



# PORTABILITY

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## What is Portability?

"Portability" in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program refers to the process through which your family can transfer or "port" your rental subsidy when to move to a location outside the jurisdiction of the public housing agency (PHA) that first gave you the voucher when you were selected to the program. This is the initial PHA.

The agency that will administer your assistance in the area to which you are moving is called the receiving PHA.

New families may have to live in the jurisdiction of the initial PHA for a year before they can port.

What do you need to do?

1. You must notify the initial PHA that you would like to port and to which area you are moving. A Request to Transfer/Port Voucher form is available at the office or by contacting your housing specialist. Information on other PHAs can be found at [hud.gov](http://hud.gov) or you can contact your housing specialist for additional guidance.
2. The initial PHA will determine if you are eligible to move. You must be in good standing and be moving in accordance with your lease.
3. If you are currently assisted, you must give your landlord notice of your intent to move in accordance with your lease AND provide a copy of this notice to your housing specialist.
4. Once a copy of your notice has been received and, if eligible to move, the initial PHA will issue a voucher and send all relevant paperwork to the receiving PHA.

## Contacting the Receiving PHA

1. Your housing specialist will let you know how and to contact the receiving PHA.
2. If there is more than one PHA that administers the HCV program where you wish to move, you may choose the receiving PHA.

Generally, the initial PHA is not required to give you any other information about the receiving PHAs, but you may wish to find out more details when contacting them (such as whether the receiving PHA operates a Family Self-Sufficient or Homeownership program).

## Before Porting, You Should Know

**Subsidy Standards:** The receiving PHA may have different subsidy standards. In other words, the initial PHA may have issued you a 3-bedroom voucher, but the receiving PHA may, if appropriate for your family, issue you a 2- bedroom voucher. Note, however, that the PHA's subsidy standards must comply with fair housing and civil rights laws. This includes processing reasonable accommodation requests that are necessary for qualified individuals with disabilities.

**Payment Standards:** The payment standards of the receiving PHA may be different for each PHA. Payment standards are what determine the amount of the rent that the PHA will pay on your behalf. If a receiving PHA's payment standards are lower than the initial PHA, then the portion of the rent you pay may be more than you were paying at the initial PHA.

**Re-screening:** The receiving PHA may re-screen you using their own policies, which may be different than the initial PHA's policies and could result in the receiving PHA denying your request to move. When contacting the receiving PHA, you may want to ask whether they re-screen families moving into their area under portability and what are their policies for termination or denial of HCV assistance. This will assist you in determining if the receiving PHA's policies might prevent you from moving to their jurisdiction. The Housing Authority of Billings does re-screening.

**Time Management:** you should manage the move so that you have enough time to arrive at the receiving PHA before the initial PHA voucher expires, otherwise you may lose your assistance.

## The Receiving PHA

1. The receiving PHA will issue you a voucher to search for the unit is its jurisdiction. Your voucher must be extended by 30 days from the expiration date on the voucher issued by the initial PHA. If you are porting into the Housing Authority of Billings, please expect to provide additional information and complete re-screening paperwork before a voucher will be issued.
2. When you submit a request for tenancy approval, the time on your voucher will stop until you are notified whether the unit is approved or denied. The request for tenancy approval is the form you will submit to the receiving PHA once you find a unit, so that the receiving PHA can determine whether you may rent that unit under the program.
3. If you decide that you do not want to lease a unit in the area, the receiving PHA will return your voucher to the initial PHA. The initial PHA is not required to extend the term of your voucher so that you may search for a unit in the initial PHA's jurisdiction or port to another jurisdiction. Any additional instructions will be provided by the receiving PHA. PHAs must comply with all nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirement in the portability process.

