

## **How to apply for affordable rental housing with Community Corp. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Q:** I am looking for affordable rental housing and heard about Community Corporation of Santa Monica (Community Corp.). How do I apply for an apartment?

**A:** The first step is to join Community Corp.'s Housing Opportunity List (HOL). The Housing Opportunity List is opened twice a year; in January and again in June. Once you join the HOL you no longer need to apply every year. You will only be required to update your household information if there are any changes. This change by Community Corp. began January 2017.

**Step # 1:** **Get an Appointment Card:** Contact Community Corp. during the month of December to find out when and where to pick up an Appointment Card for the January HOL. You can also contact Community Corp. during the month of May to find out when and where to pick up an appointment card for the June HOL.

The Appointment Card will give you the **exact date and time** for you to attend a 1-hour Housing Opportunity List Seminar (the "Seminar") where you will use a Community Corp. computer to complete an online Questionnaire. If you do not have an Appointment Card, you will not be allowed to attend the Seminar.

**Step # 2:** **Attend a Seminar on the date/time specified on the Appointment Card:** At the Seminar, staff will show you how to complete the online Questionnaire and will be available to answer questions. You will have 1-hour to complete the Questionnaire. Please arrive on time to ensure you will have enough time to complete the Questionnaire. Latecomers will not be guaranteed entrance to the Seminar.

**Step # 3:** **Answer the Questionnaire completely:** If you are unable to complete the Questionnaire on-line, you can request a hard copy. Incomplete Questionnaires will not be accepted. If you make a mistake, do not use white out. Instead, cross out the wrong information and correct it, and initial the correction.

**Step # 4** **Wait for a postcard:** Once the HOL process is completed you should receive a postcard confirming that you are on the Housing Opportunity List. If you attended a Seminar and did not receive a postcard within two months, please contact Community Corp.'s main office at (310) 394-8487.

**Step # 5** If and when you receive a written invitation from Community Corp. to attend an Open House and view a vacant apartment, follow all instructions in the letter.

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**Q:** What do I need to bring to my scheduled Seminar?

**A:** Bring a pen - not a pencil, a photo ID, and your **Appointment Card**. Know your social security number, bring a list of your sources & amounts of "gross monthly income" (before taxes or deductions), including Social Security payments, SSI, Disability, TANF, child support, etc., and a list of your bank account balances, and other assets such as pensions, etc.

**Please bring a translator if you do not speak/understand English.**

Please **DO NOT BRING food or beverages** to the Seminar.

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**Q:** What if something unexpected happens and I cannot attend my scheduled Seminar?

**A:** If you miss your scheduled Seminar, Community Corp. cannot guarantee if or when you can receive an appointment for another Seminar. We expect about 2,000 people to attend the Seminars; therefore, attending the Seminar during your scheduled date and time is important. If you realize you cannot attend your originally scheduled Seminar, please go back to go to the facility where you picked up appointment card when staff is scheduled to be in the Community Room (see Step #1 on first page of this document). If there is no availability for another Seminar, you may be given a Questionnaire stamped with "Applicant Assumes Responsibility" for you to fill out and submit before the deadline or you may be able to attend another seminar on a stand-by basis. Applicants will be responsible for complying with all deadlines and requirements.

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**Q:** Once I am part of the Housing Opportunity List, what is the next step? How long does it take to submit a formal Housing Application for rental housing?

**A:** You should receive a postcard within two months, confirming that you are on the Housing Opportunity List. When a vacant apartment becomes available, Community Corp. will match the different criteria for the apartment (such as minimum income, maximum income, # of persons in the household, etc.) with qualified applicants. Community Corp. will then contact approximately 40-80 people on the List who match the apartment's criteria. Once you receive this written invitation, you must follow all instructions and meet all deadlines. You will be asked to attend an Open House to view the vacant apartment, where you will be given the Housing Application that needs to be completed and returned to Community Corp.'s main office within

(3) business days. If you submit a Housing Application that is processed and you are not offered an apartment, your name stays on the Housing Opportunity List and you will be eligible to receive future Open House invitations.

