

The American Rescue Plan

★ EXPLAINED ★

Housing: Emergency Housing Vouchers

What We Won

\$5 billion for emergency housing vouchers, administered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

How funds can be used

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will issue guidance related to emergency vouchers, but here's what we know now -- funds can be spent for:

- Incremental emergency tenant-based vouchers for individuals and families who are homeless; at risk of homelessness; fleeing domestic violence or similar circumstances; or who were recently homeless, where voucher assistance will prevent homelessness or housing instability.
- Renewal of emergency vouchers that are issued;
- Administrative costs of issuing the vouchers and other expenses to facilitate the leasing of vouchers during the pandemic, including help with security deposits and other costs related to retaining landlord participation.
- Financial assistance to public housing agencies to cover increases in the cost of existing vouchers or to preserve rental assistance for families that might otherwise be lost because of insufficient funding.
- HUD has lots of discretion to waive other requirements that typically apply to the voucher program in order to expedite their use.
- HUD may use up to \$20 million for administration, including up to \$10 million in uncompetitive contracts for technical assistance and capacity building.

How the funds flow

- **HUD is expressly authorized to implement the emergency voucher program through notice.**

That is, they don't need to issue formal regulations.
- **HUD must develop a formula to distribute vouchers that ensure geographic diversity among public housing agencies.**

Including rural areas.
- **It is required to notify public housing agencies of their voucher allotment by May 12, 2021.**
- **HUD must develop a process for public housing agencies to accept or decline its allocation.**

That is, lease up.
- **If a public housing agency does not use its vouchers within a “reasonable period of time”, HUD can revoke the unused vouchers and redistribute them to other public housing agencies under the formula it develops.**

How this is defined will be up to HUD.
- **Funding is available to HUD until Sept. 30, 2030; however, after Sept. 30, 2023 a public housing agency cannot reissue any emergency vouchers when a family’s assistance ends.**

That is, assistance would be provided as long as a family stays eligible, but the voucher can't be turned over after 9/30/2023).

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