

Improving Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Success Rates in California:

Findings and
Recommendations for
Local and State Action



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



ABOUT THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report, required under Assembly Bill 653 (Chapter 672, Statutes of 2024), is to develop recommendations for state and local actions that may help improve Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) success rates. Its scope is limited to success rates, rather than broader program administration, to ensure that households who receive vouchers are able to successfully use them.

The intended audience includes stakeholders who informed the development of this report—public housing authorities (PHAs), researchers, and advocates—as well as local and regional government agencies, housing and homeless service providers, and other community groups that support households' housing needs. The report highlights best practices and strategies that PHAs may consider but does not establish new requirements for these entities. Recommendations are preliminary and may require additional research, stakeholder engagement, and, in some cases, enabling legislation.

While this report is focused on PHAs' role in the HCV program, these entities' scope is not only administering federal housing assistance but also providing critical financial and other implementation assistance to the development of affordable housing, including long-term Project-Based Voucher (PBV) commitments. PHAs are deep subject-matter experts and implementation partners that provide strategic investments to serve California's highest-need populations. An examination of these PHA functions, beyond HCV administration, are outside the scope of this report.

This report was developed during a time of significant and compounding fiscal strain for housing authorities. Although federal funding levels have remained relatively stable, they have not kept pace with rising housing costs, forcing PHAs to operate the same services with fewer resources per household. Federal funding is also increasingly uncertain, with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) directing PHAs to immediately reduce program costs by ceasing new voucher issuances, lowering payment standards, limiting the use of reserves, and other measures. At the same time, PHAs are preparing for the sunset of Emergency

Housing Vouchers (EHVs) and face difficult decisions about how to allocate limited resources to maintain housing for EHV households. These fiscal constraints continue to push more housing authorities in California into budgetary shortfall, in some cases preventing PHAs from issuing new vouchers entirely.

While this report highlights strategies that may meaningfully improve success rates, many would require administrative investments that could increase program costs. Higher costs may require housing authorities to make difficult tradeoffs, including potentially reducing the number of households served by the HCV program.

Therefore, increasing federal funding for the HCV program is ultimately essential to improving success rates.

Based on input received from a wide variety of PHAs statewide, many housing authorities will be unable to implement these recommendations without receiving the necessary resources.

While some recommendations may appear to be in tension with recent HUD directives encouraging PHAs to adopt cost-saving measures, they do not supersede existing HUD requirements. PHAs must continue to operate in compliance with federal guidance and program requirements.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) extends its sincere gratitude to the dozens of individuals and organizations who contributed their time, expertise, and lived experience to inform this report. This includes staff from public housing authorities (PHAs) across California, Housing Choice Voucher recipients, and additional stakeholders, including other public agencies, researchers, and housing advocates.

Their insights, experiences, and thoughtful feedback were invaluable in helping shape the findings, recommendations, and overall direction of this report. HCD appreciates the willingness of participants to candidly discuss the needs, opportunities, and challenges related to Housing Choice Voucher success rates across diverse local contexts throughout California.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Assembly Bill 653 (Chapter 672, Statutes of 2024) directs the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to establish an annual Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) data collection program, convene a public housing authority workgroup, and conduct stakeholder engagement to inform recommendations for state and local interventions that may improve HCV success rates—defined as the percentage of new voucher households that successfully lease a qualifying unit (within one year of voucher issuance, consistent with recent research). This report builds on previous efforts, including the launch of HCD's Pilot Housing Choice Voucher Data Dashboard¹ in January 2026, to fulfill the requirements of Government Code section 50496, subdivision (c).

BACKGROUND

The HCV program provides federally funded tenant-based rental assistance that is administered locally by public housing authorities (PHAs). Assistance is provided to low-income households in the form of a voucher that covers the portion of rent exceeding 30% of a household's income. In addition to standard HCVs, this report also considers Special Purpose Vouchers (SPVs), which serve specific populations with distinct needs, including veterans, transition-age youth, people who are unhoused, and people with disabilities.

