

# HOUSING SEARCH RESOURCE GUIDE

This Housing Search Resources guide was created to support individuals and families navigating the housing search process. It provides practical tools, verified resource listings, and step-by-step tips to help renters secure stable, affordable housing across Los Angeles County.

Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA) provides free legal help and advocacy in the following areas of law:

- Housing: Eviction defense, Section 8 issues, rent increases, and tenant rights.
- Public Benefits: Assistance with CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and other benefits.
- Reentry and Criminal Record Support: Help clearing criminal records and addressing reentry barriers.
- Health and Access to Care: Help resolving Medi-Cal and healthcare access problems.
- Family Law and Safety: Domestic violence restraining orders, custody, and family law matters.

Apply for help online at [nsla.org/services/help](http://nsla.org/services/help) or by phone at **800-433-6251** or **818-834-7500**.

## HOUSING SEARCH WORKSHOPS

NLSLA offers free monthly Housing Search Workshops to help clients navigate the housing search process.

**English Workshop:** 3rd Wednesday of every month, 10:00 – 11:00 AM.

**Spanish Workshop:** 4th Wednesday of every month, 10:00 – 11:00 AM.

Workshops are open to all looking for housing.

**Sign Up using the QR code or link below.**



[HTTPS://FORMS.OFFICE.COM/R/CYHEK2Z93B](https://forms.office.com/r/CYHEK2Z93B)

# COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

One of the first steps to finding housing is to expand your support system. **The Coordinated Entry System (CES)** designates agencies to provide assistance to people. These agencies may have access to financial assistance, case managers, and other support for people.

CES Access Point Directory: <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2760-ces-access-point-directory.pdf>

1. Find your Service Planning Area (SPA) on the LA County SPA Map ([visit link above](#)). You can also find your SPA at [publichealth.lacounty.gov/chs/SPAMain/ServicePlanningAreas.htm](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/chs/SPAMain/ServicePlanningAreas.htm).
2. Find your population type: Adults (18+), Families (w/ children or pregnant), Youth (16-24).
3. Call all designated agencies and express your needs. Assistance is prioritized based on vulnerability.



## PREVIEW

### HOMELESS FAMILY SOLUTIONS CENTERS

Families with minor children or with pregnant adults

| Homeless Access Center          | Contact Phone  | Address  | Operating Hours  | Pop. Served                                     | SPA |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--|--|---|-----|
| Valley Oasis                    | (661) 239-9300 | 310 Palmdale Blvd., Ste. A, Palmdale, CA 93550   | Mon-Fri 8:00am - 5:00pm<br>Walk-in Hours Mon-Fri 8:00am - 10:00am<br>1:00pm - 3:00pm | Families with minor children or pregnant adults | 1   |
| LA Family Housing               | (818) 255-2796 | 7817 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91605 | Mon-Fri 8:00am - 5:00pm<br>Walk-in Hours Mon-Fri 8:00am - 5:00pm                     | Families with minor children or pregnant adults | 2   |
| Union Station Homeless Services | (626) 337-0140 | 16029 Arrow Highway, Ste. G, Irwindale, CA 91706 | Mon-Fri 8:00am - 5:00pm<br>Walk-in Hours Mon-Fri 1:00pm - 4:00pm                     | Families with minor children or pregnant adults | 3   |
| PATH                            | (323) 212-6289 | 3123 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018  | Mon-Fri 8:30am - 5:00pm<br>Walk-in Hours Mon-Fri 8:30am - 12:30pm<br>1:00pm - 4:30pm | Families with minor children or pregnant adults | 4   |
| St. Joseph's                    |                | 12420 Venice Blvd.                               | Mon-Fri 8:00am - 4:30pm  | Families with minor children                    |     |

## How to prepare for your search

- **Get Support** - Connect with case managers, shelters, and community groups.
- **Be Document Ready** - ID, SS card/ITIN, proof of income. Bring them with you to your CES access point.
- **Know Your Needs** - Be clear about the help you need.
- **Ask Questions** - Learn what services they offer.
- **Take Notes and Contact Information** - Names, email/phone, notes on next steps.
- **Follow Up** - Stay polite and persistent.

## RESOURCE DIRECTORIES

These directories help people quickly find housing resources, public benefits, food programs, healthcare, legal aid, and other free or low-cost community services across Los Angeles County.

