



RentCafe FAQs

HCV Participants

What is RentCafe? RENTCafe

RentCafe is a website that Newark Housing Authority uses to manage applications, waitlists, and other Housing Choice Voucher program processes.

If you are interested in applying for NHA's housing programs, you must complete the application in RentCafe. Once your application is complete, you can always log back into the same account, check on the status of your application or make changes.

RentCafe was not designed or developed by NHA. It is owned and operated by a software company called Yardi, and many other housing authorities in the county use the platform.

Do I have to set up an account with RentCafe?

If you are planning to apply for housing assistance with Newark Housing Authority, you must create a RentCafe account and use RentCafe to complete the application.

Once your application is complete, you can always log back into the same account, check on the status of your application or make changes.

If you are already participating in one of NHA's housing assistance programs, you will continue to use RentCafe to complete your annual recertifications and report changes in your income or family composition.



How do I set up an account?

1. Visit this webpage: bit.ly/NHAPortal
2. If a registration code was provided to you by Newark Housing Authority, select “I have a registration code,” and enter your registration code that was provided to you.
3. If you do not have one, click the button that says, “I do NOT have a registration code.”
4. Fill in your personal information on the next page, and then review and accept the terms and conditions.
 - NOTE: RentCafe requires an active email address. You can sign up for a free email address at websites like Gmail.com, iCloud.com, or Outlook.com. Be sure to remember which email address you use to set up this account. You will need it later.
5. The next screen will let you know that a confirmation email has been sent to you. Go to that email and follow the instructions to confirm your account.

Do I need a registration code to set up my account?

No, you can set up a RentCafe account without a registration code. Here's how to do it.

1. Visit this webpage: bit.ly/NHAPortal-Setup
2. Click the button that says, “I do NOT have a registration code.”
3. Continue to set up your account by filling in your personal information and reviewing and accepting the terms and conditions.
 - NOTE: RentCafe requires an active email address. You can sign up for a free email address at websites like Gmail.com, iCloud.com, or Outlook.com. Be sure to remember which email address you use to set up this account. You will need it later.

How can I tell if I already have an account or not?

1. Visit this webpage: bit.ly/NHAPortal
2. Enter the email address you believe you used to set up your account.
3. If that email address is not linked to an account, you will get a red error message at the top of the webpage. That could mean one of three things:
 - a. You used a different email address to set up your account. Try another one.
 - b. You have a spelling error in your email address. Retype it again.
 - c. You did not register an account yet. Visit this page to register: bit.ly/NHAPortal-Setup



I'm having trouble accessing my account. What should I do?

The RentCafe platform uses email to access your account, not a username and password like many other systems. Here are some possible issues you might encounter and ways to work through them.

Problem

You enter your email address and you see an error that says, “We couldn’t find a RentCafe account with this email. Sign up or contact your property team for an invite.”

Troubleshooting

1. You used a different email address to set up your account. Try entering another one.
2. You have a spelling error in your email address. Retype it again.
3. You did not register an account yet. Visit this page to register: bit.ly/NHAPortal-Setup

Problem

You enter your email address and click “Send Verification Code,” but nothing happens.

Troubleshooting

- Check your email account to see if RentCafe emailed you a one-time password (OTP).
- The OTP is a six-digit number.
- Search your inbox for this sender email address: no-reply@rentcafe.com.
- Check your spam or junk mail folder for the email containing the OTP.
- Reset your password by clicking the “Forgot Password” link.

Problem

You enter your email address and click “Email a Link to Login,” but nothing happens.

Troubleshooting

- Check your email account to see if RentCafe emailed you a link to log in.
- The link expires 30 minutes after it was sent to you. It will expire after that time and you will need to resend the link.
- Search your inbox for this sender email address: no-reply@rentcafe.com.
- Check your spam or junk mail folder for the email containing the link.



What is the difference between Bob.ai and RentCafe?

Below are the major differences between the two platforms:

RentCafe

- is the main platform and source of information used during the applicant phase
- allows you to create your application to join the HCV waitlist
- is where you will submit your preliminary application and your complete application, if notified of lottery selection
- is where you report income changes as they happen
- is where you report changes in your family composition as they happen
- is where you complete your annual recertification

Bob.ai

- is the platform you will use after your application is approved
- manages your orientation and will provide your voucher for signature
- helps with the completion of required documents and the approval process (allowing you to submit the Request for Tenancy Approval and where your landlord will upload your signed lease agreement)

How do I know which website(s) I need to use along the way?

There are ten steps to receiving housing assistance from Newark Housing Authority. Here are each of those steps and the website or platform you will use for each one.

