

It's Time for Housing Voucher Expansion

Over 5 million people in households with low incomes use Housing Choice Vouchers — the nation's largest source of rental assistance — to help pay for housing they find in the private market, in all kinds of communities. Yet only 1 in 4 households eligible for rental assistance receive it due to funding limitations.

Rental assistance lifts 3 million people out of poverty, including 665,000 seniors and 936,000 children (using 2018 data). **Greatly expanding the number of housing vouchers could move millions more people out of poverty, significantly reduce racial disparities, and produce far-reaching benefits** for many of the 12 million households paying more than half of their income on rent.

Research shows that Housing Choice Vouchers:

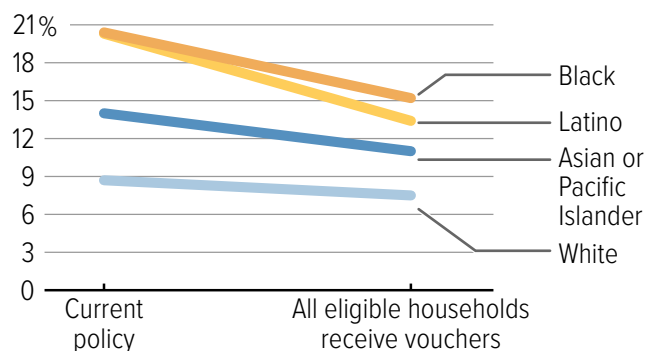
- Reduce the share of families living in shelters or on the street by three-fourths, the share living in overcrowded conditions by more than half, and the share of adults experiencing domestic violence by half.
- Allow seniors to remain in their homes and allow people with disabilities to live independently.
- Reduce how frequently children must change schools. This also benefits their classmates by helping their teachers better gauge and advance students' learning.
- Give low-income children better access to low-poverty, high-resource neighborhoods — particularly children of color, who disproportionately live in high-poverty areas due to a long history of discriminatory government policies.

Vouchers can:

- ▼ Reduce poverty
- ▼ Sharply reduce homelessness and overcrowding
- ▼ Reduce domestic violence
- ▲ Improve health and educational outcomes
- ▲ Advance racial equity
- ✚ And more

Expanding Housing Vouchers to All Eligible Households Would Cut Poverty and Reduce Racial Disparities

Percent of people in poverty by race/ethnicity



Source: Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy calculations using data from the 2019 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey

Also, when families use housing vouchers to move to lower-poverty neighborhoods, the children are likelier to attend college and earn more as adults, while the adults can enjoy major health improvements such as less diabetes, extreme obesity, and depression.

And when vouchers and other rental assistance are paired with health services provided through supportive housing, they improve access to community-based health care for people with complex health needs and reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations.