

MESSAGING GUIDANCE: TENANT BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE

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HUD's funding for tenant-based rental assistance programs (including Housing Choice Vouchers, HUD-VASH, Section 811, Section 202, and Mainstream Vouchers) assist low-income households to afford decent, safe, and accessible housing in the private market. These federal rental assistance programs are especially critical to improving outcomes for millions of Americans, including families with children, older adults, and people with disabilities.

Topline Messaging

- **CONGRESS CAN SUPPORT COMMUNITIES ADDRESS THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS BY PROVIDING \$39.1 BILLION HUD'S FY2026 TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE (TBRA) ACCOUNT.** This is a \$6.86 billion increase from FY2025.
- Congress should reject any policy riders that would allow HUD to create even more barriers to vulnerable households in need of assistance. Specifically, House Section 239 would allow HUD to establish alternative requirements for tenant payments, tenant rental payments, and housing assistance payments. Despite its flexibilities, this provision could be used to impose time limits, work requirements, and increased rental payments for tenants.
 - Work requirements have been proven to be ineffective in pushing people into work. Instead, they only create administrative barriers for recipients and increase families and individuals' risk of losing their HUD assistance and experiencing homelessness.
 - Rental assistance time limits would place more than 3 million people — half of them children — [at risk of eviction and homelessness](#).
 - Representatives should not include House Section 236 from the House bill in the conference report. This provision would allow HUD to deny funds to cities that limit their cooperation with federal immigration enforcement because they are "sanctuary cities." This would have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable households in a community, especially those who are experiencing homelessness. It would allow a highly politicized issue to be weaponized against cities who disagree with administration on a locally decided issue.

Tailored Messaging

- Advocates should work together to develop local- and state-level talking points based on what is happening in your community and state. These could include:
- Positive impacts that federal TBRA programs have in your district and state (including individual stories of success).

- The gap between very low-income households and the number of units that are affordable and available in your district and state.
- State and district Public Housing Agency (PHA) data about the number of vouchers allocated, turnover rate, number of households on waiting list, etc.
- Impact if TBRA funding was reduced by 5% or 10%, including if any households would lose their assistance and at risk of losing their housing.
- Examples of successful community partnerships between the homelessness response system and PHA(s).
- Check the [estimated number of people in your state](#) who would lose rental assistance under a proposed 2-year time limit.