

California Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheet

Federal rental assistance helps struggling seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and working families keep a roof over their heads, often by helping them afford rental units they find in the private market. Ten million people in over 5 million low-income households receive federal rental assistance.

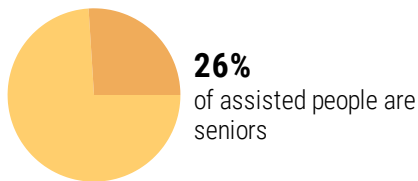
1,046,600

people in **536,000 California** households use federal rental assistance to afford modest housing.

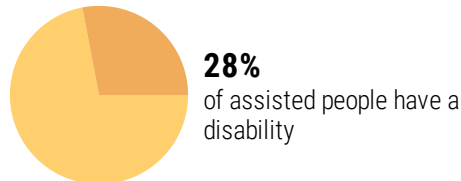
68% are seniors, children, or people with disabilities.



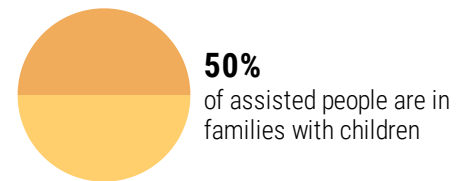
...but **4 in 10 low-income*** people in California are homeless or pay over half their income for rent. Most don't receive federal rental assistance due to limited funding.



Rental assistance helps **275,400** of California's seniors age in place.



Rental assistance helps **290,500** people with disabilities to live independently in California.



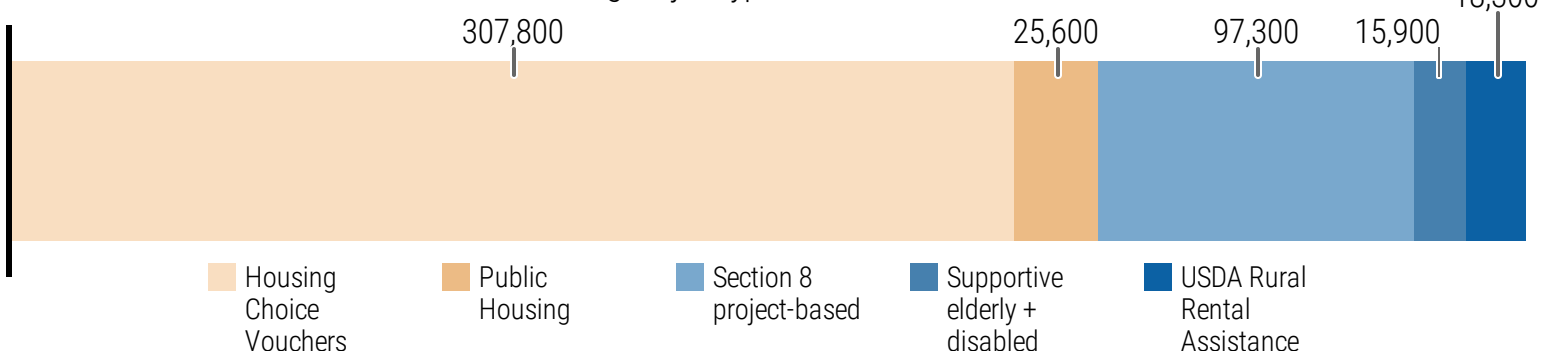
Rental assistance helps **526,600** people in families with children in California avoid homelessness.

Rental assistance supports working families: **66%** of non-disabled, working-age California households receiving Department of Housing and Urban Development rental assistance include at least one worker.

Rental Assistance Supports All Types of California Communities

Rental assistance helps 996,900 people in cities and suburbs, as well as 49,700 people in rural areas and small towns.

Number of Households Receiving Major Types of Federal Rental Assistance in California



Federal rental assistance programs provided California with **\$7.8 billion** in 2020.

