Resources are also very limited. This is why it is common to have waitlists. Here’s what you need to know about Home Forward’s waitlists:

* Wait times vary on each waitlist.
* Applying for a waitlist does not guarantee that a person will be selected to join a waitlist. Applicants are selected at random through a lottery system.
* The lottery system also means that applicants have just as much chance of making it onto a list if they apply on the first day or the last.
* applicants will be notified by Home Forward by mail no later than September 2025 if they are randomly selected in the lottery. If Home Forward has an email address on record, notification will also be sent via email
* Joining a waitlist does not guarantee immediate or long-term rent assistance or housing. A person must be eligible for a program at the time they are selected off a waitlist. Individuals making up to $41,300 a year (or $3,44/month) and families of four making up to $59,000 per year (or $4,916/month) may qualify. Note: These figures will likely change in the next 30-60 days.

**Housing Choice Voucher Waitlist**

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program helps people in our community afford rent by covering part of the cost. This program makes it easier for families to find safe and stable housing while allowing them to choose where they want to live in Multnomah County. Here’s what you need to know:

* Home Forward will randomly select up to 3,000 new applicants for the HCV waitlist through a lottery.
* Vouchers are awarded on a rolling basis to individuals in the order they joined the waitlist. The HCV program gives rent assistance in the form of a voucher to households on the waitlist.
* HCVs are attached to a person. If they choose to move to another home in Multnomah County, they get to keep their voucher as long as they are eligible.
* Before receiving a voucher, households must go through another check to make sure they qualify.
* Once a voucher is awarded, participants can use it at any property in Multnomah County where HCVs are accepted.

**Property-based Waitlists**

A property-based waitlist is for rent assistance that is tied to a Home Forward apartment community instead of a person. To get this help, you must live at that property. Here’s what you need to know:

* Home Forward will accept applications for 13 property-based waitlists. People can apply for one or more of these waitlists.
* The properties will be listed on the Waitlists web page at [homeforward.org/waitlists](http://homeforward.org/waitlists).
* Home Forward will randomly pick enough applicants to fill spots for the next three years, based on the number of people waiting, how often units become available, and other factors.
* These vouchers cannot be moved to another place. Rent assistance is accessed by simply living at that property.
* Individuals are selected off the waitlist as units become vacant.
* Once chosen, the potential resident must pass an eligibility check. If they qualify, they will get rent assistance as long as they live at that property and remain eligible for the program.

**Eligibility Guidelines**

Anyone can apply to be added to a waitlist. However, if they are selected at random to join a waitlist and then notified, they are being selected off a waitlist, they must be eligible at that time and will be screened for eligibility. We encourage you to share this information so that people who do apply are likely eligible. If someone thinks they are eligible, are not sure they’re eligible, or may become eligible in the future, we encourage them to apply! Here is a list of eligibility guidelines:

* Household income is less than 50% of the [Area Median Income](https://www.portland.gov/phb/documents/2024-income-and-rent-limits-phb/download) (AMI) for the Portland region, which is currently up to $41,300 a year (or $3,44/month) for an individual, and up to $59,000 per year (or $4,916/month) for a family of four;
* Head of the household is at least 18 years old or an emancipated minor;
* At least one household member is a U.S. citizen or of eligible immigration status; and
* Agrees to participate in a criminal background check.

The following table shows the AMI limits for Multnomah County as of March 2025\*.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of People in Household** | **Maximum Gross Income** |
| 1 | $41,300 |
| 2 | $47,200 |
| 3 | $53,100 |
| 4 | $59,000 |
| 5 | $63,750 |
| 6 | $68,450 |
| 7 | $73,200 |
| 8 | $77,900 |

*\* Important note: the AMI for our region will be updated in the next 30-60 days*

# Applicant Checklist

The application portal (Rent Café) will be open from 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 15 through 11:59 p.m. on Monday, April 21, 2025. Applicants must subit their application by this deadline or will need to wait until the next opening, which could be months or years away.

One of the most important ways you can assist in elevating this exciting opportunity is to help applicants create an account, gather needed information and submit their online application. Applicants will be able to create an account before the waitlist opens at [homeforward.org/waitlists](http://homeforward.org/waitlists). This should make applying easier once the waitlist opens. We also encourage you to download/print an Application Guide, which will be on the Waitlists page at [homeforward.org/waitlists](http://homeforward.org/waitlists).

**Checklist**

Before starting an application for the HCV and Property-based waitlists, please ensure applicants have the following information ready:

* **Full name** of each member of their household
* **Date of birth** for each member of their household
* Amount and source of **income** for each member of your household, including all forms of support.
* **Social Security number or ITIN** for each member of their household. If not applicable enter 999-99-9999.
* Physical address where they are currently living or a stable address where they can regularly receive mail. This may include one of the following:
  + A mailing address for an agency or person who assists them.
  + General delivery locations managed by the local Post Office
  + A free P.O. Box ([www.ncesc.com/free-po-box-for-homeless-people](http://www.ncesc.com/free-po-box-for-homeless-people))
  + Mail pick-up at The Transition Projects @ Bud Clark Commons (650 NW Irving Street, Portland, OR 97209)

¨ **Email address**. If the applicant does not have an email address, you can create an email address ​[using this method.](https://clean.email/create-a-new-gmail-account/create-gmail-account-without-phone-number)

**Other Important Tips**

* **Important:** Applicants are responsible for the email and password used at registration; Home Forward will NOT have access to reset account information.
* A unique application password is required to secure an account. The password must be least 10 characters long and contain all the following: one uppercase letter, one number and one symbol.
* Please document the password in a safe and secure location. They will be unable to retrieve it after registering.
* List a phone number where the applicant can receive messages.
* Encourage applicants to use the Applicant Helpline at 503-415-8050 (will be open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday, April 15 through Monday, April 21, 2025).
* Applicants can create an account before the waitlist opens, they will not be able to apply until the application portal is open

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# Help Spread the Word

This section provides information on ways your organization can raise awareness about Home Forward’s Waitlists Application.

