

Which housing program is right for you?

A Guide to Permanent Housing Options for Domestic Violence Shelter Residents

It can be difficult to sort through the many housing programs available to domestic violence shelter residents. In a time when policies are rapidly changing knowing what programs you are eligible for can be confusing. Ask yourself the following questions to learn more about what programs might be right for you.

Are you currently working full time?

If you are working full time several options are available depending on your income.

- **HiFi – Short Term Advantage:** If you can afford to pay rent but need assistance paying up front costs like a security deposit and broker's fee ask your housing specialist or shelter advocate about applying for Short Term Advantage (also called HiFi). Short Term Advantage will pay up-front costs related to securing housing including four months rent, one month security deposit and a broker's fee. After receiving this initial assistance, you would be expected to pay the rent on your own. To qualify, you must have resided in shelter for at least 42 days and have income that exceeds the allowable amount to receive cash assistance from PA. To see if you qualify for public assistance visit [ACCESS NYC](https://a858-ihss.nyc.gov/ihss1/en_US/IHSS_languageSelectionPage.do) (https://a858-ihss.nyc.gov/ihss1/en_US/IHSS_languageSelectionPage.do).

- **Affordable Housing Lotteries:** While waiting lists are often very long it is usually a good idea to apply for low or moderate income housing lotteries. Developers who receive certain types of funding to develop properties are often required to set aside a certain amount of apartments in their buildings to people with low or moderate incomes. Advertisements for such apartments can be found in newspapers, online at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/apartment/lotteries.shtml> or, by contacting New York City's Affordable Housing Hotline by dialing 311 or calling directly at 212-863-5610 (English), 212-863-5620 (Spanish), 212-863-8924 (Mandarin), 212-863-8925 (Cantonese), 212-863-8936 (Russian), 212-863-8939 (Haitian Creole) or 212-863-8979 (Korean).

- **NYCHA Public Housing:** NYCHA Public Housing gives priority to working individuals and families when processing applications for apartments. Because you may also be eligible for an additional priority as a victim of domestic violence you should speak with your housing specialist or shelter advocate before applying.

- **Rental Assistance Program (RAP):** The Coalition for the Homeless offers a two year rental subsidy of up to \$300 per month for up to two years to working people in need of rental assistance. During the two years you will receive assistance from case managers and participate in employment and educational activities to help you

become self sufficient. For more information contact the Coalition for the Homeless at 212-776-2000.

Do you work part time (20 hours per week)?

- Work Advantage: Work Advantage is available to those who have been residing in shelter for 42 days or more and who work at least 20 hours per week and receive cash benefits from public assistance. The subsidy lasts for one year with the possibility of one additional year extension. While participating in the program you are required to work and save money. You will contribute \$50 per month to your rent and the program will cover the rest. You will be required to contribute 10- 20% of the total rental amount to a savings account and at the end of the program the City will match your savings; the City will also match your \$50 contribution and add it to your savings at the end of the program.

Do you or a member of your household receive SSI or SSD?

- Fixed Income Advantage: Fixed Income Advantage offers one year of rental assistance to those families where a household member receives SSI/SSD. These households will be given a priority for Section 8 and, if found eligible, they can switch from Fixed Income Advantage into the Section 8 program.

Do you receive public assistance (PA)?

- Domestic Violence Advantage: Domestic Violence Advantage is a one year rental subsidy (with the possibility of an extension of one additional year of assistance) available to those who receive active cash assistance from PA and have been residing in a domestic violence shelter for 42 days or more. Domestic Violence Advantage recipients are required to find employment within six months of signing their leases.

Domestic Violence Advantage recipients should participate in an educational program or job readiness or job placement program through a WEP assignment so they will be ready to begin working within the required time frame.

To learn about WEP programs that can help you find a job talk with your public assistance case worker or shelter advocate. If you are currently enrolled in school and will not be finished with your education within the six months, ask your school if there is a work/study program available or consider taking a part time job. In this way you can further your education, build your resume and become eligible for a housing subsidy at the same time.

- NYCHA Public Housing: The NYCHA waiting list is open to anyone who falls within the income requirements, including those who receive public assistance. If you are on PA and do not qualify for any of NYCHA's emergency priorities because you do not have the required documentation, you may still apply for an apartment.

Your application would be coded as “homeless” or N5 – a lower priority than the DV priority which is N1.

Do you have documentation of the domestic violence you experienced such as police reports, an order of protection or documentation from an in-patient hospital stay?

- Section 8 and NYCHA Public Housing: Those who can supply required documentation are eligible to apply for both Section 8 and NYCHA Public Housing emergency priorities. The documentation requirements are strict so be sure to work closely with your housing specialist or shelter advocate when preparing your application. There are three categories of documents and you must supply one document from each category to qualify unless one incident was a “serious felony” according to NYCHA. In cases involving a serious felony you need one such document and an advocacy letter from a domestic violence service provider. For a complete list of required documentation visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/downloads/pdf/vdv-documentation.pdf>.

Do you have an active ACS case or do you have children in foster care with whom you would be able to reunite if you could find appropriate housing?

- Children Advantage: Children Advantage is available to families who reside in shelter and who ACS designates as eligible for the program. It provides a one year rental subsidy to families and an emergency priority for Section 8 housing. If you are found eligible for Section 8, Children Advantage can be converted to Section 8 for ongoing assistance. For more information about eligibility, contact your ACS worker or the ACS Housing Resource Center at 212-442-4723.
- ACS Housing Subsidy: The ACS Housing subsidy is available for families with children in foster care with whom they could reunite if they find suitable housing. The subsidy offers up to \$300 per month and up to \$1800 in back rent payments. To qualify housing must be the main barrier to reunification. For more information, contact your ACS worker or the ACS Housing Resource Center at 212-442-4723.

If you answered yes to more than one question you may be able to apply for more than one subsidy. As a general rule, residents in shelters should apply for as many programs as they may qualify for to increase their chances of securing permanent housing at the end of their shelter stay. Remember, you do not have to take a particular program or apartment just because you apply for it. Keeping your options open until the time that you sign a lease can give you more flexibility as you search for permanent housing. If you have questions about any of these programs call New Destiny’s Housing HelpLine at 646-472-0262 ext. 15.