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Congress must support fully funded Housing Choice Vouchers

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Housing affordability and homelessness is a crisis in the U.S. **Half of all renters are rent-burdened.** This means they pay more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities. Over a quarter of renters spend more than half of their income on housing.

Families tend to spend their funds on rent before other expenses. Often, housing is the single largest expense in a household budget. Rising rent costs put food, health care, and other basic needs out of reach. Or they push people into homelessness. **Forty to 60 percent of those experiencing homelessness have jobs.** But they cannot afford a place to live.

Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) are a critical tool for supporting struggling Americans. Vouchers help people working in low-wage jobs and elderly people afford housing. Vouchers help veterans and disabled people as well. Recipients have their rent partially covered by a subsidy paid to the landlord. The program also includes incentives for landlords, security deposit support, and more.

The HCV program only serves one in four eligible households. This is due to chronic underfunding. Millions of Americans are at risk of housing instability, eviction, and homelessness. This is because they are sitting — sometimes for years — on an assistance waiting list. Increasing the number of vouchers would change hundreds of thousands of lives. It would enable more Americans to afford needed childcare, groceries, and other bills.

Congress must expand access to Housing Choice Voucher funding in the fiscal year 2027 (FY27) budget. The program must add 250,000 new vouchers. Reach out to your members of Congress via email or phone today. Urge them to speak up on this priority. Ask them to submit this request to the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (T-HUD) subcommittee of Appropriations right away.

A helpful way to frame your letter, call script, or laser talk for a lobby meeting is to use **EPIC Laser Talk format** outlined below. The more personal you make your message, the better. Use the bullet points as a guide.

Sample message to Congress (EPIC format)

E = ENGAGE the listener: What makes you passionate about this issue?

- Housing affordability and homelessness are urgent challenges. Working families across the country are doing everything right. But they still can't afford a place to live.

P = State the PROBLEM: What is the problem you want the listener to solve?

- Nearly half of all renters are rent-burdened. They spend over 30 percent of their income on housing. Rising costs for food, health care, and other essentials are pushing too many families toward housing instability and homelessness.

I = INFORM on the solution: What would help solve the problem?

- This crisis of housing stability is solvable. Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) and other special purpose vouchers currently help 2.4 million households. This moves people toward economic security. These vouchers provide flexible support like rental help, landlord incentives, and aid with move-in costs. Yet chronic underfunding means only one in four eligible households receives help.

C = CALL to action: What specific action do you want the listener to take?

- Congress can strengthen housing stability nationwide. Will you urge the T-HUD subcommittee of Appropriations to increase HCV funding? This funding can fully renew current vouchers and add 250,000 new vouchers in fiscal year 2027.