

# Frequently Asked Questions: Affordable Housing with CommonBond Communities

## **Am I eligible for affordable housing?**

Each affordable housing community has its own requirements for eligibility. Usually eligibility is determined by your household income and how many people are in your household. Some housing units are set aside for specific populations, such as seniors or people with disabilities. To determine whether you're eligible, contact the community you are interested in for further details.

## **What affordable housing programs does CommonBond Communities manage?**

CommonBond Communities manages a number of affordable housing options, including Section 8, Section 42, Section 202, Section 236 and Section 811 and 202/8.

## **What is Section 8 Housing?**

Section 8 is a U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) federal program that helps low and very low-income households. There are two types of Section 8 programs: Section 8 vouchers and project-based Section 8. Under the Section 8 program, rents are based on 30% of household's income. CommonBond Communities provides project-based Section 8.

Qualified applicants must be/have:

- Income that does not exceed the maximum allowable income for this program based on the size of the household
- Must meet selection criteria for the property.

## **Is CommonBond Communities a provider of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers?**

No, CommonBond Communities does not provide Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. CommonBond Communities provides project-based subsidy that stays with the property. When a resident moves, the subsidy is then available for the next qualified person who moves into the property.

## **What is Section 42 or Tax Credit Housing?**

Section 42 or Tax Credit Housing assists households that make 30-60% of Area Median Income. These households pay lower than the area's market rate rent; however, rents are not based on 30% of household's income and do not change with the household's income. Income and rent limits are established annually by the local Housing Finance Agency. Qualified applicants must be/have:

- Minimum income requirement – two to three times the amount of rent per month
- Total gross income of the household cannot exceed the maximum allowable income based on the size of the household at the time of move in
- Rent cannot exceed the maximum allowable rents based on the size of units
- Must meet selection criteria for the property

## **What is the difference between "Income-Based" and "Income Guidelines"?**

Income Based rent is a percentage of your income. Income Guidelines are the minimum and maximum income limits set to qualify to rent an apartment. Income limits are updated every year and will vary according to city, county, and state.

## **Can I get a housing application online?**

Yes, if a housing community is accepting applications then an application can be downloaded at [www.commonbond.org](http://www.commonbond.org).



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### **Is the application good for all of CommonBond properties?**

No, a separate application needs to be completed for each property that you are interested in applying to.

### **What is the rental application process?**

Applications are only accepted at properties that have available units or an open wait list. For properties that have availability, the manager will request a Credit, Criminal and Rental background check. After these reports are received and approved, the manager will need to verify all Incomes and Assets and confirm the household qualifies under the income limits required for that specific location. Please note that housing applications are not accepted at the corporate office, excluding new developments. Applications received at the corporate office will be returned to sender.

### **Do you run background checks on everyone who wants to live at a CommonBond Community?**

Credit, criminal and rental background reports are run on all prospective residents ages 18 and over.

### **What is looked at on the Credit Report?**

The applicant's demonstrated ability to pay rent and utilities on time.

### **What is looked at on the Criminal Report?**

Arrest/conviction of criminal activity/behavior involving one or more of the following: • Crimes of physical violence to persons or property • Drugs • Theft of another's property • Registration with state and/or federal sex offender registry • Other criminal acts which may endanger the health, safety, or welfare of other residents or management staff • For felonies please refer to the property's Resident Selection Criteria for detailed information.

### **What is looked at on the rental background?**

We look for the following: • Unverifiable previous rental history • The ability to fulfill obligations and comply with all terms of previous/current lease(s) • A record of chronic late payment of rent • A record of underpayment or nonpayment of rightful obligations, including rent and utilities • A record of disruptive behavior • A record of destruction of property • A record of poor living or housekeeping habits.

### **What if I haven't rented anywhere and don't have a rental reference?**

Lack of previous rental history for first time rents is not sufficient justification to reject an applicant.

### **What does it mean to be on the waiting list?**

Properties maintain a waiting list because the demand for affordable housing is greater than the number of housing units available. The waiting list ensures that there is a ready list of potential residents when units become available. Waiting lists can be as long as two years; sometimes, waiting lists are "closed" because there are already so many people that have applied. Applicants on the waiting list may be required to renew their status as an interested applicant by contacting the site office every six to twelve months. The applicant's eligibility to rent one of the apartments is determined by their income at the time they are offered a unit. Applicants should contact each housing community individually to find out whether there is a waiting list and if they are accepting applications.

### **Are pets allowed?**

Each CommonBond Community has a pet policy. Senior communities allow pets, with breed and size limitations. Please contact the property you are interested in directly for more information. Assistance animals are allowed at all communities.

**Can I live in affordable housing if I am a student?**

The general rule is that if everyone in your household is a full-time student you are not eligible to live in affordable housing. There must be at least one household member who is not a full time student. Please check with property staff for specific details.

**Does CommonBond Communities provide emergency housing or temporary housing?**

CommonBond Communities does not provide emergency housing or temporary housing.

**How long will it take to find out if I have been approved to become a resident at a Common-Bond Community?**

Depending on availability, you should typically hear about your status in two to three weeks. Please note that there is a great need for affordable housing and the majority of the properties have waiting lists or no availability. Please contact the community directly for questions.

**Is there an application fee?**

Section 8 communities do not have an application fee; however, most Section 42 (Tax Credit) communities require a very reasonable application fee. Please check with property staff to determine if your desired community requires an application fee.