### 211 LA

[211la.org](http://211la.org) or 2-1-1 by phone

**The People's Guide to Welfare Health and other Services**  
[hungeractionla.org/peoplesguide](http://hungeractionla.org/peoplesguide)

### Chirp LA

[chirpla.org](http://chirpla.org)

### One Degree

[1degree.org](http://1degree.org) or Text 844-833-1334

### Findhelp

[Findhelp.org](http://Findhelp.org)

### Family Source Centers

[communityinvestment.lacity.gov/family-source-centers](http://communityinvestment.lacity.gov/family-source-centers)

## INTERNET ACCESS & TECH RESOURCES

### Public Internet & Devices:

- [lacountylibrary.org/library-locator](http://lacountylibrary.org/library-locator)
- [findwifi.lacounty.gov](http://findwifi.lacounty.gov)

### Low-Cost Phone & Internet:

- Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- LAUSD Families Connected: 213-443-1300

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING SEARCH SITES

### CHIRP LA

[chirpla.org/page/search-housing](http://chirpla.org/page/search-housing)

### Public and Subsidized Housing

[rentcafe.com](http://rentcafe.com)

### HRC - Project Place Listings

[housingrightscenter.org/rental-listing](http://housingrightscenter.org/rental-listing)

### LA County's affordable rental listings

[housing.lacounty.gov](http://housing.lacounty.gov)

### LAHD Affordable Housing

[housing.lacity.org/affordable-housing](http://housing.lacity.org/affordable-housing)

### AffordableHousing.com

[www.affordablehousing.com](http://www.affordablehousing.com)

### City of Pasadena

[cityofpasadena.net/housing/affordable-housing](http://cityofpasadena.net/housing/affordable-housing)

### City of Glendale

<https://www.glendaleca.gov/government/departments/community-development/housing>

### City of Santa Monica

<https://www.santamonica.gov/housing-BMH>

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPERS

### Abode Communities:

(213) 629-2702, [abodecommunities.org](http://abodecommunities.org)

### LINC Housing Corporation:

(562) 684-1100, [linchousing.org](http://linchousing.org)

### Menorah Housing Foundation:

(310) 477-1476, [menorahhousing.org](http://menorahhousing.org)

### Thomas Safran & Associates:

(310) 855-7100, [tsahousing.com](http://tsahousing.com)

### Bridge Housing:

[bridgehousing.com](http://bridgehousing.com)

### A Community of Friends (ACOF):

[acof.org](http://acof.org)

### Mercy Housing:

(866) 338-0557,

[mercyhousing.org/california](http://mercyhousing.org/california)

### Hollywood Community Housing Corporation:

[hollywoodhousing.org](http://hollywoodhousing.org)

### Meta Housing Corporation:

(310) 575-3543, [metahousing.com](http://metahousing.com)

## MARKET RATE HOUSING SEARCH SITES

### Zillow

[www.zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com)

### Apartments.com

[www.apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com)

### HotPads

[www.hotpads.com](http://www.hotpads.com)

### Zumper

[www.zumper.com](http://www.zumper.com)

### PadMapper

[www.padmapper.com](http://www.padmapper.com)

### Facebook/ Craigslist (Use Caution):

"Rooms for Rent in LA" or "LA Apartment Listings"

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

- 1. Start Early & Search Daily:** Listings move fast. Check sites daily.
- 2. Set Up Alerts:** Get notified when a new unit in your price range becomes available.
- 3. Look Beyond Popular Areas:** Consider less gentrified neighborhoods like El Sereno, Pacoima, or South LA for better prices.
- 4. Call, Don't Just Click:** Many affordable units are not updated online — call property managers directly to ask about openings.
- 5. Gather Documents Early:** Have your ID, pay stubs, credit report, and references ready to submit quickly.
- 6. Use Housing Counselors & Case Managers:** Organizations especially through the CES can help with searches, vouchers, and application support.
- 7. Stay Open to Roommates or Studios:** Sharing rent or downsizing can open up more options.
- 8. Don't Give Up:** Affordable housing is out there — it just takes time, tools, and support.

## HOUSING CALL SCRIPT

### Intro:

"Hi, my name is [Name]. I'm calling about the rental at [address]. Is it still available?"

### If not available:

"Do you have any other units or properties with current or upcoming availability?"

### Key Questions:

- What is the monthly rent, and which utilities are included?
- How much is the security deposit? Are there any other move-in fees or required insurance?
- When is the unit available for move-in?
- What are the income and credit requirements?
- Are pets allowed? If yes, what are the pet fees, deposits, or breed restrictions?
- What appliances and amenities are included (parking, laundry, A/C, etc.)?
- How are maintenance requests and repairs handled? Is there on-site management?
- Are there any application fees, and what is the process?
- What is the screening timeline (how long does approval take)?

### Closing:

"Thank you. Can we schedule a time to see the unit and get the application?"

