

Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance

The Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) programs enable more than 2 million people in 1.2 million low-income households to afford modest apartments by contracting with private owners to rent some or all of the units in their housing developments to low-income families.

“Project-based” rental assistance differs from “tenant-based” rental assistance, which low-income families can use to rent any private apartment that meets program guidelines. The main form of tenant-based rental assistance is the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Who Is Eligible for Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance?

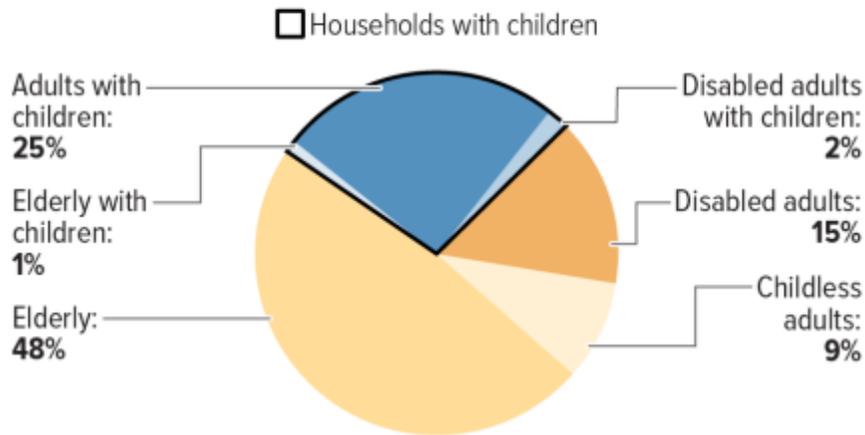
A family must be “low income” — meaning that its income may not exceed 80 percent of the local median income — in order to move into Section 8 PBRA housing.

Also, at least 40 percent of the assisted units in each development that become available annually must go to families with “extremely low incomes” (incomes not exceeding 30 percent of the local median or the poverty line, whichever is higher). Most of the remaining units are restricted to families with incomes not above half of the local median income.

In 2016, 87 percent of PBRA-assisted households were elderly, had disabilities, worked, had recently worked, or likely were subject to work requirements through another program. Seniors or people with disabilities head two-thirds of PBRA-assisted households.

Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for PBRA assistance.

Who Is Helped by Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance?



Note: Childless adults are households headed by a person under 62 without disabilities and without children in the home. Disabled adults are younger than 62. Elderly households are headed by a person age 62 or older.

Source: CBPP tabulation of 2016 HUD administrative data.

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How Much Do Section 8 PBRA Tenants Pay for Rent?

Tenants pay 30 percent of their income (after certain deductions are taken out) for rent and utilities, or a minimum of \$25 per month. The gap between the tenant contribution and the cost of maintaining and operating the apartment is filled by a monthly Section 8 PBRA payment to the private owner of the building.

Who Owns and Manages Section 8 PBRA Properties?

Private owners who have entered into multi-year rental assistance agreements with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (or with public housing agencies, for contracts funded under the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation program) own and operate Section 8 PBRA properties. Most owners are for-profit entities, but nonprofits (and some public housing agencies) own a significant share of Section 8 PBRA properties. About 17 percent of Section 8 PBRA-assisted units are in rural areas.

How Is Section 8 PBRA Funded?

Congress appropriates funding annually to renew Section 8 PBRA contracts.

What Is the Difference between Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance and “Project-Based Vouchers”?

While Section 8 PBRA is the largest project-based rental assistance program, a number of smaller programs also provide project-based rental assistance under similar rules. In addition, a hybrid form of tenant-based rental assistance — called [“project-based vouchers”](#) — may be tied to particular housing developments. In contrast to other forms of project-based rental assistance, families using project-based vouchers retain the ability to keep rental assistance when they move to a new location.

Section 8 PBRA enables frail seniors and people with disabilities to continue to live in their home communities and avoid or delay placement into nursing homes or other institutional settings that are much more costly.

How Does Section 8 PBRA Help Recipients?

Section 8 PBRA helps families to afford modest housing and avoid homelessness or other kinds of housing instability. For frail seniors and people with disabilities, Section 8 PBRA enables them to continue to live in their home communities and avoid or delay placement into nursing homes or other institutional settings that are much more costly.

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