In addition to the HCV program, the scope of PHAs' work is beyond administering federal housing assistance and includes providing critical financial and other implementation assistance to the development of affordable housing. This report does not examine these other vital functions

This report identifies key barriers to voucher success, including housing market conditions, discrimination against voucher holders, landlord apprehension of renting to voucher households, and additional administrative

¹ California Department of Housing and Community Development, [Housing Choice Voucher Data Dashboard](https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-open-data-tools/hcv-data-tracking), Housing Open Data Tools, available at <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-open-data-tools/hcv-data-tracking>.

challenges. Informed by direct input from PHAs, voucher recipients, and other stakeholders, as well as a review of recent research on existing best practices, this report presents recommendations that may help address these barriers and improve success rates statewide: first, a set of recommendations for housing authorities, and second, a set for state, regional, and local implementation.

The recommendations for housing authorities represent potential tools that PHAs may utilize when local conditions, funding availability, and administrative capacity permit. Many of these tools reflect strategies that some PHAs are already implementing, drawing from successful practices and on-the-ground experience. However, PHAs must balance these initiatives with other operational needs, including maintaining sufficient funding to issue new vouchers and navigating broader federal funding constraints and HUD guidance. Implementing these recommendations without additional resources would require administrative investments that could increase program costs. Higher costs may force PHAs to make difficult trade-offs, such as reducing the total number of households served. **While these recommendations are intended to help meaningfully improve success rates, widespread implementation will ultimately require a substantial increase in federal funding for the HCV program to support the associated costs.**

PART A OVERVIEW: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING AUTHORITIES

As described above, these recommendations represent a set of tools for PHAs to consider in light of local conditions and funding availability, as insufficient federal funding and recent HUD directives may render implementation infeasible for many PHAs.



1 IMPROVE LEASING EXPERIENCE FOR VOUCHER HOLDERS:

To ensure households are equipped with the information and support needed to successfully lease a unit, PHAs can strengthen services through strategies such as providing a consistent point of contact, enhancing program orientations, and training PHA staff in trauma-informed service delivery.

2 OFFER HOUSING NAVIGATION AND MOVE-IN COST ASSISTANCE:

To support households facing barriers to securing housing, PHAs can continue to expand access to housing navigation, move-in cost assistance (e.g., security deposits and application fees), and case management services. PHAs can leverage partnerships with community-based organizations to help fill these service gaps.

3 STRENGTHEN LANDLORD COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, AND SERVICES:

To support landlord engagement, PHAs can strengthen landlord education, communication, and services through outreach, clear and responsive communication, and streamlined processes. Strategies may include establishing landlord liaisons or points of contact, developing online portals and resources, and improving inspection and lease-up processes to enhance landlord experience and retention.

4 PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR LANDLORDS:

Providing financial incentives is an effective strategy used by PHAs to increase landlord engagement and make leasing to voucher holders more competitive in tight housing markets. Common approaches include vacancy payments, damage mitigation funds, and first-time or returning landlord bonuses.

5 EXPAND COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, CONTINUUMS OF CARE (CoCS), AND SERVICE PROVIDERS:

Building strong partnerships with local governments, CoCs, and service providers can enhance success rates by expanding PHA access to community resources and networks, such as landlord referrals or housing navigation services.

6 EXPLORE PAYMENT STANDARD MODIFICATIONS TO IMPROVE HOUSING ACCESS:

PHAs can analyze lease-up and fair housing data to determine whether targeted modifications to payment

standards are necessary and feasible to improve local housing access in higher-cost areas.

7 MAINTAIN FLEXIBLE SEARCH TIMES:

Maintaining flexible housing search times beyond the 60-day minimum (set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) allows households adequate time to overcome housing barriers and secure units in challenging housing markets.

8 REVIEW INTERNAL VOUCHER ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES:

Housing authorities can benefit from internal process mapping to pinpoint bottlenecks that may delay lease-ups and contribute to lower success rates.

PART B OVERVIEW: STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

9 STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT OF SOURCE OF INCOME (SOI) PROTECTIONS TO AFFIRMATIVELY FURTHER FAIR HOUSING (AFFH):

Enforcing source of income protections is critical to affirmatively furthering fair housing for voucher households who face significant discrimination within the housing market. State entities, including HCD and the Civil Rights Department (CRD), can collaborate with PHAs to support compliance through landlord and tenant education, referring households to fair housing resources, and coordinating efforts like training and outreach.

10 EXPAND HCD'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND RESEARCH ON BEST PRACTICES FOR ADMINISTERING HCVS:

HCD should build on its partnership with PHAs by expanding technical assistance to support and incentivize local government partnerships, facilitating resource sharing among PHAs, and partnering on future research to strengthen program administration.

