

U.S. Poverty Policy Request

Congress Must Expand Long-Term Rental Assistance

We urge members of the House Financial Services and Senate Banking Committees to include \$180 billion in guaranteed multi-year funding for Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) in the budget reconciliation, towards the goal of ensuring all eligible low-income renters get federal housing assistance.

Each year, millions of low-income Americans struggle to afford housing.

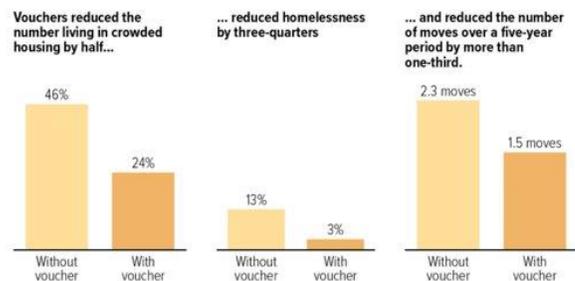
- **Wages have not kept up with increase in rents.** According to [Harvard researchers](#), since 1960 renters' median earnings have gone up 5 percent while rents are up 61 percent (adjusted for inflation). A worker making the prevailing minimum wage [cannot afford a two-bedroom apartment](#) in *any* U.S. state.
- **Only one in four eligible low-income renters receive federal housing assistance.** Before the pandemic, an estimated 24 million low-income renters paid [over half](#) of their income on housing; and due to chronic underinvestment, even those eligible [endure long wait times and greater harm](#) due to prolonged housing instability since *they cannot afford their housing long-term*. As a result, in 2020 [580,466](#) people were living on the streets and in shelters and about [1.3 million homeless students enrolled in school year 2018-19](#).
- Furthermore, because of **housing segregation and other policies that created wealth** for some Americans while blocking opportunity for Black families and other people of color, Black households (13 percent of total) make up [26 percent of all extremely low-income renters](#) and nearly [40 percent](#) of people experiencing homelessness. We can [lift children out of poverty](#) and start to [address racial inequities](#) in housing by expanding rental assistance.

RESULTS urges members of the House Financial Services and Senate Banking Committees to include \$180 billion in guaranteed multi-year funding for HCVs in the budget reconciliation. In addition, we urge Representatives to support and co-sponsor [Ending Homelessness Act](#) & [Housing is Infrastructure Act](#) to expand rental assistance.

Looking ahead, RESULTS supports efforts to expand rental assistance for all who qualify via universal HCVs and/or a refundable “renters’ tax credit”, increase the supply of affordable housing via additional resources for the Housing Trust Fund, incentivize inclusive zoning, strengthen fair housing laws, enact source of income discrimination protection, and reduce racial wealth inequality by increasing homeownership for people of color.

FIGURE 2

Housing Choice Vouchers Sharply Reduced Crowded Housing, Homelessness, and Frequent Moves, Study Shows



Note: The chart compares the housing status of low-income families in six U.S. cities who were randomly selected to receive a voucher and used it for at least part of the previous year to families in a control group who did not use vouchers. Families experiencing “crowded housing” were living in housing that has less than one room per household member. Number of moves reflects the average moves over a 4.5- to 5-year period since random assignment.
Source: Michelle Wood, Jennifer Turnham, and Gregory Mills, “Housing Affordability and Family Well-Being: Results from the Housing Voucher Evaluation,” Housing Policy Debate, 2008.

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES | CBPP.ORG