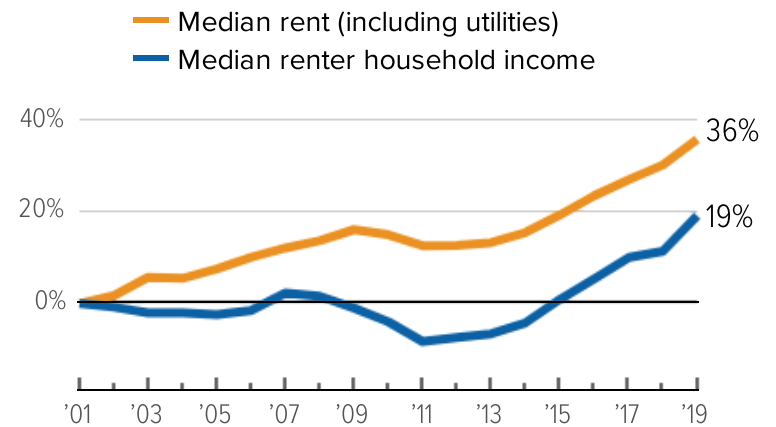
Rental Costs Have Risen Dramatically in California

The median rent (including utilities) for an apartment in California was **\$1,610/month** in 2019, a 36 percent increase since 2001.

But wages for many jobs have not caught up.

As a result, **4,066,700** people in **1,658,300** low-income California households pay more than half their income for rent, often forgoing necessities, like food or medicine, to keep a roof over their heads. The federal government considers housing unaffordable if it costs more than 30 percent of a household's income.

Percent change since 2001, adjusted for inflation



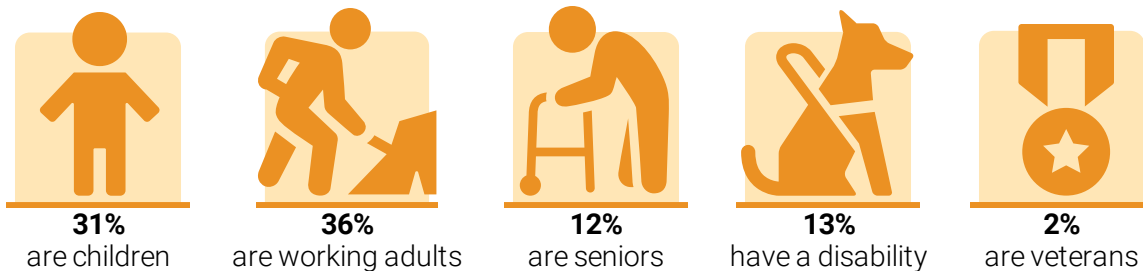
Source: CBPP tabulations of the Census Bureau's American Community Survey

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Federal Rental Assistance Hasn't Kept Pace

Despite the importance of rental assistance, more federal dollars go to homeownership subsidies like the mortgage interest deduction, which mainly benefit higher-income households, instead of families that struggle the most to afford housing. California communities only thrive when everyone — renters and homeowners, whether Black, brown, or white — have access to decent, affordable housing.

4,066,700 low-income California renters pay more than half their income for housing. Most don't receive rental assistance due to funding limitations. Who are they?



When low-income renters can't find a decent, affordable apartment, they are more likely to be evicted and risk becoming homeless.

On a single night in 2020, **161,550** people experienced homelessness in California. An estimated **271,530** California school children lived in shelters, on the street, doubled up with other families, or in hotels or motels during the 2018-2019 school year.

271,530 California children live in unstable housing

Our country's current policy approach gives more help to those who need it least. We can change this. Policymakers need to work together to expand rental assistance and ensure that all California residents have access to good, affordable homes.

Last updated January 18th, 2022

*Low-income = household income not exceeding 80 percent of local median income. For a family of three in California, 80 percent of the local median is equivalent to \$64,850. Download data for all 50 states and D.C. [here](#). Full sources and methodology available [here](#).