
August 27, 2015

Housing Voucher Data Tables: Sources and Methodology

The number of **“Authorized Vouchers”** that housing agencies can use is the number of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) set and approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and reflects the historical allocation of funding by Congress. It does not reflect current relative need. The data for each agency were downloaded from HUD’s Resident Characteristics Report (RCR) and other HUD sources. To calculate voucher utilization rates for each year (the column headed **“Percent of Authorized Vouchers in Use”**), we used the authorized count as of the prior December, except for 2004 and 2005, where we used data for January and June, respectively, because comparable data were unavailable. We used authorized vouchers as of the prior December in the denominator to account for the time it takes housing agencies to lease up new vouchers. Note that this method may yield utilization estimates that are very high for agencies that received new authorized vouchers — such as allocations of new tenant protection or VASH vouchers — after December.

“Number of Families Using Vouchers” represents the monthly average number of housing vouchers leased during the calendar year or quarter, as reported by housing agencies to HUD’s Voucher Management System (VMS). All averages are rounded to the nearest whole number. All Housing Choice vouchers, including those issued under the veterans’ supportive housing (VASH) program, were included in the figures for authorized vouchers and vouchers in use. The data may not reflect corrections submitted by agencies after HUD released the data but do reflect adjustments by CBPP to correct for obvious errors. Section 811 (i.e., five-year mainstream) vouchers were excluded from the data, to the extent that we were able to identify them, in order to maintain consistent data over the time series. Renewal funding for these vouchers is now included in the annual appropriation for Tenant-based Rental Assistance but is allocated separately.

“Total Voucher Assistance Payment to Owners” is the amount paid by housing agencies to private owners in the form of voucher assistance payments in the calendar year. It is the total reported Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) for the calendar year from VMS.

“N/A” indicates the agency did not administer vouchers during that year or the data reported for the year are incomplete.

“Estimated change in number of families using vouchers following sequestration, as of December 2014” is calculated by subtracting the number of families using vouchers in December

2012 from the number in December 2014, adjusted for new “tenant-protection” and veterans’ supportive housing (VASH) vouchers awarded and issued since December 2012. HUD has awarded more than 50,000 new tenant-protection and VASH vouchers to state and local housing agencies, and agencies have issued these vouchers to families, since December 2012. HUD issues tenant protection vouchers to replace public or other assisted housing that has been demolished or eliminated for other reasons; we subtracted these vouchers from the number of families using vouchers in December 2014 because they do not represent a net gain in the number of families receiving assistance. We also did not count new VASH vouchers in our analysis of the impact of sequestration, as Congress excluded VASH vouchers from sequestration. Some agencies have increased the number of families assisted since December 2012. The estimated sequestration cuts in vouchers at the national and state levels are the net of gains and losses among agencies in each state.

Agencies marked with a single asterisk (*) are funded according to their agreements with HUD under the Moving to Work demonstration; such agencies are permitted to shift voucher funds to support public housing and for other purposes. Agencies marked with a double asterisk (**) were potentially affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Leasing data for these agencies may be unusually low in some years due to reporting problems, an actual decline in leasing resulting from the dislocation of voucher holders, or the use of voucher funds for other purposes (such as the rehabilitation of damaged public housing) under special waiver authority granted temporarily by Congress.