

Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance

The Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) programs enable more than 2 million people in 1.2 million households with low incomes to live in affordable homes by contracting with private owners to rent some or all of the units in their housing developments to low-income families.

“Project-based” rental assistance differs from “tenant-based” rental assistance, which families with low incomes can use to rent any privately owned home that meets program guidelines. The main form of tenant-based rental assistance is the [Housing Choice Voucher Program](#).

How Does Section 8 PBRA Help Recipients?

PBRA helps people afford housing and avoid homelessness or other kinds of housing instability. PBRA can also allow older adults and people with disabilities to continue to live in their home communities and, if paired with [supportive services](#), can help people with chronic health conditions maintain stable housing.

Who Is Eligible for Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance?

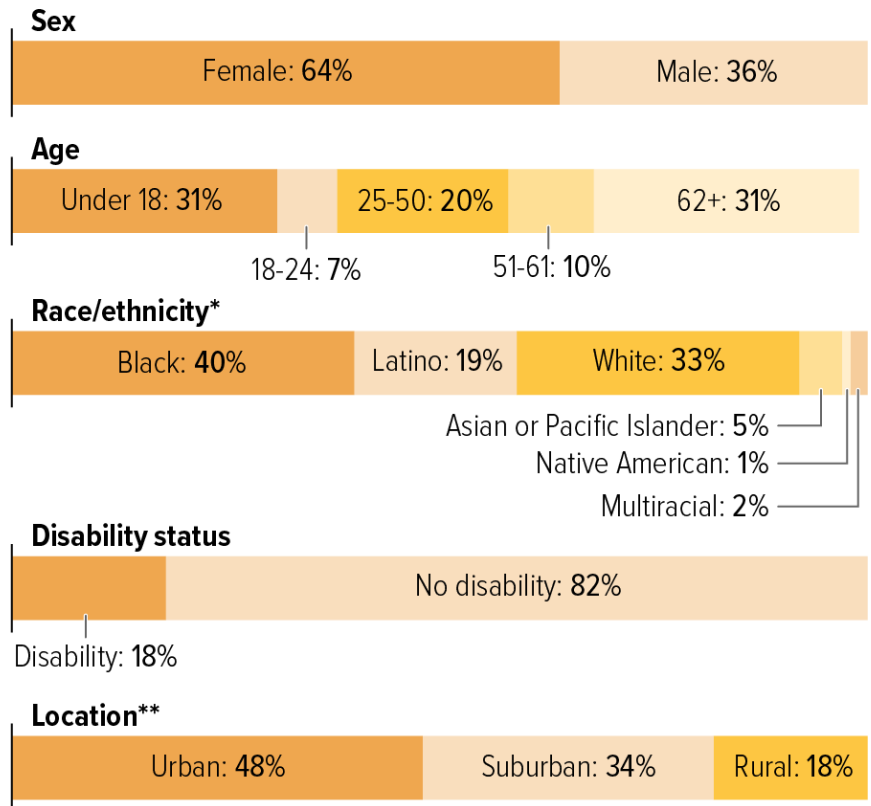
A family or individual must have a “low income” – meaning that their income may not exceed 80 percent of the local median – to live in Section 8 PBRA housing.

For each participating housing development, at least 40 percent of the subsidized units that become available annually must go to families with “extremely low incomes” (up to the poverty line or 30 percent of the local median, whichever is higher). Most of the remaining units are restricted to families or individuals with incomes not above half of the local median.

In 2016, the latest year with available data, 87 percent of households living in PBRA homes were older adults, disabled, currently employed, recently employed, or likely subject to policies under other programs that take away benefits for not meeting work requirements. Older adults or people with disabilities head two-thirds of PBRA-assisted households.

Families with an immigrant whose status makes them ineligible for a voucher can receive prorated assistance based on the number of household members who are eligible.

Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance Helps 2.1 Million People. Who Are They?



*All race/ethnicity categories other than Latino are non-Latino only. Those identifying as Latino may be of any race.

**Urban, suburban, and rural designations for U.S. Territories were not available.

Note: Category percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding or missing data.

Sources: CBPP analysis of Housing and Urban Development 2018 administrative data and the Housing Assistance Council's urban, suburban, and rural Census tract designations (for location)

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How Much Do Section 8 PBRA Tenants Pay for Rent?

Tenants pay 30 percent of their income (after certain deductions are taken out) for rent and utilities, or a minimum of \$25 per month. A monthly PBRA subsidy payment to the owner covers the difference between the tenant contribution and the cost of maintaining and operating the apartment.

Who Owns and Manages Section 8 PBRA Properties?

Participating private owners enter into multi-year rental assistance agreements with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) — or with public housing agencies for contracts funded under the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation program — and they maintain responsibility for

management of their Section 8 PBRA properties. Most owners are for-profit entities, but nonprofits and some public housing agencies own a significant share of Section 8 PBRA properties.

About 18 percent of PBRA-assisted units are in rural areas.

How Is Section 8 PBRA Funded?

Congress provides funding annually to renew PBRA contracts. Housing agencies and owners can convert some units assisted through public housing and other federal rental assistance programs to PBRA, but otherwise HUD has not been permitted to sign new Section 8 PBRA contracts since 1983.

What Is the Difference between Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance and “Project- Based Vouchers”?

While Section 8 PBRA is the largest project-based rental assistance program, a number of smaller programs also provide project-based rental assistance under similar rules. In addition, while the Housing Choice Voucher program mainly provides tenant-based assistance, state and local voucher agencies can opt to use some of their funding for “[project-based vouchers](#).” The most important difference between project-based vouchers and PBRA is that project-based voucher tenants can, after one year, move to a new location using the next tenant-based voucher that becomes available, while PBRA tenants generally cannot move without losing their rental assistance.

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