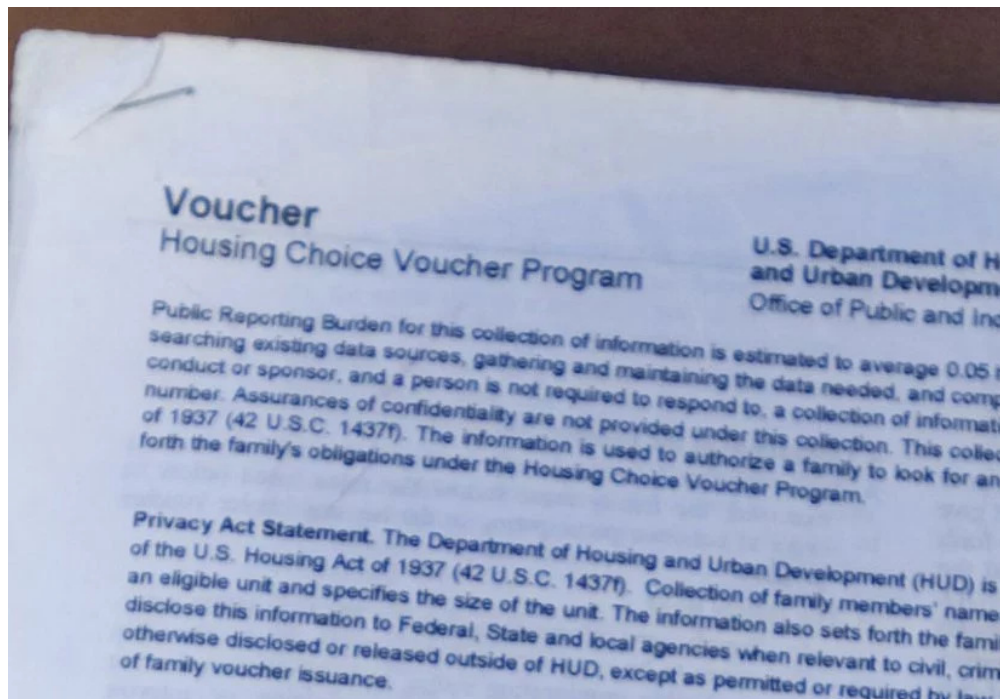


BUSINESS > HOUSING

Voucher update: About 8,300 apply for Section 8 housing in first four days

Applicants in San Bernardino County are likely to equal or surpass the 25,000 who sought help in 2015.



San Bernardino has opened its Section 8 application process with a deadline of Feb

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About 8,300 people have applied for federal housing assistance in San Bernardino County during the first four days of enrollment, a county official said early Tuesday, Feb. 12.

If that pace keeps up, the list of residents who seek a spot on the waiting list for housing vouchers could top the 25,000 who applied in 2015, the last time the county accepted new applicants.

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Residents have until 4 p.m. on Feb. 25 to apply for the Tenant-Based Voucher Program, the federal assistance initiative formerly known as Section 8. Applicants will enter a computerized lottery and be placed on a waiting list to receive subsidies for rent from landlords willing to accept the vouchers.

Ana Gamiz, director of policy and public relations for the Housing Authority of San Bernardino County, said her office has people working phone banks for those who need details on the program.

“The call center has been really, really busy,” Gamiz said. “Based on the

Applicants can apply online at hacsb.com. More information, including locations with free computer access, is available by calling 877-425-4004.

The waiting list in San Bernardino County had been whittled down to 2,000 since the last enrollment period four years ago. People who enter this lottery could wait several years before they get a voucher.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funds the program, and the agency gives local jurisdictions leeway in how the program is administered.

Neighboring Riverside County accepts new applicants at any time, said Carrie Harmon, director of the Riverside County Housing Authority. The program prioritizes help for veterans, the elderly and disabled and working families with children.

“We decided that anyone who needs affordable housing should be able to register at any time,” Harmon said.

[About 80,000 households are on the waiting list in Riverside County](#), Harmon said, and 8,300 are receiving vouchers. The list only gets shorter as participants leave the program, which happens at a rate of about 50 households a month.

Veterans and people age 75 or older are likely to spend a year on the waiting list for a voucher in Riverside County. For others, the wait can be between three and 12 years, Harmon said.

Gamiz in San Bernardino reminded applicants who sign up to get into the lottery do not pay to do so. Occasionally online scams surface that offer to place applicants on the waiting list for a fee.

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