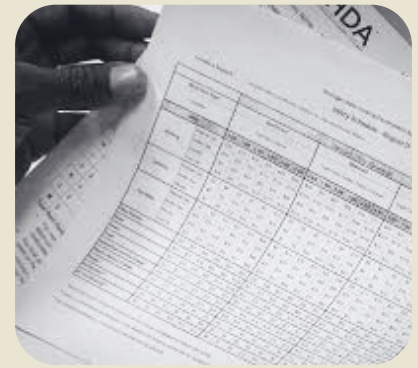




NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

# Understanding Housing VOUCHERS

[www.endhomelessnessmi.org](http://www.endhomelessnessmi.org)



## MSHDA Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

### Overview: What Are Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs)?

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, commonly known as Section 8, is a federal program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered in Michigan by: MSHDA (Michigan State Housing Development Authority) and local Housing Commissions or (PHAs).

HCVs are designed to assist very low-income individuals and families, including seniors and people with disabilities, to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private rental market.

### What It Is

MSHDA's Housing Choice Voucher Program provides tenant-based rental assistance to income-eligible households. This means the voucher is **portable and follows the tenant**, rather than being tied to a specific unit.

### Key Features

- **Eligibility:** Extremely low-income households, those experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and veterans may qualify.
- **Housing Search:** Tenants must find units where landlords are willing to accept the voucher.
- **Tenant Share:** Typically 30% of income goes toward rent; MSHDA pays the balance directly to the landlord. If the tenant has 0 income, they are still required to pay \$50/month as their share of rent.
- **Inspections:** Units must pass Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections before approval.

### Homeless Preference

MSHDA offers a Homeless Preference through its Coordinated Entry system, allowing households experiencing literal homelessness to receive priority access. The Northwest Michigan Coalition partners closely with MSHDA to ensure equitable access to these vouchers through referrals and documentation support.

## Application Process

Households experiencing homelessness cannot directly apply; they must be referred through Coordinated Entry. MSHDA maintains a waitlist for different counties that opens periodically. Homeless Preference waiting lists are prioritized and are administered by the NW Michigan Community Action Agency for NW Michigan.

## MSHDA Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Program

### What It Is

Unlike tenant-based vouchers, Project-Based Vouchers are **attached to specific rental units**. If a household moves, they may lose the subsidy unless eligible for a tenant-based transfer after one year.

### Key Features

- **Long-Term Affordability:** PBVs are usually part of affordable housing developments with committed affordability periods (often 15–20 years).
- **Supportive Services:** Often linked to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units or other service-enriched housing.
- **Referral Pathway:** Access is often limited to specific populations, such as those experiencing chronic homelessness, and must go through Coordinated Entry.
- **Portability:** Not portable unless after one year, the household is eligible and chooses to request a tenant-based voucher (subject to availability).

### Benefits

- **Landlord Stability:** Landlords have a guaranteed payment for the unit regardless of tenant turnover.
- **Housing Retention:** Often paired with services to help tenants stay stably housed.

## Housing Choice Vouchers Administered by Local Housing Commissions

Several **cities and counties** in Michigan operate their own Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and receive an allocation of HCVs directly from HUD.

### Each commission:

- Maintains its own policies and preferences
- May have dedicated units or partnerships for specialized housing programs
- May or may not coordinate with the local Continuum of Care

## Key Differences from MSHDA Vouchers

Feature	MSHDA HCV	Local PHA HCV
Administered by	MSHDA (statewide)	Local Housing Commission
Waitlist	MSHDA manages by region; opens periodically	Each PHA has its own list, criteria, and timelines
Homeless Preference	Yes, via Coordinated Entry	Varies by jurisdiction—some PHAs have preferences
Portability	Yes, subject to approval	Yes, but must request portability process

## Project-Based Vouchers vs Tenant-Based Vouchers

Understanding the difference between Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) and Tenant-Based Vouchers (HCVs) is critical for planning and service delivery.

Feature	Project-Based Voucher (PBV)	Tenant-Based Voucher (HCV)
Portability	Tied to a specific unit	Follows the tenant
Move Flexibility	Must stay 1 year before eligible for HCV	Can move anytime with proper notice
Unit Location	Specific affordable housing projects	Private rental market
Service Linkage	Often paired with services (e.g., PSH)	Services may vary
Referral Process	Through Coordinated Entry	Through Coordinated Entry

## MSHDA vs Local Housing Commission Voucher Programs

This table compares key differences between vouchers administered by MSHDA and those managed by local Housing Commissions (Public Housing Authorities - PHAs).

Feature	MSHDA HCV Program	Local PHA HCV Program
Administrator	MSHDA	City/County Housing Commission
Service Area	Areas without local PHA	Cities or counties with local PHAs
Waitlist	Statewide by region, opens periodically	Managed individually by each PHA
Homeless Preference	Yes, via Coordinated Entry	Varies by PHA
Voucher Portability	Yes	Yes (subject to PHA rules)

## For more information

### MSHDA Housing Choice Voucher Program

<https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/rental/hcv>

### Housing Choice Voucher Fact Sheet (HUD)

[https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing\\_choice\\_voucher\\_program\\_section\\_8](https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8)

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