1. Application - RentCafe

- First, you will need to register for a RentCafe account if you do not already have one.
 - NOTE: RentCafe requires an active email address. You can sign up for a free email address at websites like Gmail.com, iCloud.com, or Outlook.com. Be sure to remember which email address you used to set up this account. You will need it later.
- Then you will complete the application in RentCafe.
- You can check your application status at any time by logging back into the same RentCafe account.



2. Eligibility Determination - RentCafe

- If you are selected from the waitlist, you will be notified by email.
 - NOTE: It's important that you regularly check your email to make sure you do not miss important information about your application. Emails about your application may come from an email address ending in @rentcafe.com.
- Next, you will need to share additional information to help us determine if you are eligible. You can complete this in RentCafe.
- NHA team members will review your information to determine if you are eligible for housing assistance. They will pull the information you submitted in RentCafe to do this.
- If the NHA team has questions or needs more information, they may ask you to upload information to RentCafe or email them directly.

3. HCV Briefing

- In order to receive your voucher, you need to set up a Bob.ai account. Review the bob.ai FAQs for steps on how to do that.
- Bob.ai will guide you to watch a video all about the HCV program, what your responsibilities are, and what to expect with the program. It's important that you watch the video closely.
- You may also be requested to come into the office if this is the first time you are receiving assistance with NHA.

4. Issuance of a Voucher - Bob.ai

- Once you have completed the full application and the NHA team determines that you are eligible, you will receive your voucher to begin searching for a home.
- This voucher confirms that NHA will pay a portion of the rent on your behalf for a rental unit.
- You will sign your voucher in the Bob.ai platform.

5. Housing Search

- There are a variety of websites that can assist you with your search for housing, such as
 - AffordableHousing.com
 - ApartmentList.com
 - Homes.com
 - Redfin.com
 - Zillow.com
 - Bob.ai
- Be sure to look for homes that are the same bedroom size as noted on your voucher. If you are approved for a three-bedroom home but you found a four-bedroom home, NHA will only pay for the amount needed for the three-bedroom unit.



6. Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection - Bob.ai

- Once you have found a home and a landlord to accept your voucher, the unit must be inspected and pass inspection before you can sign a lease.
- The Bob.ai platform will help schedule the inspection with the landlord and communicate if the unit has passed or failed inspection.

7. Rent Reasonableness Determination - Bob.ai

- In order for NHA to provide housing assistance, we must know that the rent amount requested by the landlord is reasonable. We use the Bob.ai platform to check comparable rental rates in the area with the same bedroom size. Bob.ai will also negotiate with the landlord if the rent requested is out of that range.

8. Signing of the Lease and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract - Bob.ai

- Once the unit passes inspection and the rent amount is determined to be reasonable, you and your new landlord can sign the lease, and the landlord uploads it to the Bob.ai app.

9. Rent & Housing Assistance Payments

- You will make rent payments directly to the landlord for your portion of the rent amount.
- NHA will also make rent payments for the assisted portion of the rent directly to the landlord.

10. Annual Recertification - RentCafe

- After one year, it will be time to complete your annual recertification. This is where NHA will review your income level and your family composition to ensure that you are still eligible for the program and for your voucher size.
 - NOTE: If your household experiences a change in income or family composition at any time while you are receiving assistance from NHA, you must report that through the RentCafe website within 10 days of the change.



How do I apply for housing assistance with Newark Housing Authority?

If you don't already have an account with RentCafe, you will need to set one up in order to apply for housing assistance. Reference page 2 to learn how to set up an account.

Once your account is set up, you can now complete the application.

1. Visit this website: bit.ly/NHARentCafe
2. Follow the steps to select your preferred language and begin the application.
3. Enter your personal details, starting with your address and phone number, then click "Next."
4. Enter details about each member of your household. This information includes name, date of birth, race/ethnicity, and relationship to the head of household. Be sure to add everyone who lives in your household, including children, foster children and live-in caregivers.
5. Next, calculate the total annual income for your household. Your total should include all income sources from all members of your household. Income sources include but are not limited to: salary, wages, child support, Social Security, etc.
6. In the next step, you can select any unit accessibility features you or a member of your household may require, such as hearing, mobility, or sight access. If none of these apply, select "None" and click "Next."
7. Then select if you are currently displaced or homeless.
8. In the next section, we want to understand if you, the co-head of household or your spouse live or work in Newark, are aged 62 or older, or are a military veteran. This helps us find certain housing opportunities you may qualify for.
9. Select the waiting lists you want to apply for. You will see various senior housing properties. If you want to apply to the voucher program only, scroll down to the bottom and select that program. Then click "Next."
10. Complete a final review of all your information to make sure it's accurate and true. Then check the box that you accept the terms and conditions and click "Next" to submit your application.
11. If your application was successfully submitted, you will receive an email confirmation. Make sure you receive that confirmation. It will likely come from this email address: no-reply@rentcafe.com within five minutes of submitting your application. If you do not receive that email, check your spam or junk folder.
12. Applications are selected randomly through a lottery, based on available funding. If you are selected, you will be notified electronically at the email address you used for RentCafe. Be sure to check that email regularly.

