

Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development
Certificate of Preference Program
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Certificate of Preference?

A Certificate of Preference is a document that was issued by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency ("Agency") to residents displaced by the Agency in the 1960's when the Agency was implementing its federally-funded urban renewal program. This Certificate gives holders preferential consideration for Agency-sponsored and City-sponsored housing opportunities in San Francisco. In 2012 the responsibility of overseeing the Certificate of Preference Program was transferred to the Mayor's Office of Housing.

How do I get information about the Certificate of Preference Program?

Walk in appointments to discuss the certificate of preference program are not allowed. Staff will readily assist you but you must contact:

Sonia McDaniel, Certificate of Preference Program
Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development
One South Van Ness, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
415.701.5500 general
415.701.5613 hotline
sfhousinginfo@sfgov.org
www.sfmohcd.org (COPP)

Who is eligible for a Certificate? You might be eligible for a Certificate if you were an occupant of a building and were permanently displaced from the building as a result of the property being acquired by the Agency.

What is the process to obtain a certificate?

Contact Sonia McDaniel at the Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development. Please be prepared to give the following information:

- 1) Your current phone number and address;
- 2) The address from which your family was displaced;
- 3) The name(s) of the head of household at the time of displacement.

A search may take from 3 to 4 weeks. To expedite your search, please make sure that all of the information you present is accurate and up to date. To verify your eligibility, you may be asked to submit additional documentation, such as a copy of your birth certificate and driver's license.

If I am a family member of someone who has a Certificate of Preference, do I automatically get one, too? Certificate issuance is not automatic. If you believe you are eligible for a Certificate, please contact Sonia McDaniel at the number listed above.

What type of documentation would I need? Examples of documents include a birth certificate, school records, military records or other documentation that has an address which can place you either at the address at the time of displacement or as part of a household which the Agency displaced.

How does a Certificate of Preference help me get housing? A Certificate gives you priority consideration over non-certificate holders to obtain a housing unit in an Office of Community and Infrastructure (OCII) funded housing project (formerly SFRA) or a city-funded housing project. The Certificate holder must still meet the program eligibility rules for any particular housing unit including maximum income levels.

Does a Certificate of Preference have a subsidy attached to help me pay my rent or buy a house?

No. The Certificate provides the holder with priority consideration for housing. There is no monetary value associated with the Certificate. MOHCD has separate loan programs to assist first-time homeowners.

Is a Certificate of Preference the same as a Section 8 Certificate? No, the Section 8 Program is administered by the San Francisco Housing Authority (“SFHA”). Please contact the SFHA at 415-715-5200 for more information on the Section 8 Program.

How many types of Certificates of Preference are there? There are three residential certificates: “Residential A”, “Residential C”, and “Residential G” Certificates.

What is the difference between a “Residential A”, “Residential C” Certificate, and “Residential G” Certificate? A “Residential A” Certificate is given to the head of household that was displaced by Agency action. A “Residential C” Certificate is given to an eligible family or other household member residing in the household of “Residential A” Certificate holders at the time of the displacement. A “Residential G” Certificate is given to those households displaced by the Agency after 2008.

How long does a Certificate of Preference last? As of December 15, 2015, Certificates issued for people displaced from the Western Addition expire on January 2, 2021. Certificates issued for people displaced from Hunters Point expire on January 20, 2021. Residential G Certificates last for five years from the date of displacement.

How many times can I use a Certificate of Preference? A Certificate may be used once for a rental opportunity and may be used again for purchase of a home.

The use of Residential C Certificates is no longer tied to the Residential A Certificate Holder. Residential C Certificate Holders are allowed to use their Certificate for either assisted rental or assisted ownership units, regardless of whether the Residential A Certificate was exercised.

If I am denied a Certificate, what is the appeals process?

You should write a letter of appeal to Sonia McDaniel requesting an informal settlement meeting. You will be notified in writing of a date for the informal meeting. At this meeting you should submit any additional information or documentation concerning your appeal. A summary of the informal settlement will be prepared by the Mayor’s Office of Housing and be delivered personally to you or sent by regular mail to your address or such other address as you specify no later than sixty (60) days from the date of the meeting.

If you want to appeal the decision made as a result of the Informal Settlement meeting, you would submit a written request for a hearing addressed to Olson Lee, the Mayor’s Office of Housing & Community Development Director, no later than two weeks from the date of the Informal Settlement meeting summary. Your written request for a hearing must state the specific facts you believe entitles you to a Certificate of Preference. A Hearing Officer, outside the Mayor’s Office of Housing & Community Development, will then hear your appeal.

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