

# EMERGENCY HOUSING VOUCHERS

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**Administering Agency:** HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) in consultation with Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD)

**Population Targeted:** Households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness

**Funding:** \$5 billion in the "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021"

HUD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and other rental assistance programs have for decades been funded only enough to meet the needs of about one quarter of eligible households, frustrating attempts to reduce homelessness. The "American Rescue Plan Act" provides \$5 billion for additional vouchers for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and people fleeing intimate partner violence or human trafficking.

HUD required that PHAs receiving EHV's coordinate with their local Continuums of Care (CoCs) to determine which households should receive the vouchers and mechanisms for ensuring these households have access to additional services. PHAs could also adopt certain flexibilities to help EHV households obtain housing.

Since 2021, the EHV program has provided life-saving assistance to families with the greatest needs. HUD data from 2022 found that the average annual income for an EHV household was just \$11,349. EHV's helped house people more quickly than any other new HUD voucher program. The success of the EHV program has important implications for how to more efficiently and effectively connect people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness to housing and supportive services when needed for long-term stability.

## About the EHV Program

The Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program was created by the "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021," which allocated \$5 billion for the creation of 70,000 new rental assistance vouchers targeted specifically to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness and people fleeing intimate partner violence or human trafficking. The program has been extremely successful, helping recipients, including families and people who were experiencing chronic homelessness, find safe, stable housing.

HUD required that PHAs receiving these vouchers coordinate with their local CoCs to determine which households should receive the vouchers and mechanisms for ensuring these households have access to additional services. PHAs could adopt certain flexibilities to help EHV households obtain housing, including establishing higher subsidy amounts (compared to the HCV program); providing more time for EHV participants to verify income, immigration status, and Social Security numbers; extending the time households can search for a unit; and providing landlord incentives to encourage property owners to participate in the EHV program.

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## Funding

The EHV program has used its funding faster than anticipated, primarily because rents increased significantly by 22% between April 2021 and April 2023. HUD estimates EHV funds should be sufficient to continue helping families already receiving EHV assistance through 2026, but some agencies reported that their funds were likely to run out before the end of 2025.

Losing EHV households could [increase homelessness](https://tr.ee/t4ejee) (https://tr.ee/t4ejee) across the country by as much as 10% or higher in some states, especially if the HCV program does not receive sufficient funding through the annual appropriations process and is forced to serve fewer people. In addition, due to the Trump administration's changes to the Continuum of Care (CoC) program (see the Housing First chapter for more information), at least 170,000 more people nationwide are expected to lose their supportive housing.

Many housing agencies and communities do not have the resources required to transition families with EHV households to another form of assistance. The Trump administration's proposed budget would cut funding for rental assistance programs by 43%, which would make it impossible for communities to assist households with EHV households. The flat funding for HCV renewals provided in the House FY26 bill would result in an estimated 411,000 fewer people receiving the assistance they need to stay housed. An estimated 243,000 fewer people would receive help under the Senate bill. Fully funding voucher renewals in FY26—including sufficient funding to successfully transition EHV households—is critical since any shortfall will directly cause families to be left without assistance. As *Advocates' Guide* went to press, Congress had not passed an FY26 appropriations act. A short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) keeps HCV funding at FY25 levels until further congressional action.

## Forecast for 2026

Advocates should urge members of Congress to make EHV households permanent and incorporate important lessons learned from their implementation into other rental assistance programs. To avoid a sharp spike in homelessness, Congress must provide enough funding to renew all existing HCV contracts and additional funding to ensure the almost 56,000 households currently served by the EHV program do not fall into homelessness. Congress should include in the final FY26 THUD spending bill statutory and administrative flexibilities and additional funding to assist the thousands of households at risk of losing their EHV.

## For More Information

NLIHC, 202-662-1530, [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

NAEH, [www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)

[Learn more from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](https://www.cbpp.org/), <https://www.cbpp.org/>

[Read the Urban Institute's case studies about how communities have used EHV households to prevent and end homelessness](https://tr.ee/oARMIb), <https://tr.ee/oARMIb>

The Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homeless Response, <https://housingequityframework.org/>, including help for communities on using vouchers.

HUD landing page for EHV: <https://www.hud.gov/EHV>

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*Many links and resources may have been changed or removed from federal websites before this guide was finalized. As a response, this guide provides full URLs to support your web-based research. Please utilize a web archival tool like <https://archive.org> to view links that may not currently be working and research any recent changes and funding cuts to ensure that you have the most current information.*

*Please contact [outreach@nlihc.org](mailto:outreach@nlihc.org) with any questions.*