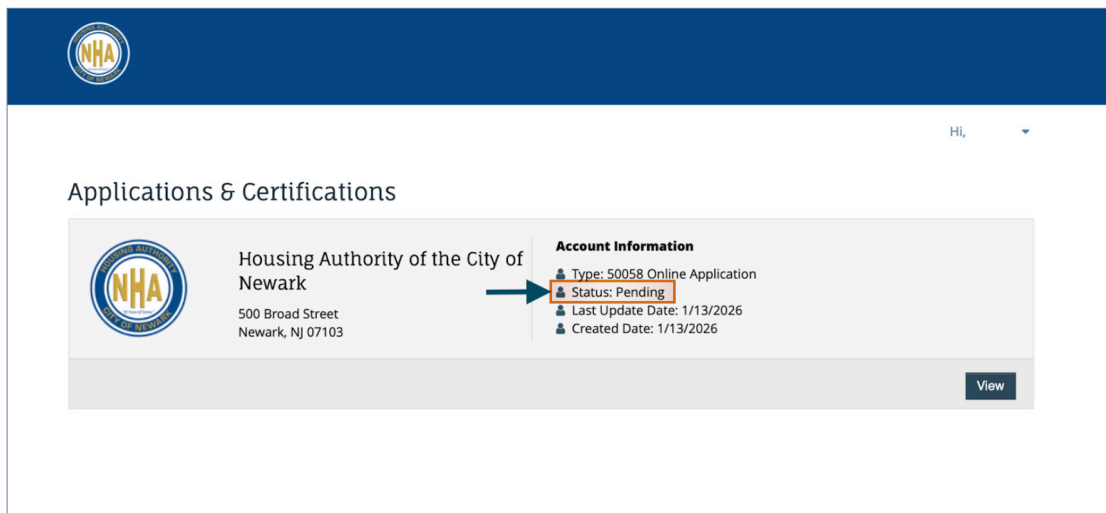


13. Your application will stay on file with us for 18 months. If you are not selected by the end of those 18 months, your application will expire. However, you can simply go back to your RentCafe account, and reapply.

How do I check my waitlist status?

You can check your status at any time by logging into the RentCafe account you used to apply. Here's how to do it.

1. Visit this webpage: bit.ly/NHARentCafe
2. Enter your email address and select your preferred login method. 1) Send a one-time passcode to your email address, or 2) send a login link to your email address.
3. Check your email for the one-time password or login link.
4. Once you've logged in, you will see your application status on the welcome page.
5. Look for the heading titled "Account Information." Under that you will see the status of your application.



I was told I have to report a change or submit an interim. What does that mean?

Any time you or a member of your household experiences a change in income—whether it's an increase, decrease or total loss, you must report that to Newark Housing Authority within 10 days of that change.

Similarly, if you have a change in household composition, such as a new baby arrives or an older child moves out, you must report that change within 10 days of the change.



These changes are known as “interim changes,” which means the change happened while you are receiving housing assistance. Failure to report these changes can result in termination from the program.

Here’s how to report a change.

1. Log into your RentCafe account at this webpage: bit.ly/NHAResident
2. Once you log in, select the button that says, “Report a Change.”
3. Complete the information requested onscreen.

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Here’s how to report a change.

1. Log into your RentCafe account at this webpage: bit.ly/NHAResident
2. Once you log in, select the button that says, “Report a Change.”
3. Follow the onscreen steps to provide the information requested.

I was told I had to complete my annual recertification? What does that mean?

Every year, Newark Housing Authority (NHA) is required to recertify that you are eligible to continue receiving housing assistance. This process ensures that any changes in your income or household composition are reported. Any changes to that can affect the amount of housing assistance or the voucher bedroom size you qualify for.

When it is time for you to complete your annual recertification, you will receive an email notice from NHA. To complete the process, follow these steps.

1. Log into your RentCafe account at this webpage: bit.ly/NHAResident
2. Once you log in, select the button that says, “Certifications.”
3. You will see a box with details about your annual recertification, such as the status and due date. Click the “Continue” button.
4. Follow the onscreen steps to provide the information requested.