## SCAM ALERT

### Rule of thumb:

If it looks too good to be true — it probably is.

### Common Scam Red Flags:

- **Rent is far below market rate** for similar units in the area.
- **No in-person tour:** The person refuses to meet or show the unit.
- **High-pressure tactics:** You're pushed to sign or move in immediately.
- **Upfront payment requests:** They ask for rent or a deposit before you've seen the unit or signed a lease — sometimes even sending a lockbox code without ever meeting you in person.
- **Untraceable payment methods:** Requests for Zelle, Venmo, cash, wire transfers, or gift cards.
- **No written lease or paperwork:** They avoid providing legal documents.
- **Suspicious communication:** Poor grammar, inconsistent details, vague responses, or unusual email addresses.

### Source of Income:

- Landlords cannot deny applicants for using vouchers or benefits (Section 8, SSI, etc.).

### Credit Screening:

- Must apply credit rules equally; low score alone can't disqualify a voucher holder.

### Criminal Background:

- No blanket bans; must consider offense type, date, and rehabilitation.

### Disability Accommodations:

- Applicants can request reasonable accommodations (e.g., support animals, modified screening steps).

## AVERAGE RENTAL APPLICATION FEES

### Average Rental Application Fees in Los Angeles

- **Typical Range:** \$30 – \$50 per application.
- **Maximum Fee (2025): \$63.57**, adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

### California Law Requires:

- Landlords **must provide an itemized receipt** of actual screening costs.
- **No fee can be charged** if there are no current vacancies, unless the applicant agrees inwriting.
- Fees **cannot exceed actual out-of-pocket screening costs**.

### Tips for Renters:

- **Ask for Receipts** – always request a breakdown of costs.
- **Check Refund Policies** – especially if no screening was done.
- **Be Scam-Aware** – avoid listings that ask for payment before viewing the unit.

## CREDIT SCORES

### Check your score:

[AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com), 1-877-322-8228

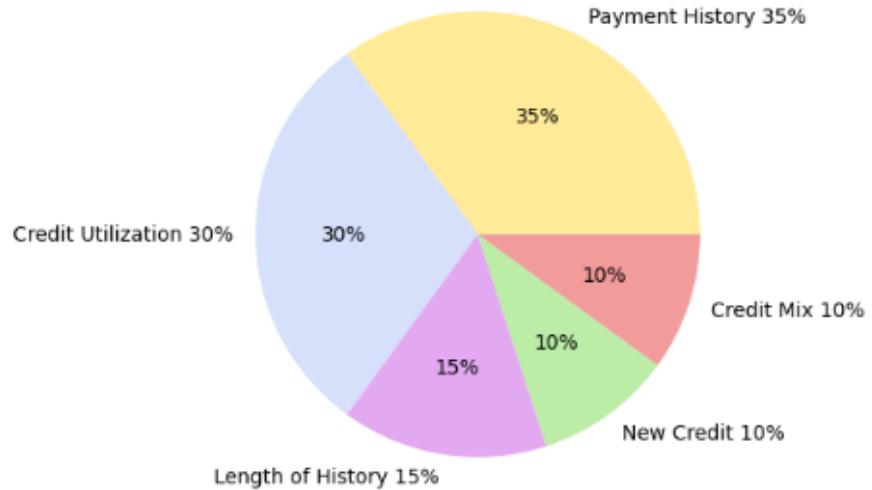
### What do landlords look for in a credit report?

- Payment history
- Rental history
- Debts
- Bankruptcy status
- Credit score

### Low credit score tips:

- Proof of regular income and employment
- Pay a higher deposit
- Get a cosigner
- Get a reference
- Keep credit card balances low (under 30%)
- Always pay at least the minimum on time
- Dispute errors on your credit report
- Ask for a credit limit increase
- Become an authorized user with someone you trust
- Use a secured card or credit-builder loan

### What Makes Up a Credit Score



## SECURITY DEPOSIT

A security deposit is money a landlord collects at move-in to cover damages or unpaid rent. In California, the maximum allowed is **one months' rent**. All deposits must be refundable — “non-refundable deposits” are illegal. Landlords must return the deposit within **21 days after you move out** and provide an **itemized list of any deductions**. If your deposit is not returned or is improperly withheld, you may file a claim in small claims court.

### Tips to Protect Your Deposit:

- Take photos and videos at move-in and move-out.
- Tenants have the right to ask for an initial inspection to fix any issues and avoid charges. Pre-inspection must happen within the two weeks before the tenant moves out.
- Keep a copy of your lease and all communication with your landlord.

