



How to get into Public Housing in Nashville

Public housing is a group of apartment buildings owned by the city. Your rent there is based on your income. You don't pay a light bill.









Tips to help you apply for public housing.

1. **Apply** at the MDHA Housing Applications office at 701 South Sixth Street. They are open Monday through Friday.
The fastest way to apply is to go there before 8:00 in the morning. They let the first people in line apply that day. Not in a hurry? Then you can make an appointment to apply. Call 252-8590.
2. Try to take with you the **papers** you need to apply. See the list on page 2.
3. Tell the housing application worker if you are a "**priority.**" (See page 3.)
4. They may put you on their waiting list. Make sure they always have **your right address and phone number.** (See page 4.)
5. If they OK you for an apartment, go to the next **training for new renters.** It's every Tuesday morning.
6. If they **turn you down** for an apartment, see page 5 for what to do.

When you apply, take the papers they need to see.

This should speed things up. Here's what they will want to see.

-  **Social Security** cards for everyone in the family.
-  **Birth certificates** for everyone in the family. But, if you were born outside the U. S., you don't need a birth certificate. Instead, bring an I-95 form or naturalization papers.
-  **Proof of your income.** If your income is from Social Security or the VA, bring your letter from them. Or, bring a bank statement that shows your check goes directly to the bank.
-  **If you work,** bring your work address. They will send a paper to your boss to fill out and mail back. Make sure your boss sends the paper back right away.
-  **Name, address and zip code** of your landlord now and your last landlord.
-  **If you pay for day care,** the name, address and zip code of your child's day care. You can get a letter on the day care's stationery saying how much you pay. **OR,** you can get a paper from Metro Housing for the day care to fill out.

What if you don't have these papers yet?

You can still apply. But they can't decide if you will get an apartment until they get these papers.

The Metro Housing office will check **police records**. But, a criminal record will not always keep you out of public housing.

Tell them if you are a "priority."

If you are what they call a "**priority**," you will get an apartment faster. Look below to see what could make you a priority. If one of these is true for you, tell the housing application worker.

1. You had to leave your home because your life was in danger. For example, you were afraid of someone in your family. Bring your Court Order of Protection.



or

2. You had to leave your home because of a disaster, such as a fire, flood or tornado. If the housing worker wants written proof, ask them where you can get it.

or

3. The government made you leave your home. For example, your home was condemned. Bring your letter that says your home was condemned.

or

4. The head of the family or their husband or wife has had a full-time job for a year or more. Bring a letter from the employer.

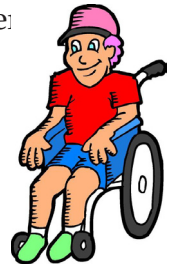
or

5. You are age 62 or older.

or

6. You are disabled. You don't have be getting disability payments from Social

Security. You can bring a letter from your doctor. The letter should say your disability will last at least a year. Do you need an apartment set up for someone with a disability? Tell the housing worker.



or

7. You are homeless.

You will get a letter saying if they OKed you to get an apartment. If they OKed you, you may still have to wait awhile to move in.



If you get on the waiting list, make sure they can always reach you.

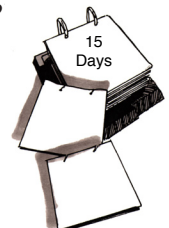
If you move or change your phone number, let them know. Call **252-8590**. Ask for your housing application worker.

If the Metro Housing office asks you to contact them, do it right away. If they can't reach you, they will take you off the waiting list. Then you would have to apply all over again.

What to do if they turn you down for an apartment

If they turn you down for public housing, a letter will tell you why. You can try to change their minds. You have **only 15 days to do this after you are turned down**. Ask in writing for a "grievance hearing"

Just write, "I want to talk to the Metro Housing office some more about my application." You can send them a note. Or, you can get them to send you a form. Either way, send it in within 15 days.



The Metro Housing office will set a day and time for the hearing. At the hearing, you tell your side of the story to some new people. Or, you can take a lawyer or someone else to speak for you.

To win at the hearing, you need to prove one of these things:

- That they turned you down because of something that is not true.
- That they turned you down because of something that is no longer true.
- That they turned you down because of something that was not your fault.

