

FACT SHEET:
Update on the American Rescue Plan’s Emergency Housing Voucher Program

July 12, 2022

Since awarding nearly 70,000 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) through President Biden’s American Rescue Plan in May 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has made significant progress in working with communities to house people experiencing homelessness with the vouchers.

The Emergency Housing Voucher program is the first-ever special purpose voucher program within HUD to address homelessness not specific to veterans. The program is leasing at a rate faster than any previous housing voucher program within HUD and is driving unprecedented collaboration among public housing agencies (PHAs), homeless services organizations, and victim services organizations to provide housing assistance to vulnerable populations, including individuals and families who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness; fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or were recently homeless or have a high risk of housing instability. The EHV program is an anchor program of HUD’s [House America initiative](#) in which HUD, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), and other federal agencies have enlisted leaders in [100 state and local communities](#) to make specific commitments to re-house people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing.

The EHV program provides communities new flexibilities and resources to help individuals and families with higher barriers successfully use housing vouchers. This includes robust administrative funding and a new service fee that allows program administrators to pay for costs necessary to help families find and retain housing. PHAs can also use service fees for landlords incentives, tenants’ security and utility deposits, housing search assistance, and even for furniture and household goods, which are often a forgotten expense for families who are directly transitioning from homelessness.

HUD is taking aggressive action to ensure that more individuals and families can secure and retain homes. HUD and the Biden-Harris Administration will continue to build on this progress to make sure more households have a safe and stable place to call home. Highlights to date include:

IMPROVING VOUCHER ISSUANCES AND UTILIZATION, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE MOST VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

The EHV program has already helped over 26,000 households who were homeless, survivors of domestic violence, or otherwise at risk to afford a safe, stable place to call home. At the current rate – the fastest leasing rate of any previous HUD housing voucher program – the program is on track to reach full lease-up by the end of next year.

- All 613 EHV PHAs have executed a memorandum of understanding with a homeless service provider or victim service provider, and, at 37% utilized to date, **the EHV program is leasing at a rate faster than any previous housing voucher program within HUD.**
- **To date, approximately 87 percent of EHV are in use – either leased or currently issued.** Over 26,000 households have been housed, while nearly 35,000 voucher holders are in the process of searching for a unit or completing the lease process.
- **PHAs continue to issue roughly 1,200 EHV per week,** and the time for issuance to lease is averaging 77 days. Of the vouchers issued 180 or more days ago, about 58% have been housed. **At this rate, the program is on track to reach full lease-up by the end of 2023.**
- **Many communities are targeting their EHV assistance to households with the most needs. On average, EHV-assisted households have an income of \$11,349 – 27% less than the typical Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) household.** Examples:
 - A family in Brazoria County, TX lost their home after the death of the husband and father and resorted to living in a motel. The mother shared that through the assistance of the EHV program, within a month she and her children moved into a unit that was near a school and bus route, and both boys are thriving. She has not seen her children this happy since their father passed, and they are no longer ashamed or embarrassed of their living conditions.
 - A man in Los Angeles was living in his car at the time he was issued an EHV. He was very proactive about locating housing and used the Los Angeles County Development Authority’s (LACDA) housing locator services. Ultimately, he located a unit in Koreatown with an owner who rents other units to several Section 8 tenants.
 - A human trafficking survivor stated: “I am so happy and settled into our new home. It is perfect. I had so much added stress in my life on a daily basis. The Emergency Housing Voucher program, and recent move, has finally brought my family stability and calm. We no longer have all the stressors of wondering what will happen to us and worries about affording rent.”

CREATIVELY USING SERVICE FEES TO HELP HOUSE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

PHAs across the country are creatively and successfully using their service fees to help house individuals and families, including through landlord incentives, housing search services, and application fees and security deposit assistance. Examples:

- **Housing Authority of Santa Barbara (California):** The Housing Authority of Santa Barbara (HASB) – which has a 79% EHV utilization rate and has used 62% of its service fees – offers a \$1,500 signing bonus to landlords leasing to an EHV family and a \$2,000 security deposit for each unit leased to an EHV family. HASB established a Landlord Mitigation Fund that provides financial assistance to landlords to mitigate damages to units.
- **Greenville Housing Authority (North Carolina):** The Greenville Housing Authority (GHA) – which has a 96% EHV utilization rate and has used 57% of its service fees – provides a landlord leasing incentive that consists of \$1,000 for a new landlord who has not previously participated as a landlord in a GHA program in the past 12 months and \$250 for each additional unit leased, as well as a \$500 one-time bonus for current landlords for the first unit leased and \$250 for each additional unit leased to an EHV family. GHA also provides a Landlord Mitigation Fund that enables landlords to apply for up to \$2,500 per unit for damages. Additionally, households may apply for application fee costs up to \$50 and for security deposit assistance.
- **San Diego Housing Commission (California):** The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) – which has a 75% EHV utilization rate and has used 80% of its service fees – provides application fee assistance to EHV families, up to two times the contract rent in security deposits and an average of \$100 in utility assistance per household, and “holding deposits” that are credited toward security deposit amounts upon approval of the rental application. SDHC also provides landlords renting to EHV recipients \$500 for the first unit rented and \$250 for each subsequent unit. SDHC hired full-time staff to serve as housing specialists/navigators. Staff members are specifically assigned to EHV families, facilitating landlord incentives, housing search services, service provider coordination, and rental assistance staff communication. Additionally, SDHC leverages funding from the City of San Diego Affordable Housing Fund to reserve vacancies while Housing Specialists identify candidate applicants and facilitate rental application submissions, process voucher documents, and execute the move-in processes. This Vacancy Loss Incentive serves as a benefit to give the Housing Specialists time to line up suitable tenant options while the owner is compensated for their collaboration with SDHC.