I: INTRODUCTION

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) tenant-based rental assistance program, also known as Section 8, is the most prominent demand-side housing subsidy in the nation. Originally designed to enable households to access quality housing in higher-opportunity neighborhoods, it provides a critical pathway to affordable and stable housing for low-income households. Federally funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered locally by public housing authorities (PHAs), the program serves over 2 million households nationally and over 300,000 households in California alone.^[2] Demand for the program far exceeds supply, serving only one in four to one in six households who qualify.^[3] Nevertheless, it has proven to be an effective and crucial resource that expands housing security, reduces homelessness, mitigates poverty, and supports overall household wellbeing.

Despite its general success, the program faces several challenges that hamper program efficacy. Scarce funding and strong demand heighten the need to maximize resources and underpin program reach, efficiency, and effectiveness. Although housing authorities must largely adhere to administrative guidelines established by HUD, they also have some administrative flexibilities that impact vital programmatic outcomes, such as success rates.

2 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, [Housing Choice Voucher Data Dashboard](https://www.hud.gov/helping-americans/public-indian-housing-hcv-dashboard), available at <https://www.hud.gov/helping-americans/public-indian-housing-hcv-dashboard>.

3 Christi Economy, Ryan Finnigan, Susha Roy, and Jason M. Ward, *Improving Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program*, UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation and RAND Corporation, September 16, 2025.



SUCCESS RATES

One of the most persistent challenges associated with HCV administration is related to the ability of voucher households to secure a qualifying unit where they can use their voucher subsidy. Because the HCV program relies on the ability of voucher households to access units within the private market, many households face challenges in their search for housing and are unable to find a unit to utilize their voucher. This challenge has been documented throughout the program's history with the evaluation of success rates,^[4] which measure the percentage of new voucher households that successfully lease a qualifying unit with their voucher.^[5] Households typically wait years to receive a voucher due to high demand and long waitlists.^[6] Enhancing success rates is critical in ensuring that households who receive vouchers can use them.

Research indicates that national success rates are steadily declining and are currently at historic lows. Since the HCV program was established in 1974, there have been few large-scale studies measuring PHA success rates nationwide. While available research shows fluctuations over time, success rates ranged from 68% to 81% between 1985 and 2000,^[7] but have declined in more recent years. A study by researchers from the NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy published by HUD measuring national success rates for vouchers issued in 2019 found a 61% rate within 180 days of voucher issuance, and 63% within 240 days of voucher

- 4 In addition to success rates, HCV administration is also commonly evaluated by voucher and budget *utilization* rates. In this context, utilization does not refer to a household's ability to use their voucher, but rather the share of a PHA's allocated resources the PHA is currently utilizing. While these metrics are related, the focus of this report remains distinctly on improving success rates.
- 5 Studies have measured HCV success rates using varying lease-up windows (e.g., 90 or 180 days), but more recent research by the NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy defines success rates based on whether a household leases a qualifying unit within one year (365 days) from voucher issuance.
- 6 California State Auditor, *Housing Choice Voucher Program: Households Face Long Wait Times for Vouchers and Potential Housing Loss When an Emergency Housing Program Ends*, report no. 2024 104, March 19, 2026.
- 7 Ingrid Gould Ellen, Katherine O'Regan, and Sarah Strochak, [Success Rates in the Housing Choice Voucher Program: 2018–2022](https://www.furmancenter.org/news/calculating-success-rates-for-the-housing-choice-voucher-program-using-hud-administrative-data), NYU Furman Center, April 2025, available at <https://www.furmancenter.org/news/calculating-success-rates-for-the-housing-choice-voucher-program-using-hud-administrative-data>.

issuance.^[8] The most recent study conducted by the same researchers measured success rates based on the share of new voucher households that leased a unit within one year (365 days) from issuance and estimated the national success rate to be 57% in 2022.^[9] This rate reflects the outcomes voucher households experience when attempting to secure housing in the private market, where multiple factors may impede success.

Research has also shown that success rates often vary based on a PHA's Moving to Work (MTW) designation status. Housing authorities designated by HUD as MTW and MTW Expansion agencies have more administrative and budgetary flexibility than non-MTW housing authorities, allowing more room for innovation and investment in strategies to improve success rates. As of July 2026, there are six MTW agencies and nine MTW Expansion agencies in California (out of an initial 39 and 100, respectively, in the U.S.). Although both MTW and MTW Expansion agencies benefit from additional flexibilities, MTW Expansion agencies are relatively more limited in their ability to innovate compared to the original MTW cohort. Extending the flexibility granted to MTW agencies to all PHAs would likely be broadly beneficial in advancing strategies to improve success rates.