Take any witnesses or papers that can back you up. Here are some examples:

Example: Maybe Metro Housing evicted you in the past because of drugs. But, this is no longer true. You could show them a letter from a drug treatment program. The letter should say that you finished the program and have stayed drug free. Or, you could prove that the person who bought or sold drugs no longer lives with you.

Example: Maybe you did not pay your rent when you lived in public housing before. You can bring your medical bills to the hearing. They could prove that you got behind because you were sick. This was something that you could not help.

What to do if they turn you down because of unpaid rent

Do you owe rent from the last time you lived in public housing? They may keep you off the waiting list until you pay the old rent.



Here's what you can do:

- Look at the old file they have on you. See if you really owe what they say.
- If you owe the money, pay it if you can.
- If you can't pay it, a Chapter 7 or a Chapter 13 bankruptcy may help. See a lawyer or call Legal Aid. As soon as you file bankruptcy, Metro Housing can't hold the unpaid rent against you. But, they may still turn you down for public housing. This can happen if you used to get behind on rent a lot.

Legal Aid can send you pamphlets about these two kinds of bankruptcy.

Other places to apply for low-cost apartments

Subsidized apartment buildings

You can get a list of these apartment buildings from Metro Housing or from Legal Aid.

These buildings have some apartments where the rent is based on your income.



You apply at the apartment building, not at the Metro Housing office. There is a long waiting list. But, they have the same "priorities" as public housing. Tell the manager you only want an apartment where the rent is based on your income.

Section 8 vouchers

A **Section 8 voucher** is a paper. It says Metro Housing will pay part of your rent. You can live anywhere that the landlord will take a Section 8 voucher. Your part of the rent is based on your income. If you must pay the light bill, your rent is set even lower.

You apply for Section 8 vouchers at 620 Dew Street. But, you can only apply when the waiting list is open. To see if the waiting list is open, call 252-6500. After you apply, you may have to wait a while to get a voucher.

Hope VI (Hope 6) apartments

These are new apartments. Your rent is based on your income. To live there, you must have good credit and no police record. You are a "priority" to get a Hope VI place if:

1. The Hope VI apartments were built where your old apartment used to be,
2. **OR** you live in public housing now and
 - you have worked a year or more,
 - or, you have a disability
 - or, you are age 62 or older,
3. **OR** you don't live in public housing now and
 - you have worked for a year or more,
 - or you have a disability,
 - or you are age 62 or older,
 - or you can pay the full rent.



There are 3 places with Hope VI apartments. You go there to apply or get on the waiting list.

Preston Taylor Hope VI Homes
3900 Clifton Road, Nashville, TN 37209
Phone: 615-252-8590

Vine Hill Hope VI Homes
625 Benton Ave., Nashville, TN 37204
Phone: 615-383-5205

Sam Levy Hope VI Homes
Current office: MDHA 252-8571
Future office: 303 Foster Street
Nashville, TN 37206

Legal Aid Society

of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands

300 Deaderick Street

Nashville, Tennessee 37201

(615) 244-6610

We also have offices in:

Clarksville
Columbia
Cookeville
Gallatin
Murfreesboro
Oak Ridge
Tullahoma

The phone number for all these offices is
1-800-238-1443.
It's a free call.

This information is not meant to take the place of legal advice. Every case is different and needs individual attention.

9/2005

Tennessee Legal Aid/Legal Services Offices

Legal Aid Society

of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands

1-800-238-1443

Offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge, and Tullahoma

West Tennessee Legal Services

Jackson Office 1-800-372-8346
Dyersburg Office (731) 285-8181
Huntingdon Office (731) 986-8975
Selmer Office (731) 645-7961

Memphis Area Legal Services

Memphis Office (901) 523-8822
Covington Office 1-888-207-6386

Legal Aid of East Tennessee

Knoxville Office (865) 637-0484
Johnson City Office 1-800-821-1312
Morristown Office 1-800-821-1309
Maryville Office (865) 981-1818
Chattanooga Office 1-800-572-7457
Cleveland Office 1-800-445-3219