

Purpose

The Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program (see [Notice PIH 2021-15](#) for details) is a new housing voucher program that is funded by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and provides 70,000 housing vouchers through Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to assist people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness; are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; or were recently homeless. Implementation of these vouchers must be done in partnership with the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Victim Services Providers (VSPs). The [Emergency Housing Vouchers Webinar Series](#) provided information highlighting key elements of PIH Notice 2021-15 to help PHAs, CoCs, VSPs, and other community partners prepare for EHV's.

The [Pairing Services and EHV's webinar](#) helped participants gain an understanding of the expectations and options for services related to EHV's. Attendees learned to work with local stakeholders to plan for ways to pair short- and/or long-term services with EHV's depending on the population selected, local needs, and resources that are available. This document provides a summary of key themes and takeaways from the webinar.

Planning and Considerations

The EHV program will require PHAs, CoCs, VSPs, and other community providers to work together in ways they have not before. For successful planning:

- Use an [inclusive planning process](#) (which taps key stakeholders including people with lived experience of homelessness, people of color, and people from other historically marginalized populations) to identify how households will be prioritized by the coordinated entry (CE) system for EHV referral, what the service needs are for different priority populations, and what funding or partnerships can be identified to support EHV implementation.
- Build or deepen partnerships with a diverse array of providers that can offer a variety of services to EHV households, including services that are accessible to and meet the needs of people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, non-native speakers, and people from other historically marginalized populations.

Transition Supports and Services

All EHV households should receive some level of **transition supports and services**—individualized services and resources that assist the household to transition from their homeless or at-risk living situation into housing. PHAs can use the EHV Services Fee detailed in [Notice PIH 2021-15](#) to fund transition supports under eligible categories. In addition, the CoC and other community partners may be able to provide support, depending on what other resources the EHV household is eligible for. To successfully lease up, EHV households may need transition assistance including:

- **Housing Search Assistance.** PHAs are required to ensure that housing search assistance is made available to EHV families (either by the PHA or through the CoC or another partnering organization) during their initial housing search. PHAs can use any EHV administrative fees, including the services fee, to fund these activities. At a minimum, the assistance *must* include:
 - Support identifying available units that meet household needs and preferences.
 - Providing transportation assistance or direction to potential units.
 - Conducting owner outreach.
 - Assisting with rental applications and PHA forms.
 - Expediting the EHV leasing process for the household.

Other recommended activities including helping households identify barriers to leasing and strategies to overcome them, providing workshops on how to conduct an effective housing search, enhanced support for portability processing, checking in with families during the process and providing reminders about important deadlines, and dedicating a landlord liaison for EHV households.

- **Assistance with securing documentation** necessary for the PHA or property manager.
- **Move-in assistance**, including funds for security or utility deposits, application fees, moving costs, securing furniture and other items, and moving these items into the new home.
- **Orientation** to the unit and property, tenancy responsibilities, and the neighborhood.

Supportive Services

While all households should receive transition supports, some households will also need **supportive services**—voluntary, ongoing services that provide individualized support for the household for as long as needed. The need for ongoing services (after lease-up and the initial transition) will depend on the general needs of the populations prioritized for referral to EHV, as well as the individual needs of each household. Examples of services include housing case management, primary and behavioral health care, care coordination, aging services, intellectual and developmental disabilities services, workforce and education supports, benefits assistance, and legal services, among others.

Levels of Intensity and Service Models

Services can be delivered using a variety of models and can range in intensity and flexibility depending on the needs of the target population. For example, people with [high-acuity needs](#) may require intensive, individualized supports from multi-disciplinary teams (such as an [Assertive Community Treatment](#) model) and staff with low [caseloads](#) (such as an Intensive Case Management Model) to stabilize in and sustain housing. On the other side of the continuum, people with low-acuity needs may be able to sustain housing with low-intensity supports such as connections to mainstream providers and education and wellness programming.