Despite different administrative and budgetary flexibility afforded to MTW, MTW Expansion, and non-MTW housing authorities, all PHAs in California are experiencing significant fiscal strain as federal funding fails to keep pace with rising housing costs. At the same time, HUD has directed PHAs to take immediate cost-cutting measures, and the end of the Emergency Housing Voucher program in late 2026 has forced these agencies to make difficult decisions about how to allocate limited resources. These pressures have pushed many PHAs into budget shortfalls that halt new voucher issuance entirely.

Informed by stakeholder engagement and prior research, this report aims to improve voucher household experiences and program outcomes by highlighting promising strategies to strengthen success rates in California. The recommendations for housing authorities should be viewed as a menu of potential tools for PHAs to consider when local conditions, funding availability, and administrative capacity allow.

⁸ Ingrid Gould Ellen, Katherine O'Regan, and Sarah Strochak, *Using HUD Administrative Data to Estimate Success Rates and Search Durations for New Voucher Recipients*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, December 2021.

⁹ Ellen, O'Regan, and Strochak, *Success Rates in the Housing Choice Voucher Program*.



II. METHODOLOGY

From March 2025 to April 2026, HCD conducted an engagement process with three sets of stakeholder groups to gain insights from those most heavily invested in the day-to-day administration of vouchers: PHAs, voucher recipients, and other stakeholders including researchers and advocates. HCD consulted with 29 PHAs across California, of varying sizes and representing diverse geographic regions, through individual interviews and workgroup sessions. These sessions allowed HCD to learn about their experiences with various interventions and gather insights on which strategies or combination of strategies have shown the greatest impact on success rates. Additionally, program staff conducted interviews with researchers from NYU's Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy and UC Berkeley's Turner Center for Housing Innovation regarding their research findings and thoughts on potential success rate interventions. Program staff also previewed report recommendations with AB 653 bill sponsors for input and validation. Lastly, HCD staff spoke with voucher recipients referred by tenant organizations regarding their first-hand experiences navigating the private housing market as voucher holders seeking housing.

This report also draws on previous research to ground recommendations in existing best practices and validate insights provided by various stakeholder groups. In addition, this report builds on previous efforts, including HCD's recently launched Housing Choice Voucher Data Dashboard¹⁰. The dashboard displays program administration metrics based on pilot data collected directly from PHAs in California pursuant to AB 653 (Chapter 672, Statutes of 2024), covering new vouchers issued in July 2024 and their status as of July 2025. This effort will continue through ongoing annual data collection to support more comprehensive analysis.

¹⁰ California Department of Housing and Community Development, [Housing Choice Voucher Data Dashboard](https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-open-data-tools/hcv-data-tracking), Housing Open Data Tools, available at <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-open-data-tools/hcv-data-tracking>.