PROVIDING DIRECT SUPPORT AND LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT IN RESPONSE TO UTILIZATION CHALLENGES

From rising rental costs to difficulty finding landlords to the higher barriers to housing experienced by EHV households, the challenges around housing the most disadvantaged

are real. That is why HUD is proactively working with PHAs, providing direct support through technical assistance, engaging landlords, and providing other support and resources to address these challenges head on and ensure that more households can obtain decent, stable housing through the EHV program.

- **In response to the utilization challenges PHAs are experiencing in competitive rental markets across the country, HUD is hosting a four-part EHV landlord engagement series.** More information about the webinar series is available at www.hud.gov/ehv.
- The Department is **preparing landlord symposiums in housing markets across the U.S. to encourage more landlord participation in HUD’s housing voucher programs and to dispel myths and misconceptions of voucher-assisted households.**
- HUD **provides bi-weekly office hours and ensured that families have housing search assistance during their initial housing search.** HUD’s December 14, 2021, [office hours](#) highlighted Seattle, Chicago, and the State of Michigan’s best practices for housing search and tenant readiness services. These communities also explained their use of service fees that helped overcome barriers to accessing and maintaining housing.
- HUD has **provided direct technical assistance to 90 communities, including San Francisco, New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Tucson/Pima County, New Orleans, and others, to expand understanding of the program and its flexibilities and to build coordinated landlord engagement approaches.** Examples of the types of technical assistance (TA) provided include:
 - **New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)/ New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (NYHPD) (New York)** – HUD assigned TA to NYCHA and NYHPD to reduce bottlenecks in the referral process from the Continuum of Care (CoC) and other partner agencies. The TA provider worked closely with NYCHA and NYHPD to refine how applicants were guided through the system and provided helpful feedback on NYCHA’s portal system to reduce wait times. The two PHAs have issued 5,491 EHV’s as a result.
 - Regarding the benefits of EHV technical assistance, NYHPD stated: “Envisioning and building New York City’s sweeping Emergency Housing Voucher initiative demanded we navigate a thousand complexities tied to launching a new program with a new set of partners. HUD’s Technical Advisors assisted with devising solutions to help us deliver. Our TA partners brought housing groups together to plan through challenges; helped develop

communications, training resources, and new media campaigns. Their support was crucial to shortening the learning curve as we worked to meet the needs of communities not historically given priority for federal vouchers. We look forward to continued collaboration to help New Yorkers navigate an especially competitive rental market.”

- **St. Francis County Housing Authority (Arkansas)** – HUD assigned TA to help the PHA better understand program rules and regulations and develop better processes in assisting applicants referred by local partners. The TA provider worked with the PHA to develop local partnerships, and the program is now fully leased.
- **Tucson and Pima County (Arizona)** – HUD assigned TA to help develop and refine landlord incentive policies and landlord outreach. As a result, the PHAs have leased 121 families and 38 additional families are searching for housing.
- **HUD is hosting regional symposiums with participating PHAs to discuss program challenges and identify solutions.**

ADVANCING BEST PRACTICES AND ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE TO HELP MORE HOUSEHOLDS SECURE HOUSING

HUD is bringing together PHAs and people with lived experience to foster collaboration, address inequities, and strengthen support and resources to improve outcomes of the EHV program and other voucher programs administered by the Department.

- **HUD recently accepted 10 EHV communities to participate in the first cohort of a Community of Practice focused on advancing equity in the EHV program.** HUD plans to use this Community of Practice to draw upon the strengths of communities to foster and encourage resource sharing, innovative thinking, and connections among PHAs, while exploring inequalities within their existing systems and developing system adjustments to ensure efforts to advance equity throughout the EHV program.
- **In July 2022, HUD will host a series of focus groups for people with lived experience leasing a new home through the EHV program.** The results of these focus groups will inform the EHV team for areas of technical assistance in the future.
- **Earlier this year, HUD released the [Emergency Housing Vouchers \(EHV\): A How-To Guide for Public Housing Agencies](#) to provide an overview of EHV operating requirements, outline considerations for PHAs in the design of their EHV programs, and highlight best practices in program**

implementation.

- **HUD’s efforts around the EHV program are informing work around the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program – the federal government’s major program for providing housing assistance to over 2.3 million American families – and the Special Purpose Voucher (SPV) program.** HUD will bring the innovative approach of the EHV program to these other voucher programs to improve housing outcomes for households across the U.S.

ENSURING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE EHV PROGRAM

HUD has prioritized informing the public on EHV leasing, issuances, and unit utilization to provide transparency and ensure accountability in the program.

- In 2021, HUD launched the [Emergency Housing Voucher \(EHV\) Data Dashboard](#) to provide unprecedented transparency and accountability for this new special purpose voucher program. The dashboard provides updates (with potential delays as PHAs gather and submit data) on leasing, issuances, unit utilization, and information on voucher awards and funding by PHA. The dashboard showcases EHV data at the national, regional, field office, state, and PHA-level for ease of use by a variety of audiences. The dashboard is also a valuable tool for identifying communities that are facing challenges and that could benefit from additional assistance.

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