

PRIORITIES FOR THE AMERICAN JOBS PLAN ACT

Congress is working to enact an American Jobs Plan to invest in America, create good-paying jobs, combat the climate crisis, advance racial equity, and build back better. To achieve these ambitious goals, any comprehensive jobs package must advance bold housing solutions to help ensure everyone has a stable, affordable home. Any comprehensive jobs package should:

- **Expand rental assistance to every eligible household.**
- **Invest \$70 billion to preserve public housing.**
- **Provide \$40 billion to build new homes through the national Housing Trust Fund.**

Expand rental assistance for every eligible household

The American Jobs Plan Act should make funding for rental assistance mandatory and expand assistance to every eligible household.

A major cause of today's housing crisis is the fundamental mismatch between growing housing costs and stagnant incomes for people with the lowest incomes. Making rental assistance available to all income-eligible households in need – a core element of President Biden's [housing platform](#) – is central to any successful strategy to rebuild our economy and advance racial equity.

Rental assistance is a critical tool for helping the lowest-income people afford decent, stable, accessible housing, and it has a [proven track record](#) of reducing homelessness and housing poverty. A [growing body of research](#) finds that rental assistance can improve health and educational outcomes and increase children's chances of long-term success.

Unlike other parts of our nation's safety net, funding for federal rental assistance is not "mandatory." Mandatory programs, like Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and others, automatically receive full funding each year to cover the needs of all eligible households.

Funding for rental assistance, in contrast, is not guaranteed, and rental assistance is funded only at arbitrary levels enacted by Congress and the president through the annual appropriations process. Because of decades of chronic divestment by Congress, only [1 in 4](#) families who qualify for housing access receive it, and 3 in 4 of these households in need of housing assistance are left to fend for themselves.

Expand and preserve the supply of rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes.

An underlying cause of America's housing crisis is a market failure that results in the severe [shortage of rental homes](#) affordable to people with the lowest incomes. We must address this market failure to end America's housing crisis.

- **Expand the National Housing Trust Fund - \$40 billion.** The Housing Trust Fund is the first new federal housing resource in a generation exclusively targeted to build and preserve rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes. It is the only federal housing production program targeted to address the market failure that is an underlying cause of the housing crisis. President Biden included robust funding for the Housing Trust Fund in his [plan](#) for addressing the housing needs of the lowest-income renters.
- **Repair Public Housing - \$70 billion.** Public housing is critical to ensuring people with the greatest needs have a safe, decent, affordable, and accessible place to call home, and the preservation of this community asset must be included in any strategy to ensure housing is a human right. Congress has divested from public housing for decades, resulting in over \$70 billion in unmet capital backlog needs. As a result, our nation loses 10,000 to 15,000 units of public housing every year to obsolescence or decay, and other units fall into disrepair.

Impact on America's Economy and Communities

Affordable and stable housing is [linked](#) to nearly every measure of having a quality life. A major investment in housing in the American Jobs Plan would positively impact:

- **Efforts to Build Back Better:** The pandemic has exposed significant gaps in our federal housing safety net. Housing inequities contributed to the spread of COVID-19 [cases](#) and [deaths](#), and the lack of universal housing assistance placed tens of millions of renters [at risk of losing their homes](#) and with them, the ability to keep themselves and their families safe. We can build back better by closing gaps in our safety net so that our nation is better prepared for the next crisis.
- **Our Economy:** Stable, affordable housing drives stronger student outcomes, prevents long-term health challenges, and promotes healthy, productive lives. A [landmark study](#) by Harvard economic Raj Chetty demonstrates the enormous positive impact affordable housing can have on upward economic mobility for low-income children. Affordable housing frees up more family income for other necessities, such as nutritious food, transportation, healthcare, and savings.
- **Climate Change:** The Biden administration's housing platform recognizes the direct connection between affordable housing and climate change. Significant resources are needed to preserve and expand the supply of affordable homes that are energy-efficient and resilient.
- **Racial Equity:** Decades of systematically racist housing policies have locked Black, Latino, and Native households out of opportunities to build wealth and economic security, creating tremendous racial disparities in housing and homelessness. Universal housing assistance would help ensure that renters of color have access to affordable housing and robust housing choice.

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