### **✉️** Share the news with your email list or on your website

*Below is a template to send as an email or as web copy for your website:*

**Headline:** Home Forward’s Housing Choice Voucher and Property-based Waitlists Open April 15-21

We are pleased to share that [Home Forward](http://homeforward.org/waitlists) is opening its Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) waitlist and 13 Home Forward apartment community waitlists. Applications will be accepted starting **Tuesday, April 15 at 9:00 a.m. until Monday, April 21 at 11:59 p.m. (Pacific time).**

HCV and property-based waitlists are for rent assistance that supports families, seniors, people with disabilities, and anyone with low income in affording safe and stable housing. Since demand for housing assistance is high and resources are limited, waiting periods are common.

Visit [homeforward.org/waitlists](http://homeforward.org/waitlists) for more information about the programs, eligibility and how to apply through Home Forward’s online application portal, which will be available in English, Spanish, Somali, Russian and Vietnamese.

**A few things to note:**

* All online applications must be completed and submitted before the application period closes on April 21 at 11:59 p.m.
* Home Forward will select 3,000 applicants through a lottery to be added to the HCV waitlist. They will also select enough applicants from the 13 property-based waitlists to fill enough spots for the next three years.
* Wait times vary. The HCV program selects people off the waitlist in the order they joined the waitlist. Property-based waitlists select people from waitlists as units become vacant.
* Anyone can apply for the waitlist. But you must be eligible for the program if you are selected off a waitlist. Individuals making up to $41,300 a year (or $3,44/month) and families of four making up to $59,000 per year (or $4,916/month) may qualify.

Questions? Visit [homeforward.org/waitlists](http://homeforward.org/waitlists) for more information. The Home Forward Applicant Helpline phone number is **503-415-8050.** It will be open Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. during the open application period.

### 📣Amplify the message through social media

*Below are template posts/captions for your social media channels:*

*Tag Us:*

[LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/home-forward/)

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HomeForwardorg/)

[Twitter](https://x.com/homeforwardnews)

*Suggested Hashtags:* #HCV #HousingChoiceVoucher #HomeForwardWaitlist #PropertyBasedWaitlist #RentAssistance #MultCo

*Suggested Images (created in Canva):*

* [Twitter/X](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGiAMuJQlw/-f4fdCpKVpxTEVwrNy6iig/edit?utm_content=DAGiAMuJQlw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton) (available on Canva)
* [LinkedIn/Facebook](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGiAKKMZIY/z-LGwvF3xiAMTCpb4vVoGA/edit?utm_content=DAGiAKKMZIY&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

**Social Media #1 (Send out ASAP)**

🏘️ Exciting news! Home Forward will begin accepting applications for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program waitlist and 13 of its apartment community waitlists. Applications will be accepted from 4/15 at 9 a.m. to 4/21 at 11:59 p.m. PT.

HCV and property-based waitlists are for rent assistance that supports families, seniors, people with disabilities, and anyone with low income in affording safe and stable housing. Learn more at homeforward.org/waitlists!

**Social Media #2 (One Week Out)**

🏘️ REMINDER: Home Forward will begin accepting applications for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program waitlist and 13 apartment community waitlists from 4/15 at 9 a.m. to 4/21 at 11:59 p.m.! These programs make rents deeply affordable. Eligibility is based on income/other factors. Anyone can apply to join a waitlist, but you must be eligible for the program if selected off of a waitlist. Individuals making up to $41,300 a year (or $3,44/month) and families of four making up to $59,000 per year (or $4,916/month) may qualify. Go to homeforward.org/waitlists for a checklist of what you will need and tips for applying. Prepare now and spread the word!

**Social Media #3 (Waitlist is OPEN April 15)**

🏘️ STARTING TODAY! Applications for Home Forward’s Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) waitlist and 13 apartment community waitlists are OPEN. Applications will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. on 4/21 (PST). HCVs give people a choice of where to live in MultCo at deeply affordable rents. Property-based rent assistance makes living at a Home Forward apartment much more affordable. Learn about program eligibility and more at homeforward.org/waitlists.

# Contact Information

Thank you for your partnership! We’re here to help:

* Questions about the waitlists? Visit [homeforward.org/waitlists](http://homeforward.org/waitlists) and check out the FAQs.
* Want to assist people in applying? Email [waitlistportalhelp@homeforward.org](mailto:waitlistportalhelp@homeforward.org).
* Does an applicant need to talk to someone while applying? Call the Home Forward Applicant Helpline at 503- Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. between April 15-21.
* Questions about the toolkit? Email [ariane.lechevallier@homeforward.org](mailto:ariane.lechevallier@homeforward.org)