



2024 Agency-based Voucher Opportunity REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

April 30, 2024

2024 AGENCY-BASED VOUCHER OPPORTUNITY

Summary

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) is seeking applications from agencies and community-based organizations willing and able to partner with SHA to refer and support a defined number of program participants in obtaining and leasing in place with an SHA Tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher under this Agency-based Voucher Opportunity by September 30, 2024. Eligible households must be very low-income families with children and already leased in an eligible unit in Seattle who would benefit from housing subsidy to remain stably housed.

[Applications Due: May 17, 2024](#)

Background

The [Seattle Housing Authority](#) (SHA) provides housing assistance to more than 38,000 low-income individuals in more than 19,000 households. SHA provides several ways for low-income households to access affordable housing opportunities across a variety of programs including:

- More than 8,500 rental units that SHA develops, owns, and manages as subsidized housing and other types of affordable housing in a variety of neighborhoods and housing types in Seattle.
- Collaborations with nonprofit housing partners in Seattle to subsidize about 3,500 units through Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs or Vouchers) that are “project-based” (dedicated to the project). The vast majority of these units are specifically provided for individuals (and to a limited extent, families) who have experienced homelessness, including nearly 2,000 units designated as Permanent Supportive Housing.
- More than 8,300 tenant-based Vouchers that subsidize rents for participating households renting in the private market (including both commercial and nonprofit owned housing). Nearly 6,000 of these Vouchers are typically accessed through periodic random drawings of households on SHA’s Voucher List. And about 2,500 Vouchers are authorized by Congress for special purposes such as veterans and people with disabilities. From time-to-time SHA partners with local organizations to augment the distribution of tenant-based Vouchers to select populations through an Agency-based Voucher opportunity.

Many marginalized groups are underrepresented within the city of Seattle and have not been able to access housing, resources and benefits within city limits due to ongoing systemic barriers. Similarly, many marginalized groups in Seattle face disproportionate housing needs and are at high risk of displacement¹. SHA’s own housing resources are a critical tool in enabling Seattle to be affordable to households who are most susceptible to housing discrimination and facing disproportionate housing

¹ Several related reports can be accessed from <https://www.seattle.gov/rsji/racial-equity-research/housing-affordability>, <https://www.seattle.gov/opcd/one-seattle-plan/project-documents> and additional information is available in the most recent [Assessment of Fair Housing](#).

needs. Despite SHA’s diverse housing options SHA recognizes that there are populations that are not well-reached through standard access points. One tool for addressing this is through partnering with local organizations who have relationships with, and access to, such households.

While there is an insufficient supply of affordable housing across all low-income demographic groups, SHA has taken particular note that as housing inequity has become more pronounced in Seattle, and research on the long-term benefits of stable, quality housing for children growing up in low-income families has grown, the share of SHA’s participants who are children has fallen from 42% to 30% over the last 25 years.

Family Eligibility

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A VOUCHER UNDER THIS PROGRAM?

In order to qualify for an Agency-based Voucher, a client household must meet eligibility requirements, including:

- 1) Income - Have a household income at or below 50% of the area median income.
- 2) Citizenship - Have at least one household member who is a US citizen or has eligible immigration status.
- 3) Criminal history – SHA rarely denies housing assistance due to criminal history and considers the totality of all circumstances in considering criminal history. However, federal law requires that SHA conduct a criminal background check and mandates denial in two specific situations, described [here](#).

Additionally, to be eligible for this 2024 Agency-based Voucher opportunity the household must:

- 1) Have one or more minors in the household.
- 2) Already be renting an [eligible unit](#) in Seattle².

Organization Requirements and Opportunities

TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2024 AGENCY-BASED VOUCHER PROGRAM, AN ORGANIZATION:

- 1) Must be a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, incorporated within the state of Washington, or be a division of local government, and
- 2) Have capacity *without SHA financial assistance* to meet the commitments outlined in the following section which include:
 - Identify clients eligible for this Agency-based Voucher Opportunity, including initial screening of client and unit eligibility.
 - Serve as the liaison between clients/their landlords and SHA.
 - Establish and follow client selection processes that further Fair Housing.

² Or, in limited circumstances, a household that is approved for leasing an eligible unit in Seattle pending only income/affordability requirements may be eligible.

WHAT SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS ARE EXPECTED OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS?