Funding for Supportive Services

There are many sources of funding and community resources that can be utilized to meet a wide variety of needs for EHV households, including:

- **Medicaid/Medicare/Managed Care**—Provides health coverage; eligibility and offerings vary widely by state. For more information, see [Managed Care Resource Brief](#) and [Public Housing Agencies and Medicaid Managed Care Organizations](#).
- **Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services**—Where available, provides services in the home or community instead of institutions or other isolated settings. See if your state has a benefit: [Summary of State Action—Medicaid and Supportive Housing Services](#).
- **Primary Health Care**—Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) provide community-based, patient-centered primary care and other services. In addition, FQHCs received funding through the ARP to expand capacity and enhance services—for more information, see [Using HRSA Health Center Funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to Improve Systems of Care for People Experiencing Homelessness](#).
- **Behavioral Health Care**—The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) provides funding through a variety of programs that can support behavioral health, intensive case management, Assertive Community Treatment teams, and other services.
- **Aging and Disability Services**—To find resources near you, see [Eldercare Locator](#), [Centers for Independent Living \(CILS\)](#), and [State Councils on Developmental Disabilities](#).
- **Hospital Community Benefit Funds**—Not-for-profit hospitals are obligated to fund activities that benefit their communities. Connect with your local not-for-profit hospitals to understand their current priorities and opportunities for partnership. For more information, see [Hospital Community Benefit Funds](#).
- **Local/Private Funds**—Some communities have funding from local government programs or private funders that can be used for services.

For each of these categories, the type of funding that is available, who is eligible, how funds can be used, and other factors can vary widely by program as well as by state and locality. After determining what funding is available locally, key questions to ask include:

- What services and resources are offered and how can they support housing stability and well-being for EHV households?
- Who is eligible and what is the process for enrollment and accessing benefits?
- How can PHAs and CoCs work with the funders to increase access to benefits for EHV households?
- Are there opportunities to build partnerships around coordination and service delivery?

Community-Based Services

All people in a community, including those who are eligible for EHV, have a variety of different needs and circumstances they are navigating at any given point. There are many different community-based organizations and services available to provide a wide range of supports, including:

- Benefits counseling.
- Childcare.
- Educational and workforce support.
- Legal services.
- Culturally specific organizations.
- Food and diaper banks.
- Financial literacy education and financial management and credit building/repair services.
- Social, self-help, faith, or other community groups.

Seek out a diverse array of partners, including those that are trusted by people experiencing homelessness, people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ-identifying individuals, and other historically marginalized groups. Key questions to ask about community-based services include:

- What services and resources are available?
- How are households already connected to community-based services? Are there unmet needs?
- What partnerships already exist and what new connections can be made?
- Are there options for services that are easily accessible to (and offered by trusted providers) people from historically marginalized populations and subpopulations prioritized for EHV?
- Are services active or passive? Do they actively engage or do they rely on households coming to them? Can households navigate making connections on their own or do they need support? Can any of those connections be made during the transition period?

Quality Services

Quality supportive services should be comprehensive and customized to meet the evolving needs of each household. Quality services are:

- **Voluntary.** Although providers should actively work to engage and connect with participants, housing should not be contingent on participation in services.
- **Person-centered.** Providers should work with individuals and families to co-create services plans and goals.
- **Trauma-informed.** Trauma has a profound impact on functioning and well-being. Ensuring that staff are trained to understand trauma and deliver [trauma-informed care](#) is vital to providing effective supportive services.

Services for Survivors

In addition to safe housing and other basic needs, survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking may have unique needs for rehousing and recovery, including:

- Trauma-informed services that take into account physical health, mental health, and safety concerns resulting from abuse.
- Legal services to obtain protective orders, restraining orders, or child support assistance, or to resolve warrants or address other needs.
- Assistance regaining economic independence, including credit repair.
- Services responsive to the needs of survivors from historically underserved or marginalized populations.
- Heightened confidentiality and information-sharing protections.

For more information, see [Safe Housing Partnerships: Building Partnerships](#) and [Serving Survivors through Coordinated Entry](#).