

ENDING HOMELESSNESS ACT



House Financial Services Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) with Representatives Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO) and Ritchie Torres (D-NY) introduced the [“Ending Homelessness Act of 2021” \(H.R.4496\)](#).

The bill includes one of the HoUSed campaign’s [top priorities](#) and a core element of President Biden’s housing platform: it ensures universal rental assistance for every eligible household. The bill also increases the supply of housing affordable to people with the lowest incomes, bans source of income discrimination, and includes other critical measures to help end homelessness.

The [HoUSed campaign](#) urges Congress to quickly enact the Ending Homelessness Act to help address the urgent housing needs of America’s lowest-income and most marginalized households.

The Ending Homelessness Act:

- **Establishes a universal voucher program to ensure every eligible household can receive rental assistance.**

[Expanding rental assistance](#) to every eligible household is central to any successful strategy to solve the housing crisis. Rental assistance is a critical tool for helping the lowest-income people afford decent, stable, accessible housing, and the Housing Choice Voucher program 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, increase children’s chances of long-term success, and increase racial equity.

Because of decades of chronic divestment by Congress, only [1 in 4](#) households who qualify for housing assistance receives it, and most are left to fend for themselves. Today, [8 million](#) extremely low-income households pay more than half of their income on rent, forcing them to make impossible tradeoffs between paying rent and putting healthy food on the table or making ends meet. These households are one financial shock – a broken-down car or missed day at work – from falling behind on their rent and face eviction. While millions of eligible households [wait for help](#), too many are pushed into homelessness, institutionalization, or incarceration.

Over ten years, the legislation phases in additional funding for housing vouchers until it covers all eligible low-income households, starting with those with the greatest needs.

- **Provides \$10.5 billion to build homes affordable to people with the greatest needs.**

The bill includes \$5 billion over 5 years for the national Housing Trust Fund to address the [severe shortage of affordable housing](#) and to combat homelessness. 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.

The legislation provides \$5 billion in McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Grants to build 85,000 new permanent supportive housing. The bill directs the HUD Secretary to ensure that grantees are using a Housing First Approach.

An additional \$500 million is provided to support outreach, case management, and social services, and \$20 million is provided to help communities coordinate housing and healthcare initiatives.

- **Bans source of income discrimination and provides funding for fair housing enforcement.**

Discrimination by landlords against renters prevent households from effectively using federal, state, or local rental assistance, and is often a pretext for illegal discrimination against renters of color, women, and people with disabilities.

The legislation prohibits housing discrimination based on source of income or veteran status and authorizes new funding to enforce fair housing and civil rights laws. The legislation provides \$90 million annually over 10 years for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987 and \$47 million annually over 10 years for the Fair Housing Assistance Program under the Fair Housing Act.

The legislation also authorizes \$3 million annually through 2024 to HUD to implement a national public awareness campaign to help individuals understand their expanded rights under the Fair Housing Act and learn how to report incidents of housing discrimination.

- **Reduces segregation and expands opportunity by increasing housing choice.**

The legislation requires public housing agencies (PHAs) to establish and use payment standards only on the basis of Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs). By tying voucher subsidies to market rents in a given neighborhood, rather than an entire metropolitan area, SAMFRs [reduce segregation and expand opportunity](#) for low-income families with Housing Choice Vouchers.

- **Permanently authorizes the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.**

USICH is an independent agency that coordinates federal efforts to help states and communities efficiently and effectively combat homelessness. It works across 19 federal agencies and departments to streamline and improve service delivery to people experiencing homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act authorizes federal homelessness programs.

[Read Chair Waters' fact sheet on the Ending Homelessness Act of 2021.](#)

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