

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation and
Housing and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation and
Housing and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
440 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

We respectfully request that the Committee increase funding for the Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), also known as Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, in the FY2020 Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Bill. Specifically, we request that the Committee provide at least \$24 billion for housing vouchers to renew all vouchers currently in use and made targeted investments in vouchers for families with children.

Over the past decade, Congress' investment in housing vouchers has reduced veterans' homelessness by nearly 50 percent and helped tens of thousands more people with disabilities live independently in their communities.¹ These successful efforts are a model for how the federal government can address homelessness and housing instability among vulnerable populations. As the Appropriations Committee looks towards opportunities to expand HCV in FY2020, we request that you consider the needs of another such population: families with children.

A growing body of research finds that when low-income children grow up in affordable homes in neighborhoods with quality schools and other opportunities, they are much more likely to succeed in school and grow up to be healthy and productive adults.² Yet the number of low-income families with children that receive federal rental assistance has fallen over the past decade and a half. Since 2004, the number of families with children receiving rental assistance has fallen by 250,000 families – a decline of 13 percent – even as the number of families with “worst-case housing needs” has risen by 60 percent.³

With this in mind, we ask that the Committee increase funding for HCV to help more families with children live in stable, affordable homes. Specifically, we request at least \$24 billion for housing vouchers, including:

¹ Bailey, Anne. “Housing Vouchers Work: Vouchers the Best Tool to End Homelessness.” April 6, 2017. *Center for Budget and Policy Priorities*. <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/housing-vouchers-work-vouchers-the-best-tool-to-end-homelessness>.

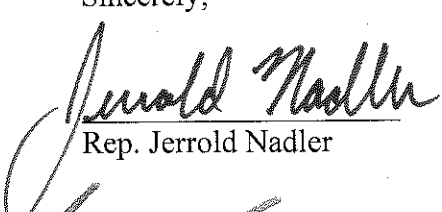

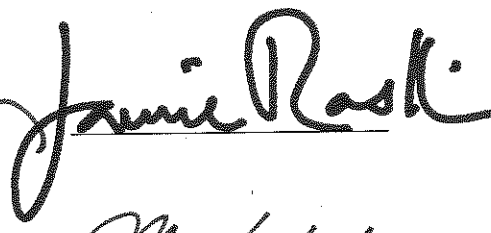
² Fischer, Will. “Research Shows Housing Vouchers Reduce Hardship and Provide Platform for Long-Term Gains Among Children.” October 7, 2015. *Center for Budget and Policy Priorities*. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/research-shows-housing-vouchers-reduce-hardship-and-provide-platform-for-long-term>



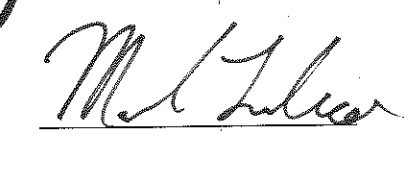
³ Mazzara, Alicia, Barbara Sand, and Douglas Rice. “Rental Assistance to Families with Children at Lowest Point in Decade.” October 18, 2016. *Center for Budget and Policy Priorities*. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/rental-assistance-to-families-with-children-at-lowest-point-in-decade>

- \$21.4 billion to renew 2.2 million vouchers that low-income families, veterans, seniors, and others are currently using to afford modest, stable homes;
- Sufficient funds to fully renew up to 25,000 “mainstream” vouchers for non-elderly people with disabilities that will require additional funding in FY2020;
- At least \$300 million to provide new housing vouchers for 30,000 youth and families with children, including:
 - At least \$250 million for vouchers for families who are either homeless or living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty; and
 - \$50 million for vouchers administered under the Family Unification program, which helps at-risk youth who have exited foster care and provides assistance families with children who require access to suitable housing in order to be unified.
- \$25 million to enable more communities to participate in the Housing Voucher Mobility Demonstration that Congress enacted in FY2019 to support families’ efforts to use housing vouchers to relocate to neighborhoods with quality schools and other opportunities.

Research also demonstrates that rental assistance is one of the most potent tools for reducing poverty and expanding opportunity. A 2015 study found that rental assistance lifted 33 percent of participants above the poverty line, a higher percentage than other safety net programs even though it reaches fewer families⁴. Other rigorous studies have found that, when families with young children use housing vouchers to locate in areas with quality schools and other opportunities, their children are much more likely to attend college, less likely to become single parents, and earn more as adults⁵. To achieve our shared goal of reducing poverty and expanding opportunity in this country, we further ask that, if Congress reaches an agreement to significantly raise the non-defense discretionary budget cap for FY2020, a substantial share of the additional resources be used to scale up our request and provide as much as \$2 billion in additional funding in FY2020 to make housing vouchers available to tens of thousands of additional vulnerable families.

Sincerely,


 Rep. Jerrald Nadler
 


⁴ Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. “Chart Book: Economic Security and Health Insurance Programs Reduce Poverty and Provide Access to Needed Care.” March 21, 2018. <https://www.cbpp.org/node/18557>

⁵ Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2016. “The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment.” *American Economic Review*, 106 (4): 855-902, <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20150572>.

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