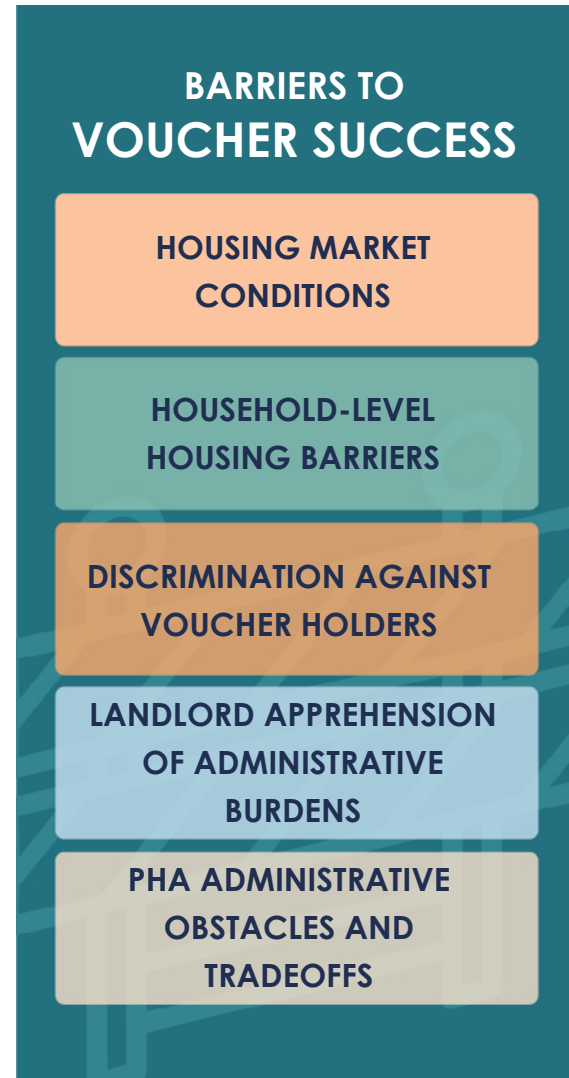
III. BARRIERS TO VOUCHER SUCCESS

PHAs face administrative challenges in achieving high success rates, and there are several prominent barriers that limit voucher households' ability to successfully lease-up. These key challenges and barriers include:

- ▣ **Housing Market Conditions:** Voucher households face increased competition for limited units in tight housing markets with high demand, high rents, and low vacancies.^[11] Rising rents can make payment standards insufficient and rent reasonableness tests can further limit housing options and choice. In rural areas, a limited supply of high-quality units also increases competition and restricts options.
- ▣ **Household-Level Housing Barriers:** Factors such as lack of rental history or landlord references, prior evictions, or criminal records can further disadvantage households from securing units. Households facing these barriers often do not have access to the assistance and support needed to successfully navigate the application and leasing process.^[12]

¹¹ Ingrid Gould Ellen, Katherine O'Regan, and Sarah Strochak, *Race, Space, and Take Up: Explaining Housing Voucher Lease Up Rates*, *Journal of Housing Economics* 63, March 2024.

¹² Molly W. Metzger, Annah Bender, Alana Flowers, Vithya Murugan, and Divya Ravindranath, *Step by Step: Tenant Accounts of Securing and Maintaining Quality Housing with a Housing Choice Voucher*, *Journal of Community Practice* 27, no. 1, 2019, pp. 31–44.



- ▣ **Discrimination Against Voucher Holders:** California is one of 17 states that have banned source of income-based discrimination against voucher households,^[13] yet discrimination persists.^[14] Some landlords openly refuse vouchers, while others use indirect discrimination tactics like strict tenant screening criteria such as income requirements, or choose not to respond to inquiries. These impediments lower success rates, especially for Black and Hispanic households who face additional systemic barriers.^[15]
- ▣ **Landlord Apprehension of Administrative Burdens:** As the voucher system is designed to rely on the private rental market, its success depends on landlords renting units to voucher holders. Landlords often express apprehension of administrative requirements associated with the program. Research and PHA input indicates that limited landlord engagement in the voucher program is a substantial barrier to voucher success, especially in high-opportunity neighborhoods.^[16]
- ▣ **PHA Administrative Obstacles and Tradeoffs:** PHAs face difficult tradeoffs in administering limited voucher resources.^[17] Federal funding levels are increasingly insufficient due to the continued rise in housing costs. PHAs must determine how to issue the maximum number of vouchers possible without exceeding their annual budget authority, which is often constrained by uncertainty in federal funding. Smaller PHAs or PHAs in rural areas may face further constraints due to limited personnel or other resources for HCV administration.

¹³ California Senate Bill 329 (Chapter 600, Statutes of 2019).

¹⁴ Robbie Sequeira, "Some States Protect Section 8 Renters, but Enforcement Is Elusive," Stateline, July 21, 2023.

¹⁵ Miriam Elnemr Rofael, *Improving the Housing Choice Voucher Program through Source of Income Discrimination Laws*, California Law Review 107, no. 5, October 2019, pp. 1635–1660.

¹⁶ Hiren Nisar, Jim Murdoch, Dallas Elgin, Mallory Vachon, and Charles Horseman, *Landlord Participation Study*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, October 2018.

¹⁷ Economy, Finnigan, Sussha Roy, and Ward, *Improving Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program*.

IV: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL AND STATE ACTION: PROMISING PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES

These recommendations are organized into two categories: recommendations for housing authorities (Part A) and recommendations designed for collaborative implementation at the state, regional, and local levels (Part B). Part A includes strategies for housing authorities that vary in complexity and resource intensity (as depicted on page 13) and represents a set of tools PHAs may continue to pursue when local conditions, sufficient funding, and administrative capacity support implementation. Part B provides recommendations that require coordination among state, regional, and local entities.

