

Johnson County Housing Voucher Program revamps waitlist to better serve families



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Johnson County is getting ready to open its [Housing Choice Voucher Program](#), which assists people who need rent assistance.

When the waitlist opens this year, the process will be a little different.

Last year, the county accepted more than 1,400 applicants but only saw a success rate of around 11%.

This year, Johnson County will take the first 600 applicants with the hope of improving the success rate.

As rent prices rise, Heather McNeive, director of Johnson County Housing Services, explained how vouchers can help

"Rents in Johnson County have gone up between 16 and 26% in the last two years," McNeive said. "That really dramatically impacts the lowest income families in our community, and those are the folks we're trying to serve with this section eight program."

If you want to apply, the program prefers people who live or work in Johnson County. Commonly, applicants are elderly, disabled or survivors of domestic violence.

If accepted, a voucher will cover 60-70% of monthly rent. However, Johnson County has a shortage of housing options that accept vouchers.

"I really hope for an expansion of affordable units in our community. There's a dramatic shortage," McNeive said. "The demand is very high, and the supply is very low. We need to see more intentional affordable housing development in Johnson County."

Other metro communities like Kansas City, Missouri, and Lawrence have sources of income protection, so all landlords accept vouchers. Johnson County doesn't have that protection but offers landlords incentives to help people find a safe

place to live.

The voucher waitlist opens at 9 a.m. Wednesday, July 31.

McNeive said applicants never need to include any credit card info to get on a waitlist or hire a lawyer to move up the list. She said the best thing to do is follow the county's instructions.



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