



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

San Diego Housing Commission Move Process Step-by-Step Guide

San Diego Housing Commission
1122 Broadway, Suite 300
San Diego, CA 92101
www.sdhc.org



THE MOVE PROCESS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Complete these steps before you give notice to your landlord that you plan to move or begin the move process.

Step 1: Find out if you are eligible to move.

- Contact your SDHC Housing Assistant to find out if you meet the following **Move Eligibility Requirements**:
 - Must have been an SDHC rental assistance program participant for at least 12 months.
 - Must not have moved within the past 12 months.
 - Must not be in violation of any SDHC rental assistance program rules.
 - Must not owe any money to SDHC.
 - Must have fulfilled the initial terms of the current lease agreement. This includes complying with the agreed Notice to Vacate (or move-out date).
 - Must not be a household SDHC has identified as “Work-Able” with zero income.

Step 2: Locate a new rental unit and find out if you can afford it.

- Ask the landlord of the unit you want to rent for the **contract rent amount** and the **security deposit amount**.
- Review SDHC Payment Standards charts, listed on the fact sheets on the [Choice Communities page on SDHC’s website](#). (You may also request a printed copy). The contract rent should be equal to or less than the payment standard for which you qualify based on your housing voucher.

To meet your family’s housing needs, and if SDHC approves, you may choose to rent an apartment with a contract rent that is higher than your **payment standard**. However, you will be responsible to pay your portion of the contract rent (known as the tenant rent portion) plus the amount of the contract rent that is higher than the payment standard. This is known as a rent premium. Please see the table below for an example.

Total Contract Rent	Payment Standard	Tenant Pays*	SDHC Pays
\$2,900	\$2,793	\$732	\$2,168

**In this example, the tenant’s income-based rent portion of \$625 plus the rent premium of \$107 equals the total tenant share of rent to the landlord in the amount of \$732.*

- Your SDHC Housing Assistant can help you know the applicable payment standard for which you qualify.
- Your portion of the rent, including any rent premium, may not be more than 50% of your family’s monthly adjusted income. If you are paying the minimum rent under the Path to Success Program, you may not be approved for a unit if the total contract rent is higher than the payment standard.

Step 3: Give your current landlord a Notice to Vacate

- **After** your SDHC Housing Assistant confirms that you meet the eligibility criteria to move and you confirm that you can afford the rent of the new unit, you can provide written notice (Notice to Vacate) to your current landlord, based on the terms of your lease. Note: SDHC requires you to give your landlord a written notice at least 30 days before you vacate the unit. However, please review your lease for your specific noticing requirements. Your lease may require a notice of more than 30 days.
- The Notice to Vacate must state the date you will move out and the date you gave the notice to the landlord. Your notice should follow the requirements in your lease.
- Provide your SDHC Housing Assistant with a copy of your Notice to Vacate.

- If your move-out date changes for any reason, you must provide a copy of an updated move-out notice. The updated move-out notice must be signed by the head of your household and the landlord. The signed updated move-out notice must be provided before your original move-out date. If the updated notice is not provided before the original move-out date, your SDHC Housing Assistant will end the contract based on the original move-out date. If you move out before or after the move-out date you provided to SDHC, you may be responsible for the full contract rent. SDHC only pays Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) to the landlord during the lease term and while you are living in the unit.
- If the landlord issued the move-out notice, SDHC will pay the landlord through the date when you move out of the unit. This is verified by giving SDHC a key receipt signed by you and the landlord of the previous unit. SDHC cannot make a payment on your new rental unit until you have given a Notice to Vacate and have left the unit so that the landlord can lease it to someone new.

After the actions listed above are done and a copy of the Notice to Vacate is given to SDHC, select one of the two options below to see the next steps in the move process for steps 4 through 7.

- A. Moving within the City of San Diego**
- B. Moving out of the City of San Diego**

A. Moving Within the City of San Diego (ZIP Codes beginning with 921.. or 92037)

Step 4: Obtain your Move Packet from your Housing Assistant

- When your SDHC Housing Assistant receives your Notice to Vacate, they will send you a move packet. It includes:
 - A Housing Voucher. You must sign, date and return the voucher to your SDHC Housing Assistant.
 - Copy of a Contract Termination Notice for your current unit and Key Receipt (if applicable)
 - Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA)
 - Maximum Rent Notice

Step 5: Complete the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) with the landlord you want to rent from.

- Complete the RFTA electronically or on paper:
 - **Electronically:** You must have a valid email address. Contact your SDHC Housing Assistant and provide them with the first and last name and email address for the landlord you want to rent from. The RFTA will be sent to your email and that landlord's email to be completed in DocuSign.
 - **Paper copy:** First, provide the RFTA to the landlord you want to rent from. They will need to complete their portion of the RFTA. Please work with the landlord to fully complete the RFTA form. After your landlord signs the RFTA, you should sign and initial all tenant fields on the form. You and the landlord must sign the document and submit the completed document to SDHC. Incomplete forms will delay the process.

NOTE: You may only submit one RFTA at a time. SDHC will only accept one RFTA per family at a time.