Because each PHA operates within a unique local context with varying administrative circumstances, PHAs can continue to prioritize among these recommendations according to their own needs, capacity, constraints, and available resources. While some housing authorities may be able to implement lower-cost strategies internally within existing capacity, other strategies require more substantial investments, external resources, partnerships, or ongoing funding commitments. Any of these strategies may increase costs, so each PHA is best suited to assess the resources needed for implementation within their own context.



PHAs must weigh these recommendations against other operational considerations, such as ensuring they maintain sufficient funding to issue new vouchers in addition to broader federal funding constraints and HUD guidance. PHAs that have already adopted these approaches have typically relied on a combination of local funding sources and partnerships with service providers, local governments, or philanthropic organizations. However, many PHAs that aspire to adopt or expand on these strategies are currently unable to do so due to limited funding— even for lower-cost actions. This may be particularly challenging for PHAs experiencing budgetary shortfall and smaller PHAs with limited staff capacity. Although these strategies are among the most impactful for improving voucher success rates and are critical to advancing program outcomes, they require additional federal investment. Ultimately, there was broad agreement among stakeholders that increased and sustained federal funding is necessary to support long-term and effective implementation.

While many PHAs may lack the capacity or resources to implement these strategies independently, in some cases they can leverage the existing efforts of peer agencies that have already adopted them. Continuing to build strong peer relationships and a community of practice can help mitigate fiscal and capacity constraints by facilitating knowledge and resource sharing among PHAs throughout California. The following recommendations reflect potential tools that PHAs may pursue independently when feasible, as well as potential opportunities for broader collaboration and cross-sector support.

While many PHAs may lack the capacity or resources to implement these strategies independently, in some cases they can leverage the existing efforts of peer agencies that have already adopted them. Continuing to build strong peer relationships and a community of practice can help mitigate fiscal and capacity constraints by facilitating knowledge and resource sharing among PHAs throughout California.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING AUTHORITIES AT A GLANCE

Chart Key



Strategy that requires more substantial investments or resources.



Strategies are included in multiple recommendation categories due to their relevance to each.



RECOMMENDATION CATEGORY #1

Improve services and support for voucher recipients.

Improve leasing experience for voucher holders.



Offer housing navigation and case management services.



Expand coordination and collaboration with local governments, CoCs, and service providers.



Review internal voucher administration process.



RECOMMENDATION CATEGORY #2

Increase and sustain landlord engagement.

Strengthen landlord communication, education, and services.



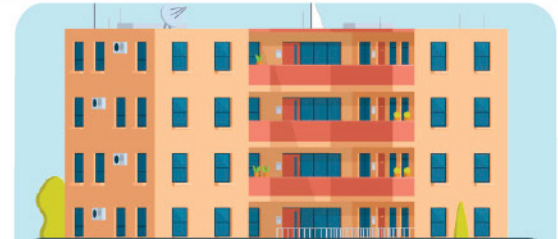
Provide financial incentives for landlords.



Expand coordination and collaboration with local governments, CoCs, and service providers.



Review internal voucher administration process.



RECOMMENDATION CATEGORY #3

Expand household access to housing opportunities.



Explore payment standard modifications to improve housing access.

Maintain flexible housing search times, extending beyond HUD's 60-day minimum when needed.



Review internal voucher administration process.

PART A: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING AUTHORITIES

#1: IMPROVE LEASING EXPERIENCE FOR VOUCHER HOLDERS

LOWER COST

Consistent Point of Contact

Relationship and trust building is valuable for new voucher households as they navigate the program and housing search process, often for the first time. Research and stakeholder input indicates that voucher participants often experience challenges navigating complex program requirements and rules.^[18] To ensure that households have the information they need to succeed in the program, PHAs can confirm that households are aware of a consistent point of contact within the housing authority and that this information is included at the beginning of the onboarding packet.^[19] Establishing clear, consistent, and reliable communication pathways is a critical component of providing strong services to voucher households.

