

Virginia County to Add 5,000 Households to Voucher Waitlist

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by Morgan Sweeney

Through a special application and lottery process in September, Arlington, Virginia, is opening up the waitlist for its Housing Choice Voucher Program for the first time in more than 10 years.

The process will add 5,000 people to the housing voucher waitlist, likely keeping the list full for years to come, according to the local agency that manages the Arlington Housing Choice Voucher Program.

That's how the waitlist limits are usually decided – the housing agency determines how many applicants are needed to “fill any available vacancies” several years out, the agency told The Center Square in an email.

Currently, approximately 1,550 households receive housing vouchers in Arlington County. To make it onto the waitlist, a family's income may not exceed 50% of the county's median income for a family of that size.

Northern Virginia is one of the wealthiest areas in the country, encompassing four of the most affluent localities in the nation. Loudoun County – with a median

income of \$156,821 – is the wealthiest county in America, with the city of Falls Church falling right behind it at second on the list, according to U.S. News & World Report.

Fairfax County is number 5, and Arlington County is the eighth-richest county in the country, with a median income of \$128,145 as of December 2022.

Fifty percent of the county’s median income for fiscal year 2023 amounted to \$52,750 for individuals and \$75,350 for a family of four, according to the agency.

For new applicants, preference will be given to those who live or work in Arlington County, unhoused or houseless individuals, domestic violence victims, people with disabilities that would qualify under the Olmstead Act, and disabled households that qualify for permanent supportive housing, according to a press release from the county.

As the voucher program is federal, applicants must be U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or non-citizens with documented and eligible immigration status.

Arlington’s program has “grown slightly” over the last several years, according to the agency, “the county has not received a large, new allocation.” Until it does, it likely won’t be able to offer many more vouchers, and the waitlist “should provide a resource for potentially eligible applicants for numerous years.”

Morgan Sweeney is a staff writer covering Virginia and Maryland for [The Center Square](#). Morgan was an active member of the journalism program as an undergraduate at Hillsdale College and previously freelanced for [The Center Square](#)