

Special Needs Q&A

Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, also serving Hollister and San Juan Bautista

March 2023

What kind of assistance do you offer for persons with disabilities?

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz has special voucher programs for disabled persons meeting certain eligibility criteria. For a list of all special voucher programs, please visit our website at <https://hacosantacruz.org/waiting-lists/waiting-lists-for-all-programs/>. Additionally, if you are homeless or at risk of homelessness, please reach out to <https://smartpathsc.org/homeless/> or call 831-454-4122 or 2-1-1.

You might consider contacting the caseworker you have through the County or other Agency that is not the Housing Authority, to discuss options for you.

What other options might be available?

When you apply for or begin receiving assistance from the Housing Authority, our staff can help with special needs such as:

- ✓ Authorizing someone else to speak to us, receive mail, or sign papers on your behalf.
- ✓ Requests for extensions of important deadlines if the delay was related to a disability.
- ✓ Requests for a live-in aide, which is a person that is required by your disability to live in your home and assist you.
- ✓ Requests to rent a unit from a relative if you are unable to find another unit with the special features you require.

Other options, continued:

- ✓ Requests for an extra bedroom to store oversized medical equipment or provide extra space related to the disabilities.
- ✓ Other special needs

How Do I Make a Request?

Complete the appropriate Special Request Form, which you can download from our website, or call our Info Line (# below) to request a form or to make your request verbally if you cannot complete the form.

Make your request as early as possible so that processing time will not interfere in your housing needs.

Be specific about what you are asking for.

Once we get the request, we will send a form directly to your health care provider, social worker, or other knowledgeable professional to verify the need. Please make sure that person is aware of your needs and understands how important it is to provide as much detail as possible on our form and return it quickly. Your health care provider or social worker cannot give the form to you—he or she must send it directly to us.

When will I know if my request has been approved?

This depends on how long it takes your health care provider or social worker to respond. Most requests take over 30 days to process. We will send you a letter notifying you of our decision.

Approving a special request can result in you receiving more rental assistance that would otherwise be used to help another family.

For this reason, we require thorough documentation of the need and we will verify that the accommodation is being used.

Questions? Call our Reasonable Accommodation Line at 454-5955 ext. 317, email ra@hacosantacruz.org, or visit us online at www.hacosantacruz.org



2160 41st Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010. Open M-TH 8-4:30, Closed Fridays
For our business office or para información en español: 831 454-9455
Program rules are subject to change. Use this as general guidance only.
TDD: 831 475-1146

Special Needs Q&A cont'd

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More Information for Persons with Disabilities

What are the requirements for live-in aides?

- ✓ A live-in aide (LIA) cannot be someone who would normally live with you as part of your family or support you financially. A LIA is an employee who you hire to provide care.
- ✓ A health care provider, social worker, or other knowledgeable professional must verify that you need a LIA to perform essential tasks related to your disability during nighttime hours. The Housing Authority will confirm this need.
- ✓ You may not charge rent to a LIA.
- ✓ A LIA does not have any rights to the voucher and is not considered part of the assisted household.
- ✓ A LIA's income is not counted as part of your household income.
- ✓ A LIA must live with you full-time and document that he/she does not have another residence.
- ✓ You do not need our approval for daytime help, only for a LIA to live with you.

What are the requirements for renting from a relative?

You are only allowed to rent from a relative if:

- ✓ Your health care provider, social worker, or other knowledgeable professional verifies that you need special features due to a disability, and
- ✓ You complete a Housing Search Form to show that you tried to find another unit and that your needs can be met only by your relative's unit.

How can I get a larger unit or an extra bedroom?

Granting extra bedrooms mean that you get more rental assistance that could otherwise help another family. Extra bedrooms are approved in limited situations for:

- ✓ Large medical equipment
- ✓ Certain conditions that make it impossible for two people to share a room.

If you are searching for a unit, do not assume that your request will be approved!

Continue your housing search. You might not get an extension on your voucher simply because you were waiting for approval of your request.

When can I get an extension of my voucher expiration date?

Extensions due to a disability are only granted if your health care provider, social worker or other knowledgeable professional documents the dates when your disability prevented you from searching for a rental. There is no guarantee that extensions will be granted. **If you do not lease up by the deadline, you could lose your voucher.** Continue your housing search and document every unit you contact.



Need More Info?

Visit our website or call our Reasonable Accommodation Line for more resources, including:

- ✓ Special Needs Request Form
- ✓ Live-in Aide Request Form
- ✓ Housing Search Form
- ✓ Authorization to Act on Tenant's Behalf Form
- ✓ Housing Search Q&A

Reasonable Accommodation Line: 831 454-5955 ext. 317

Website: www.hacosantacruz.org