Getting on the Housing Opportunity List is NOT a guarantee that you will be invited to an Open House or to submit a Housing Application. It is also not a guarantee that you will qualify for an apartment with Community Corp.

If you submit all the required documentation but do not get the apartment, you will be notified by mail, and your Housing Application will remain active for 90 days.

**Q: I am on the Housing Opportunity List and I need to change some of the information on my Questionnaire (such as address, household size or income). What should I do?**

A: An adult member (18 and older) of the household must come to Community Corp.'s office immediately to fill out the Declaration of Household Change form or you can download the form from our website: [www.communitycorp.org](http://www.communitycorp.org) and return the completed form to our main office at 1423 Second Street, Suite B, Santa Monica, CA 90401.

**Q: I received my postcard confirming that I am on the Housing Opportunity List but I still have not received a written invitation to attend an Open House and complete a Housing Application. What does this mean?**

A: There are typically between 3,000-5,000 applicants on our Housing Opportunity List with only 80-120 vacancies every year, therefore, we cannot invite everyone to an Open House. Do not be discouraged by the large number of applicants. The various programs and income requirements can accommodate many variations of income and household size.

**Q: What are the income requirements for Community Corp. housing? How much are the rents?**

A: It is difficult to provide an exact answer to these questions as every apartment's income and rent requirements are subject to change based on Federal, State and Local housing programs. Community Corp. uses both minimum and maximum income limits. As an *estimate*, the lowest income for 1 person is approximately \$1,380 per month. If you have a Section 8 Voucher, there is no minimum income.

The amount of rent is different for each apartment. Typically, our studios rent from \$449 to \$1,195; 1-bedrooms from \$543 to \$1,366; 2-bedrooms from \$560-\$1,622; 3-bedrooms from \$621 to \$1,853; and 4-bedrooms from \$671 to \$2,092. These are only guidelines. Actual rents can be higher or lower than any of these estimates. The rent for an apartment is fixed and does NOT change based upon changes to the applicant/tenant's income.

**Q: Does Community Corp. issue Section 8 Vouchers?**

A: No, Community Corp. does not issue Section 8 Vouchers, however, as a landlord we accept applicants with Section 8 Vouchers. If you would like to apply for a Section 8 Voucher, please contact the Santa Monica Housing Authority located at 1901 Main St., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Suite A, Santa Monica, CA 90405. Call (310) 458-8740 for more information.

**Q: Can I still qualify if I have bad credit, criminal record and/or an eviction?**

A: Community Corp. has strict Tenant Selection Criteria. Among the many factors we check are credit history for the previous 2 years and landlord history for the previous 3 years. We require that each applicant does not have more than \$3,000 in negative credit (past due bills, collection accounts, etc.). Bankruptcies or Evictions / Unlawful Detainers within the last 4 years will be considered automatic reasons for denial.

**Q: Can I choose which Community Corp. apartment I would like to live in?**

A: Unfortunately, you will not be able to choose which apartment you would like to live in. If you have a medical condition or a disability that requires you to have certain accommodations, such as a ground floor unit, a wheelchair-accessible apartment, or an assistive animal please write that on your Questionnaire under "Alternative Criteria". If you reject an apartment for reasons that do not meet our policy guidelines, your name will be removed from our Housing Opportunity List for the remainder of that year. You may re-apply for the following year.

**Q: Does Community Corp. allow pets?**

A: Community Corp. does NOT allow pets. There may be tenants who moved in prior to Community Corp. purchasing the property who may have had pets, but no pets are allowed for all new Community Corp. tenants.

Q: Is there an application fee for Community Corp. housing?

A: No, Community Corp. does not charge an application fee. Once you have been approved for housing you will be asked to make a deposit and that deposit will be applied to your security deposit. Community Corp. does not accept cash. Applicants who offer cash incentives or gifts to CCSM employees will be removed from the Housing Opportunity List.