Selected partner organization are expected to³, without SHA financial assistance:

- 1) Identify specific staff member(s) who will manage the Vouchers on the organization's behalf. The organization must have a designated contact person.
- 2) Identify eligible applicants and collect necessary information to document their eligibility, using SHA/HUD criteria. Submit completed application packets for each client. The primary responsibility for communicating with clients about their applications will belong to the organization.
- 3) Commit staff resources to attend orientation with their clients (remote options may be available), assist clients with using Vouchers in their current unit (or, in limited circumstances, lease an eligible previously identified unit), including educating and negotiating with landlords.
- 4) Commit staff resources to educating clients and landlords about ongoing HCV program requirements.
- 5) Commit to initial training by SHA (remote options may be available), for staff and ongoing training of the HCV program as needed to participate in this Agency-based Voucher Opportunity.
- 6) Establish, document and follow selection criteria that reflects SHA's eligibility criteria, furthers Fair Housing and avoids the appearance of a conflict of interest.
- 7) Set up and implement tracking mechanisms and communication channels between the organization and SHA staff regarding progress of the individual applications.

WHAT SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS WILL SHA MAKE TO ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?

- 1) Reserve a specific number of Vouchers to be issued to the organization's eligible clients when their applications are complete.
- 2) Identify a staff member point of contact to respond to partner organization staff questions and concerns.
- 3) Conduct initial training for and provide resources (e.g., checklists, definitions) and ongoing support for identified organization staff.
- 4) Assist in establishing tracking mechanisms and communication channels regarding progress of individual applications.
- 5) Conduct periodic audits of organization compliance with the terms of the Agency Services Agreement.
- 6) Conduct briefings for participants approved for Voucher issuance.

These commitments, on both sides will be outlined in an Agency Services Agreement executed between SHA and each participating organization before SHA will reserve an allocation of Vouchers for the organization's clients.

HOW MANY VOUCHERS CAN AN ORGANIZATION HELP TO DISTRIBUTE?

Allocations among selected partners will be based on how many Vouchers the partner organization demonstrates it can lease up by September 30, 2024 (inclusive of the time necessary for SHA to approve the client and the unit) and the total number of Vouchers requested by agencies. Vouchers which go

³ SHA may consider modifications of expectations from very small organizations (e.g., fewer than 5 FTE).

unused may be withdrawn. SHA may also allocate withdrawn or additional Vouchers to a subset of agencies for leasing by a later date.

CAN AGENCIES 'RE-USE' VOUCHERS WHEN THEIR CLIENTS EXIT THE VOUCHER PROGRAM?

No. Vouchers allocated under this Agency-based Voucher Opportunity are for one-time use.

How to Apply

ORGANIZATION APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SHA AGENCY-BASED VOUCHERS

If your organization would like to participate, please return the Agency-based Voucher Opportunity Application electronically to: AgencyVouchers@seattlehousing.org by 11:59 pm May 17, 2024.

Responses submitted after the deadline may be considered. Contact AgencyVouchers@seattlehousing.org prior to the deadline if an extension needed.

HOW WILL APPLICATIONS FOR VOUCHERS BE EVALUATED?

SHA will rate the applications based on the extent to which the organization:

- 1) Provides services to and has relationships with very low-income families with children in Seattle that would be eligible for and benefit from this opportunity.
- 2) Provides culturally specific services to families with the most disproportionate housing needs in Seattle.
- 3) Has the capacity to fulfill the organization commitments outlined above.
- 4) Conducts its work in a person-centered manner, centers racial equity and involves impacted individuals in agency leadership and decision-making.

TIMELINE

SHA intends to respond to applications by the end of May with information about allocations and begin executing Agency Services Agreements. Organizations may begin referring clients as soon as Agency Service Agreements are executed.

SHA may allocate additional Vouchers toward this Agency-based Voucher Opportunity or redistribute allocated Vouchers in SHA's sole discretion.

Resources & Additional Information

If, prior to applying you would like more information about the Voucher program in general, please visit our website at seattlehousing.org/housing/housing-choice-vouchers.

For more information about the Request for Applications for the 2024 Agency-Based Voucher opportunity, please send an email to AgencyVouchers@seattlehousing.org.

Any updates to this Request for Applications or additional information will be available at seattlehousing.org/housing/collaborative-housing/agency-based-voucher-opportunity.