

U.S. Poverty Policy Request

Congress Must Provide Rental Assistance

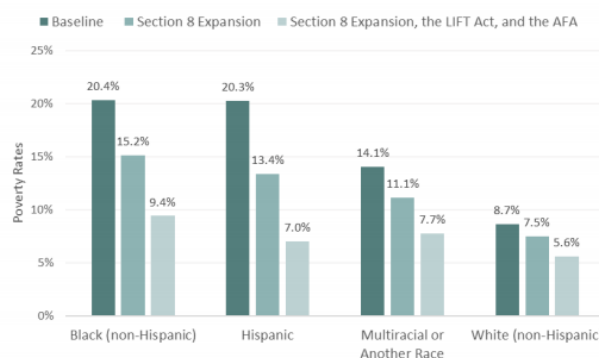
We urge Congress to prioritize affordable housing policies in recovery legislation by ensuring all eligible low-income renters get federal housing assistance -- by making Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) universal or enacting refundable renters' tax credit.

Each year, millions of low-income Americans struggle to afford housing.

- **Wages have not kept up with increase in rents.** According to [Harvard researchers](#), since 1960 renters' median earnings have gone up 5 percent while rents are up 61 percent (adjusted for inflation). A worker making the prevailing minimum wage [cannot afford a two-bedroom apartment](#) in *any* U.S. state.
- **Millions suffer from housing instability and will continue to do so without long-term rental assistance to help afford housing.** In 2020, [580,466](#) people were living on the streets and in shelters and nearly [1.4 million homeless students enrolled in school year 2018-19](#). [Millions more are at-risk of evictions and homelessness](#) if they are unable to afford their housing in the long-term.
- Furthermore, because of **housing segregation and other policies that created wealth** for some Americans while blocking opportunity for others, Black households (13 percent of total) make up [26 percent of all extremely low-income renters](#) and nearly [40 percent](#) of people experiencing homelessness.
- **Affordable rentals are out of reach for many.** Only [37 affordable and available rental homes exist for every 100 extremely low-income renter households](#), whose household incomes are at or below the poverty guideline or 30% of their area median income.
- **Only one in four eligible low-income renters** receive federal housing assistance.

We can [lift children out of poverty](#) (see right) and [address racial inequities](#) in housing by making HCVs universal – with guaranteed, multi-year funding to provide housing stability. Longer-term, we support efforts to enact a refundable “renters’ tax credit” to help all low-income renters afford a home. **RESULTS urges Congress to ensure all eligible low-income renters get federal housing assistance in any recovery legislation.** In addition, we urge Congress to increase the supply of affordable housing through the Housing Trust Fund and reducing racial wealth inequality by promoting policies that increase homeownership for communities of color.

Figure 2. Predicted Poverty Rates with the Section 8 Expansion and the Combined Policies, by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Authors' calculations using data from the 2019 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey. Data retrieved from IPUMS-CPS, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.