

PORTABILITY FAQ

COVID-19, Coronavirus, continues to impact people throughout the country. The health and safety of our employees and clients is a priority. Out of an abundance of caution, Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) is closed to the public until further notice.

We realize you may have many questions and concerns that need to be addressed. We will continue to provide updated information regarding DHA's operations on our website, www.decaurhousing.org. Additionally, you may call or email your Housing Specialist or the Front Desk Receptionist, if you have questions. Staff contact information can be found on DHA's website. Most staff are working remotely but your call will be returned. We appreciate your patience.

We would like to address some of your portability Frequently Asked Questions, FAQs, below.

Q. Is DHA accepting portable families?

A. Yes, families can port to Decatur Housing Authority.

Q. How do I port to Decatur Housing Authority?

A. You must submit a written request to port to your initial housing authority. They will send your portability packet to DHA. Preferably, you should have at least sixty days on your voucher.

Q. What happens after my initial PHA submits my portability paperwork to DHA?

A. An intake packet will be mailed to you. Please provide a current mailing address and email address. The intake packet must be completed, signed, and returned by mail or email to the Portability Housing Specialist, with the requested documents, including **birth certificates, social security cards, income verification, bank statements, current photo identification. Use the verification checklist in your intake packet to ensure that you send all applicable documents for each household member.** If you return your packet by email, **please send your documents as attachments. Do not include the documents in the body of your email.** All adult members of the household must sign the forms in the intake packet. Upon receipt, the completed intake packet will be reviewed by the Portability Housing Specialist and you and all adult members of the household will be instructed to watch the Portability Briefing video. You and each adult member of the household must sign and date the form acknowledging that every adult member watched the portability briefing video. Upon receipt of the Acknowledgement form, your voucher, Tenant Rent Estimator and Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) will be sent to you. Questions should be addressed to Portability Housing Specialist at portability@decaurha.org or 404-270-2113.

Q. What happens if I do not watch the portability briefing video?

A. All housing authorities operate differently. DHA does not operate like the housing authority you are porting from. The briefing video explains how DHA operates and details on how to complete the intake packet. You are more likely to submit an incomplete/incorrect packet if you do not watch the briefing video.

Q. What is an incomplete packet?

A. An incomplete packet includes, unsigned forms or forms not signed by all adults, failure to provide birth certificates, social security cards, income verifications, bank statements, current photo identification child support for applicable household members, and unanswered questions on the forms. All required documents must be provided, and all forms must be completed in their entirety for your paperwork to be processed. Paperwork is processed in the order in which it is received. If your paperwork is incomplete, it delays the process.

Q. What happens if I return an incomplete portability packet?

A. Incomplete packets cannot be processed and will be returned to the sender. If you submit an incomplete packet, it will delay the issuance of your voucher and RFTA. The packet will be returned to you and processed when it is resubmitted correctly, and all documents are provided.

Q. My voucher amount is too low. Can the housing authority give me a higher voucher amount?

A. Rents in metropolitan Atlanta are high. The Housing Choice Voucher program is an income-based program. Families with more income can afford higher rents and have more success finding suitable housing. Zero income families have difficulty finding suitable housing.

Q. My relatives give me money each month. Can I include the contributions as income?

A. No, DHA does not include contributions as income at lease-up.

Q. Can I live anywhere in DeKalb County?

A. You can live anywhere in DeKalb County except within the City of Atlanta or the City of Lithonia city limits. The City of Atlanta and the City of Lithonia have their own housing authorities.

Q. How do I find housing?

A. Several websites offer property listings including www.georgiahousingsearch.org and www.gosection8.com. Before relocating to metropolitan Atlanta, we encourage you to research unit rental amounts, the cost of living in comparison to the cost of living in the area you are porting from, the quality of school districts, neighborhood crime statistics, areas of low poverty, areas of low minority concentration, location of employment opportunities, proximity to educational opportunities and access to public transportation.

Q. Can participants who ported to DHA request voucher extensions?

A. You must be diligent about your housing search. **DHA is not absorbing.** We will bill your housing authority. DHA will give 30 days from the expiration date of the voucher issued by your housing authority. You may need to request additional time from your initial housing authority. Per the federal regulations, DHA must send your port paperwork back to your initial housing authority if you do not lease up before the billing date deadline. DHA will work with your housing authority regarding voucher extensions and billing deadlines.

Q. Does DHA help with paying the security deposit?

A. No. The family is responsible for paying the security deposit and any deposits for utility services that the family is responsible for paying.

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Q. What happens when I find a unit?

A. DHA is operating with a skeleton staff and it will take longer to process your RFTA and schedule inspections. Also, it may take you longer to find housing at this time. The Portability Housing Specialist will review the RFTA and determine if the requested rent is affordable for your family based on the household income and if the rent is reasonable. If the rent is not affordable, the owner will need to decrease the requested rent, or you will need to find another unit. If the rent is not reasonable, the owner will need to decrease the rent to the acceptable amount, or you will need to find another unit.

Once the unit and rent are approved, the initial inspection will be performed. The owner has 15 days to make repairs.

Families porting to DHA's jurisdiction **must not** move into the new unit before the unit passes initial inspection. **Move-in inspections will be conducted as long as the tenant has not moved into the unit.**

After the unit passes inspection, your family can move into the unit. You will be notified of your share of rent.

Q. Is DHA responsible for preparing the lease?

A. No. DHA is not a party to the lease. The lease is a legal document between the owner and the tenant. Please make sure you read and understand the lease completely before signing it.

Q. Who should I contact if I have portability questions?

A. Contact the Portability Housing Specialist, at 404-270-2113 or portability@decaturha.org .