Step 6: Submit the RFTA to SDHC.

- You or the landlord may submit the completed RFTA to your SDHC Housing Assistant.
- The completed move packet will be forwarded to the Leasing Department when SDHC receives the RFTA. The Leasing Department will assign a caseworker to review the move packet. This includes verifying ownership of the unit. They will also contact you and/or the landlord you want to rent from if any additional documents are required. The Leasing Department caseworker is only **temporarily** assigned to your case. After the move process is completed, your case will go back to your assigned SDHC Housing Assistant.

Step 7: Final Steps to Complete the Move Process

- **Inspection of the Unit:** SDHC's Inspections Department will contact the landlord you want to rent from within three business days to schedule an inspection of the unit. During the inspection, the inspector will decide if the unit meets federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and if the rent is reasonable. SDHC will not pay the Housing Assistance Payment for a unit until it passes inspection and the assisted family moves in. SDHC will not pay for any days before the unit passes an inspection.
- **Contracts:** Contracts will be sent electronically through DocuSign after all of the following actions have happened:
 - The unit passes inspection.
 - The requested contract rent is approved and determined to be reasonable.
 - Your move-in date has been verified.
 - A copy of the signed lease is provided to SDHC.

A new contract cannot go into effect until your Notice to Vacate to the previous landlord expires. Contracts **must** be signed within 60 days of the initial contract date. Otherwise, the family will be responsible for the full contract rent amount. **A preliminary Rent Portion Letter will be sent to you and the landlord.** Note: If SDHC determines that the RFTA or unit cannot be approved for any reason, the landlord and you will be notified. SDHC will instruct the landlord and you of the steps necessary for approval. If for any reason an RFTA is not approved, SDHC will provide another RFTA form to you if you ask for one, so you can continue to search for eligible housing.

- **Move-in:** Once the unit passes inspection and the rent amount is approved, you may set a move-in date. The Rental Assistance for the new unit will not begin until the keys from your last unit are returned to the previous landlord. A copy of the signed lease agreement for the new unit **must** be provided to SDHC. If you move in before the approved move in-date or before the date on the Notice to Vacate for your previous unit, you will be responsible for the full rent for any days before the date the approved contract takes effect. Extensions of the move-out date for your old unit must be received on or before the effective date listed on the Contract Termination Notice. If you do not receive an extension by the listed Contract Termination date, no further payment will be issued to your previous landlord.
- **Housing Assistance Payment (HAP):** The first Housing Assistance Payment will be sent to the landlord within three business days **after** SDHC has received all the signed contracts.

B. Moving Out of the City of San Diego

Moving out of the City of San Diego with a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher is known as “porting out” or “portability.”

Step 4: Find out if you are eligible to move out of the City of San Diego.

To request to move out of the City of San Diego with a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, please make sure you meet the following requirements:

- You must not be in a current lease term.
- Must not have moved in the past 12 months.
- Must be in good standing (no program violations) and must not owe SDHC money.
- Your housing voucher must have more than 30 days before it expires.
- All household changes must be completed before starting the process of moving out of the City.
- You must provide your landlord with a written Notice to Vacate at least 30 days before you will be moving out. SDHC requires you to provide your landlord at least a 30-day written notice. However, please review your lease to see if it requires a notice more than 30 days before you will be moving out.
- You must also provide a copy of the written Notice to Vacate to your SDHC Housing Assistant.

Step 5: Request a Port-Out Form

- If SDHC has identified you as an *Elderly/Disabled* household, request a Port-Out form from your SDHC Housing Assistant.
 - Fill out the form and return it to your Housing Assistant.
- If SDHC has identified you as a *Work-Able* household, you may only move with your rental assistance to an area outside of the City of San Diego if you ask for and receive permission for a reason such as one of the following (this is known as an exception):
 - Employment opportunities
 - Post-secondary education/educational opportunity for an adult family member
 - Safety reasons
 - A medical/disability need
 - Other exceptions determined on a case-by-case basis.If you meet one of the above exceptions, request a Work-Able Port-Out form from your SDHC Housing Assistant. Your port-out request MUST be reviewed and approved before your Housing Assistant can issue you a Housing Voucher to move out of the City of San Diego.

Step 6: Complete and Submit the Port-Out Request Form

- Complete and submit the port-out request form and provide documents that support your request to your SDHC Housing Assistant.
- Your request will be reviewed. If it is approved, your caseworker will send you a voucher to sign and return.
- When you give your signed voucher back to your Housing Assistant, you must also give a copy of your move-out notice. The move-out notice must give your landlord notice at least 30 days before the date you plan to move out.
- Be prepared to pay the full contract rent amount for the new unit until the public housing authority for the community you are moving to is able to complete processing your file.