## REPORTING HOUSING INJUSTICE

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD)</b><br>Tenant complaints, rent stabilization violations, illegal evictions<br><b>Phone:</b> 866-557-7368<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://housing.lacity.org">housing.lacity.org</a> | <b>Housing Rights Center (HRC)</b><br>Rental fraud, discrimination, landlord-tenant disputes<br><b>Phone:</b> 800-477-5977<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://housingrightscenter.org">housingrightscenter.org</a> | <b>LA County Dept. of Consumer &amp; Business Affairs (DCBA)</b><br>Security deposit theft, deceptive practices, scam listings<br><b>Phone:</b> 800-593-8222<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://dcba.lacounty.gov">dcba.lacounty.gov</a> |
| <b>LA County Sheriff - Fraud &amp; Cyber Crimes Unit</b><br>Scams like fake listings or identity theft<br><b>Phone:</b> 562-946-7217<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://lasd.org">lasd.org</a>                                  | <b>Federal Trade Commission (FTC)</b><br>Online scams and deceptive rental ads<br><b>Phone:</b> 877-382-4357<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://reportfraud.ftc.gov">reportfraud.ftc.gov</a>                       | <b>California Attorney General - Consumer Protection</b><br>Consumer fraud or landlord misconduct<br><b>Phone:</b> 800-952-5225<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://oag.ca.gov/report">oag.ca.gov/report</a>                              |
| <b>CA Civil Rights Dept</b><br>Discrimination, harassment, retaliation<br><b>Phone:</b> 800-884-1684<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://calcivilrights.ca.gov">calcivilrights.ca.gov</a>  | <b>Fair Housing Foundation</b><br>Discrimination, tenant-landlord education, and mediation<br><b>Phone:</b> 592-989-1206<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://fhfca.org">fhfca.org</a>                               | <b>LA County Health Department</b><br>Habitability, unsafe living conditions, public health complaints<br><b>Phone:</b> 888-700-9995<br><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://publichealth.lacounty.gov">publichealth.lacounty.gov</a>         |

## FREE/ LOW COST LEGAL RESOURCES

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County</b><br>800-433-6251, <a href="http://nlsla.org">nlsla.org</a>   | <b>Stay Housed LA</b><br>888-694-0040, <a href="http://stayhousedla.org">stayhousedla.org</a>                              | <b>American Bar Association</b><br>800-285-2221, <a href="http://ca.freelegalanswers.org">ca.freelegalanswers.org</a> |
| <b>Free Legal Help Directory</b><br>800-433-6251, <a href="http://calbar.ca.gov/Public/Need-Legal-Help/Free-Legal-Help">calbar.ca.gov/Public/Need-Legal-Help/Free-Legal-Help</a> | <b>LA County Bar Association</b><br>(213) 243-1525, <a href="http://lacba.org/?pg=contact-us">lacba.org/?pg=contact-us</a> | <b>SmartLaw</b><br>866-762-7852, <a href="http://Smartlaw.org">Smartlaw.org</a>                                       |

# NOTES TO STAY ORGANIZED

TAKE NOTES OF YOUR COMMUNICATION WITH CASE MANAGERS AND PROPERTY MANAGERS

DATE

CONTACT INFO

NOTES

| DATE  | CONTACT INFO | NOTES |
|-------|--------------|-------|
|       |              |       |
|       |              |       |
|       |              |       |
|       |              |       |
|       |              |       |
|       |              |       |
|       |              |       |
| NOTES |              |       |

# UNIT INSPECTION CHECK LIST

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT INFO:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ENTRY:** CEILINGS, CLOSETS, DOORS AND LOCKS, ELECTRICAL OUTLETS, FLOORING, LIGHTING, WALLS, OTHER

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**KITCHEN:** CABINETS/DRAWERS, CEILINGS, COUNTERS, GARBAGE DISPOSAL, FRIDGE, SINK/ FAUCET, SMOKE DETECTOR, STOVE/ OVEN, WALLS, WINDOWS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**ROOMS:** CEILINGS, CLOSETS, CURTAINS/ BLINDS, DOORS AND LOCKS, OUTLETS, FLOORING, LIGHTING, SMOKE DETECTOR, WALLS, WINDOWS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*TAKE PICTURES FOR COMPARISON, TO KEEP TRACK AND  
REMEMBER ALL THE UNITS YOU SEE\*\***

# BUDGET

## Monthly Income

Salary

Others

## Monthly Expenses

Rent Budget

Utilities

Food

Entertainment

Transportation

Phone/Internet/Streaming Services

Car/Student Loan/Credit Card Payments

**Income - Expenses =**