



OFFICE OF PUBLIC & INDIAN HOUSING

November 8, 2023

Dear Executive Director,

Public housing agencies across the country are stepping up to help eradicate homelessness in their communities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is working with PHAs to support this work by providing new resources, reducing barriers, and being responsive to their evolving needs. I am writing to encourage your agency to take full advantage of these resources and policies as you work with your community partners to address homelessness.

Many PHAs have long worked with Continuums of Care (CoCs), local government leaders, victim services providers, and other partners to tackle homelessness, and several agencies have created successful models that work. As part of President Biden's American Rescue Plan, PHAs have successfully created Emergency Housing Voucher programs that have given 60,000 individuals and families, who were formerly homeless or at risk of homelessness, decent, stable homes; your partnership with CoCs and victim services is working. Additionally, more than 15,000 formerly homeless families now live in public housing and 100,000 formerly homeless individuals and families received Housing Choice Vouchers in the past two years. This is a testament to the dedicated work of your staff. We are pleased that HUD's field office staff have been able to provide technical assistance to help meet our goals.

But we all still have work to do as more people continue to experience homelessness. The Department is committed to strengthening PHAs' capacity to address homelessness. HUD is giving PHAs more resources, streamlining program administration, lowering entry barriers for families, and improving families' leasing success (see the list below). I have also directed the PIH team to explore ways we can further streamline program documentation requirements and eligibility determination processes for people experiencing homelessness.

I encourage you to work with your staff, local partners, and HUD to address the needs of your community and ensure that your programs are as effective as they need to be to meet the urgency of homelessness. HUD welcomes your ideas about steps we can take to address homelessness. If you believe your community faces extraordinary homelessness challenges that require waiving existing regulation or adopting alternative requirements for good cause, we invite you to request waivers from your local HUD field office.

Housing agencies are essential partners in addressing homelessness. You understand your communities, the complexity of housing and social needs, and how to work across sectors to deliver results. Homelessness is a crisis that demands all hands on deck, and I am proud to say that HUD and over 3,300 public housing agencies can offer their support in this moment. Thank you for all the work you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard J. Monocchio".

Richard J. Monocchio
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Indian Housing

HUD'S RESOURCES AND STREAMLINING ACTIONS TO HELP PHAs ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

- **Updated guidance on strategies PHAs can pursue to expand housing opportunities for individuals and families experiencing homeless through the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs ([PIH Notice 2023-13](#)).** This notice provides guidance on:
 - Strengthening partnerships and data sharing with Continuums of Care, Coordinated Entry systems, and other partners;
 - Establishing admissions preferences and improving wait list management;
 - Simplifying applications and the application process for individuals and families seeking assistance;
 - Revising criminal, substance use, and other policies to lower entry barriers for individuals and families in need of assistance;
 - Updating program termination and eviction policies;
 - Expanding the use of Project-Based Vouchers and CoC-funded supportive services to create more permanent supportive housing; and
 - Extending search times to improve households' success in leasing units with Housing Vouchers.
- **New guidance implementing HOTMA Sections 102 and 104 regarding household income and assets ([PIH Notice 2023-27](#)).** This guidance contains several provisions that will take effect on January 01, 2024 and should make it easier for people experiencing homelessness to access rental assistance, including:
 - A "safe harbor" provision that allows PHAs to use income determinations made within the previous 12 months under other federal programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance and Medicaid programs;
 - Allowing PHAs to accept documentation of income that is dated within 120 days of receipt (instead of 60 days as is currently required), and accept documentation of annually set benefits for the current benefit year regardless of date;
 - Allowing PHAs to accept self-certification of an applicant's Social Security Number (SSN) and a third-party document such as a bank statement, utility bill, or benefit letter with the applicant's name printed on it to satisfy the SSN disclosure requirement; and
 - Reminding PHAs that they may accept self-certification of income as the highest form of verification if the applicant reports zero income or the PHA's reasonable efforts to obtain third-party verification of tenant reported income have been unsuccessful. HUD also does not require that the self-certification be notarized.

HUD will provide further guidance on streamlining income and asset verification in additional forthcoming guidance documents, including revised chapters of both the [HCV Guidebook](#) and [Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook](#) in 2024.

- **Housing Choice Voucher Program- Flexible policies to expand families' housing opportunities and improve their chances of successfully leasing units under difficult market conditions:**
 - Streamlined authority to set HCV payment standards at up to 120% of the Fair Market Rent ([PIH Notice 2023-29](#));
 - Use of [Small Area Fair Market Rents](#) (SAFMRs). Research shows that SAFMRs significantly expand families' housing opportunities in higher rent areas. In a new notice, HUD just designated 41 new metro areas where PHAs will be required to use SAFMRs beginning in FY 2024 ([88 FR 73352](#)), which increases the total number of designated metro areas to 65. But PHAs in other metro areas may also implement SAFMRs on a voluntary basis, as explained on [HUD SAFMR Resource Page](#);
 - Use of HCV administrative fees to provide security deposit assistance to families and incentives to landlords to lease units to families with Housing Vouchers ([PIH 2022-18](#));
 - Expanded eligible uses of the Services Fee for Emergency Housing Vouchers ([PIH 2023-23](#));

- New guidance on using housing vouchers in shared housing, which is an important option for some households with Housing Vouchers ([PIH Notice 2021-05](#));
 - HUD will also be reinvigorating its efforts in coming months to encourage landlords across the country to accept families with Housing Vouchers as tenants.
- **New Housing Choice Vouchers and administrative fee incentives to assist people experiencing homelessness:**
 - Awarded 4,150 new flexible “incremental” Housing Choice Vouchers to more than 210 PHAs in 2023 and another 19,000 vouchers to nearly PHA in 2022. PHAs that received new vouchers in 2023 are also eligible to receive supplemental administrative fees for vouchers that are used by people experiencing homelessness;
 - Awarded 3,360 [Stability Vouchers](#) to more than 130 PHAs that are partnering with local Continuums of Care to address unsheltered and rural homelessness;
 - Awarded 4,601 new [Mainstream Vouchers](#) and over \$18M in extraordinary administrative fees to allow PHAs to serve non-elderly disabled households under PIH Notices 2022-07 and 2022-19;
 - Awarded 4,047 [HUD-VASH vouchers](#) to 170 PHAs to address veteran homelessness in FY2023;
 - Awarded 1,272 [Foster Youth to Independence \(FYI\) vouchers](#) to serve young adults with prior foster care involvement who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
 - **Requesting waivers to existing regulations or adopting alternative requirements based on good cause:**
 - In 2018, HUD updated its guidance on how to submit requests for regulatory waivers for PHAs; any PHA considering a request for a waiver should follow the guidance in [PIH 2018-16](#);
 - HUD is monitoring and evaluating the flexibilities under the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration for innovative strategies.
 - HUD will continue to assess the impact of certain regulatory waivers and alternative requirements authorized under certain special purpose voucher programs like HUD-VASH and EHV to inform future policymaking for the Housing Choice Voucher program.