

Massachusetts 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.

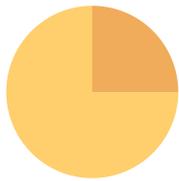
368,600

people in **196,000 Massachusetts** households use federal rental assistance to afford modest housing.

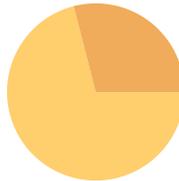
70% are seniors, children, or people with disabilities.



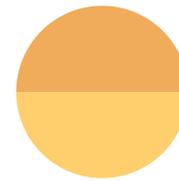
...but **4 in 10 low-income*** people in Massachusetts are homeless or pay over half their income for rent. Most don't receive federal rental assistance due to limited funding.



25% of assisted people are seniors



29% of assisted people have a disability



50% of assisted people are in families with children

Rental assistance helps **91,600** of Massachusetts' seniors age in place.

Rental assistance helps **107,400** people with disabilities to live independently in Massachusetts.

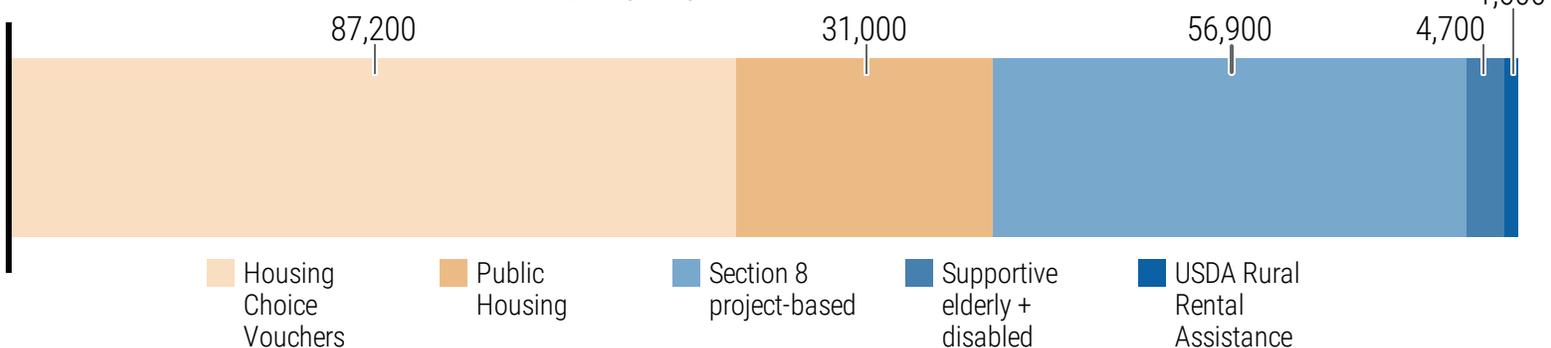
Rental assistance helps **185,800** people in families with children in Massachusetts avoid homelessness.

Rental assistance supports working families: **67%** of non-disabled, working-age Massachusetts households receiving Department of Housing and Urban Development rental assistance include at least one worker.

Rental Assistance Supports All Types of Massachusetts Communities

Rental assistance helps 363,200 people in cities and suburbs, as well as 5,400 people in rural areas and small towns.

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



Federal rental assistance programs provided Massachusetts with **\$2.7 billion** in 2020.

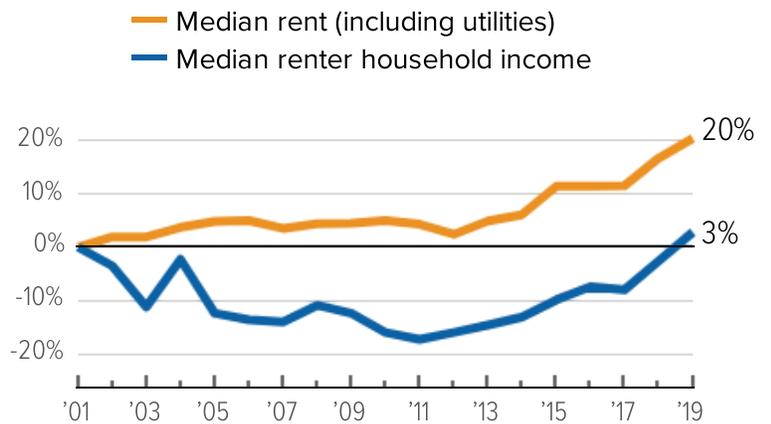
Rental Costs Have Risen Dramatically in Massachusetts

The median rent (including utilities) for an apartment in Massachusetts was **\$1,360/month** in 2019, a 20 percent increase since 2001.

But wages for many jobs have not caught up.

As a result, **489,900** people in **247,200** low-income Massachusetts 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



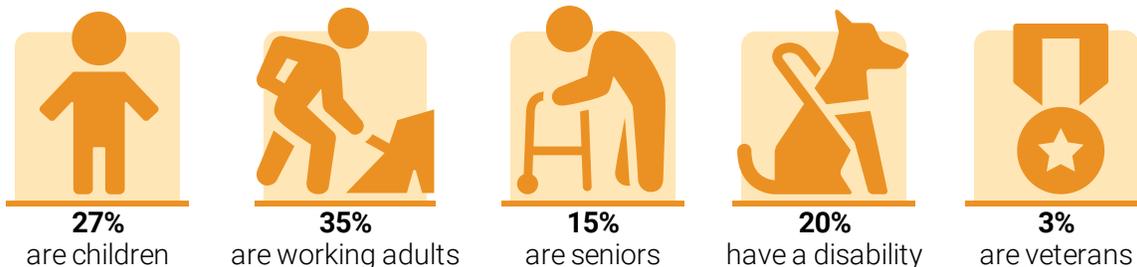
Source: CBPP tabulations of the Census Bureau's American Community Survey

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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. Massachusetts communities only thrive when everyone — renters and homeowners, whether Black, brown, or white — have access to decent, affordable housing.

489,900 low-income Massachusetts 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, **17,980** people experienced homelessness in Massachusetts. An estimated **24,660** Massachusetts school children lived in shelters, on the street, doubled up with other families, or in hotels or motels during the 2018-2019 school year.

24,660 Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts, 80 percent of the local median is equivalent to \$71,900. Download data for all 50 states and D.C. [here](#). Full sources and methodology available [here](#).