



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**ASIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK ESTABLISHES
PHONELINE ASSISTANCE FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT APPLICANTS
FOR NEW YORK CITY SECTION 8 VOUCHER WAITLIST LOTTERY AND NEW
YORK STATE EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ERAP)**

NEW YORK -- May 28, 2021. The Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY), through its Pro Bono and Community Service Committee, Government Service and Public Interest Committee, and Student Outreach Committee, has set up a phone hotline to assist limited English proficient (LEP) applicants for the Section 8 Voucher Waitlist Lottery and the New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, commonly known as Section 8, is a federally funded rental housing program that provides low-income families, the elderly and the disabled with financial assistance to rent safe, decent and privately-owned housing.

On May 17, 2021, New York State Homes & Community Renewal (NYSHCR) opened up the Section 8 Voucher Waitlist Lottery. The application process ends on May 28 (Friday) at 11:59 PM. **There is a two-step process to become eligible for the Section 8 waitlist.**

For this application process, no paper applications are accepted. **First**, NYC Residents must apply online and the applicant must have an email address. (For more information, see https://hcr.ny.gov/section8?utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=section-8-voucher&utm_content=eng.) NYSHCR will only respond via email after randomly selecting 30,000 households for placement on the New York City waitlist. NYSHCR will then contact the 30,000 households to submit a full application for assistance, including documentation of current income, *as vouchers become available*. Priority will be given to households at risk of or experiencing homelessness, households who identify as elderly and/or disabled, and households with dependent children. The application criteria are:

1. The Head of Household must be at least 18 years of age or an emancipated minor according to NY State law;
2. The household must be income eligible. See the "Income Eligibility" section below for details;
3. The household must meet immigration requirements. The head of household, or at least one member of the applicant's household, must be a U.S. citizen, a legal permanent resident, or have another eligible immigration status; and
4. The household must reside in New York City OR they must agree to reside within New York City for the first 12 months after receiving a voucher.

Second, NYSHCR will announce the results of the Section 8 waitlist lottery during the week of June 7 to verify placement. The applicant chosen will then have to go through an online applicant portal to complete verification screening.

The Section 8 Waitlist Call Center at 1-833-990-4001 is open Monday through Saturday from 9 am – 7pm. NYSHCR expressly states that by **submitting an application does not guarantee placement on the waitlist or receipt of a voucher.** NYSHCR reserves the right to adjust and change the terms, including the dates for opening and closing the waitlist, as necessary.

As for the ERAP program, the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) will be administering the application process that provides rental and utility assistance to eligible New York residents who owe arrears. There are no immigration status requirements to qualify for the program. **The application process starts June 1, 2021.**

Households approved for ERAP may receive:

- Up to 12 months of **rental arrears payments** for rents accrued on or after March 13, 2020.
- Up to three months of **additional rental assistance** if the household is expected to spend 30 percent or more of their gross monthly income to pay for rent.
- Up to 12 months of electric or gas **utility arrears payments** for arrears that have accrued on or after March 13, 2020.

Payments will be made directly to the landlord/property owner and utility company on behalf of the tenant. Tenant applicants will be notified of the amounts paid on their behalf. Applications for all eligible households will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, as long as funds remain available.

The application form has not been published on the OTDA's website. However, applicants should start preparing their documents to apply. For more information, please see <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/#overview>.

The OTDA's call center is 1(844) NY1-RENT (1 (844) 691-7368).

Our project hopes to help LEP applicants who lack electronic access to complete the application online by reaching out to NYSHCR and OTDA to complete the application via telephone. Applicants can call our phone line at **(929) 251-3022** or contact us at probono@aabany.org to schedule a time to contact NYSHCR or OTDA. Volunteers are unable to answer applicants' questions about eligibility and legal concerns. However, if the applicants have general housing or immigration questions, not related to the Section 8 Waitlist Lottery or ERAP, we can refer them to not-for-profit legal services or AABANY's Legal Referral Information Services at (516) 788-8820 (English); (516) 788-8821 (Mandarin); and (516) 788-8822 (Cantonese).

To view our flyer about the Section 8 Waitlist Lottery in Chinese, please see link: https://www.aabany.org/resource/resmgr/pdfs/other_pdfs/NYC_Section_8_FAQ_Chinese_v4.pdf

The Asian American Bar Association of New York is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) professional membership organization of attorneys concerned with issues affecting the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Incorporated in 1989, AABANY seeks not only to encourage the professional growth of its members but also to advocate for the AAPI community as a whole. AABANY is a New York regional affiliate of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA).

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