Step 7: Port-Out Process

- When you return the move-out notice and signed voucher, your file will be reviewed within five business days, and your documents will be faxed or emailed to the public housing authority for the community you are moving to. This is known as the Receiving Public Housing Authority (RPHA). You will receive a letter confirming your file has been transferred.
- If the RPHA approves your port-out request, the RPHA may certify that you are eligible during the portability process. You must provide all the required verifications, even if your recertification was recently completed.
 - NOTE: Please contact the RPHA if you have questions about your case and their processes and timelines.
- Once your case is transferred to the RPHA, their policies and procedures apply. This specifically includes but is not limited to the voucher size and payment standard.
- A new contract cannot go into effect with the RPHA until the commitment to your last landlord has been met. Extensions of the move-out date must be received on or before the effective date of the Contract Termination Notice. If you do not receive an extension before this date, no further payment will be issued to your landlord.
- Payments will be made from the effective date as determined by both housing agencies.
- Some RPHAs can take up to 60 days to accept and process your paperwork.
- Requests for a voucher extension must be submitted to SDHC or the RPHA before your voucher is scheduled to end. It is recommended you submit a copy of the voucher extension request to both agencies.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CANCELLING A MOVE REQUEST

A written request to cancel the move process and Notice to Vacate must be submitted to SDHC. You and the landlord must sign the cancellation request before it is submitted to SDHC. When SDHC receives the request, SDHC will end the move voucher.

- If an RFTA has not been submitted, SDHC will send a Move Cancellation Notice to you and your current landlord.
- If an RFTA has been submitted, a Lease Disapproval Letter will also be sent to the landlord whose unit you had requested to move to.

TERM OF THE VOUCHER

The move voucher is valid for at least 120 calendar days from date it was issued. You must submit an RFTA within the initial term of the voucher unless SDHC has granted an extension.

- **Extensions:** You may ask in writing for an extension of the voucher period. All requests must be received before the date the voucher expires. The voucher extension will be based on the availability of funding. If there is not enough funding to extend the voucher, SDHC will not grant an extension.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** If SDHC already has extended the voucher for 300 days, you may ask for an additional extension as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to a family member who has a disability. SDHC may grant an extension to the voucher. You must submit a completed Reasonable Accommodation Request Form. Subsequent extension requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- **Suspensions:** If an RFTA is received, the term of the voucher will be suspended as of the day it was received. If the RFTA is not approved, SDHC will add the number of days that were required to process the RFTA to the term of the voucher.
- **Expirations:** You must submit an RFTA within the initial term of the voucher unless SDHC has granted an extension. If you are a program participant receiving rental assistance and the voucher expires, assistance will continue as long as you and the unit remain eligible.

SDHC RESOURCES DURING THE MOVE PROCESS

Rent Affordability Calculator

<https://sdhc.org/housing-opportunities/help-with-your-rent/rent-calculator/>

SDHC's website includes a Rent Affordability Calculator. Families that receive federal Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance from SDHC can use this calculator to help find out if they can afford the rent of a specific rental housing unit with their voucher in the City of San Diego.

To use this calculator, you will need to provide information from your Max Rent Notice Form from SDHC.

The Max Rent Notice Form is part of the RFTA packet that SDHC provides to families in the rental assistance program. The results of the SDHC Rent Affordability Calculator are not guaranteed.

SDHC is required to evaluate the proposed rent to determine if the rent the landlord has requested will meet rent-affordability thresholds for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance household.

SDHC Mobility Counseling

An SDHC mobility counselor helps with pre- and post-moving counseling, housing search assistance and guidance about neighborhood features for families who are new to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program.

For additional information and to sign up for online housing search workshop, contact the SDHC Mobility Counselor at (619) 578-7131 [or mobility@sdhc.org](mailto:mobility@sdhc.org).

SDHC Security Deposit Loans

Families who are new to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program are eligible for no-interest security deposit loans up to the payment standard for the ZIP Code where they plan to live and the voucher size assigned to their household.

SDHC Achievement Academy

The SDHC Achievement Academy provides programs that emphasize career planning, job skills, job placement and personal financial education to help individuals and families become more financially self-reliant.

SDHC Achievement Academy programs are available at no cost to program participants. Families with low income in the City of San Diego are eligible to participate.

Through the SDHC Achievement Academy, many motivated clients have successfully secured employment, increased their earnings, and started their own businesses.

For more information contact (619) 578-7451

ADDITIONAL HOUSING RESOURCES

- Housing Search Resources ([SDHC Affordable Housing Resource Guide: City of San Diego Edition](#))
- Zillow (www.zillow.com/)
- Trulia (www.trulia.com/)
- HotPads (<https://hotpads.com/>)
- Apartments.com (www.apartments.com/)
- Zumper (www.zumper.com/)
- AffordableHousing.com (<https://www.affordablehousing.com/>)

Legal Assistance

Legal Aid Society of San Diego provides free help with housing problems or questions about your rights as a tenant, questions about security deposits, issues with public housing, discrimination in housing, foreclosure, and home loan problems. To speak to their intake team, you can call Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. 1-877-534-2524 or TTY 1-800-735-2929.

City of San Diego Eviction Prevention Program

The City of San Diego Eviction Prevention Program (EPP) helps renters with low income in the City of San Diego who are facing eviction for not paying their rent. For more information visit <https://sdhc.org/evictionban/>

211

211 works to cultivate relationships with community providers to ensure their public database is robust, accurate, and comprehensive. <https://211sandiego.org/resources/>