Enhanced Program Orientations

In discussions with voucher participants, many of them expressed the need for more thorough programmatic education to better prepare them for what to expect, how to navigate the leasing process, how to talk about the program to landlords (including information about any available landlord incentives), how to seek support if needed, and more. When a voucher is initially issued to a household, the issuing PHA typically requires the household to participate in an orientation process to learn about the program structure, process, requirements, and search timelines. While many housing authorities already offer strong program orientations, orientation processes can still vary in comprehensiveness. To mitigate capacity constraints, PHAs looking to strengthen orientation processes can benefit from peer learning and resource sharing with other PHAs that have already

¹⁸ Stefanie DeLuca and Jacqueline Groccia, *Increasing Residential Opportunity for Housing Choice Voucher Holders: The Importance of Supportive Staff for Families and Landlords*, *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* 26, no. 2, 2024, pp. 123–143.

¹⁹ Deborah Thrope, *Achieving Housing Choice and Mobility in the Voucher Program: Recommendations for the Administration*, *Advancing Housing Justice* 27, no. 1, 2018, pp. 145–160.

established effective orientation strategies, resources, and tools. For example, some PHAs support voucher holders in providing education to prospective landlords about the program by providing flyers with QR codes to webpages or other materials that voucher holders can easily share. PHAs that have already created and offer these resources can share these materials or templates with their peers who have not already developed their own.

PHAs can better support voucher holders in providing education to prospective landlords about the program by providing flyers with QR codes to webpages or other materials that voucher holders can easily share.

In addition, orientations should include information about any programmatic support that the PHA may offer to better facilitate a speedy lease-up process when a voucher household is facing delays or roadblocks, and how to access these accommodations. This includes providing information about reasonable accommodation requests generally, including examples of what accommodations households may request, how to go about requesting them, what verifications are required, and ensuring they are aware that requests can be made at any stage of the process. PHAs can also inform landlords of their responsibilities regarding reasonable accommodations. In addition, as they are able, PHAs can enhance their efforts to streamline the lease-up process for households experiencing homelessness. For example, PHAs can prioritize households experiencing homelessness during the inspection process.

PHAs can also strengthen support for voucher participants by providing basic housing search guidance and sharing relevant local resources. Because some households are navigating the housing search process for the first time, additional guidance may be needed on how to proactively search for a unit that meets their needs, how to engage with landlords, and how to navigate application processes. To better support households starting their housing search, some PHAs provide and maintain a list of local apartments and affordable housing options, or a list of landlords that are already engaged in the program. Tenant rights and fair housing information should also be provided during voucher orientations to help households understand their rights and identify source of income discrimination in practice. For example, PHAs can inform households that landlords

who screen prospective tenants based on minimum income requirements must adjust this requirement to be based on the portion of the rent paid by the voucher household. PHAs can also stay informed about the local social services landscape and provide general resource lists to voucher holders, as well as referrals or warm handoffs when possible. When support services or case management are unavailable, PHAs can help set voucher households up for success in navigating the private housing market by connecting them to other available community resources.

PHA Staff Training

Multiple housing authorities emphasized the importance of ensuring that PHA staff are equipped with a foundational understanding of the trauma that is caused by housing insecurity, and how to best work with households who have experienced trauma. Voucher participants and housing authorities alike discussed the need for staff to meet households “where they are at,” remain accessible, and take the time to listen. While some housing authorities provide staff training in trauma-informed services, more PHAs could benefit from focused staff training to enhance relationship building and trust between administrators and voucher households and improve households’ programmatic experiences. PHAs can share training resources and opportunities amongst their peer agencies to pool resources, mitigate costs, and help scale these efforts statewide.

Multiple housing authorities emphasized the importance of ensuring that PHA staff are equipped with a foundational understanding of the trauma that is caused by housing insecurity, and how to best work with households who have experienced trauma.

#2 OFFER HOUSING NAVIGATION AND MOVE-IN COST ASSISTANCE

HIGHER COST

Many voucher households face barriers in their search for a qualifying unit^[20] for which they can use their voucher. SPV programs that provide housing navigation and case management services have shown promise in supporting high success rates.^[21] To implement these services, SPV programs are sometimes paired with additional funds. Vulnerable populations served by SPV programs can be more likely to face housing barriers than households receiving HCVs. However, these individualized, hands-on supports are also important for households that receive HCVs, and especially for those that face continued barriers to accessing a home. For example, move-in cost assistance provides funds to help households overcome financial barriers related to securing a qualifying unit, covering costs such as application fees, security deposits, and utility arrears.

In addition, some PHAs that have been able to fund and provide mobility counseling programs that offer hands-on, personalized support to voucher households have shown success in assisting households in moving to lower-poverty, higher-opportunity areas,^[22] and several PHAs noted in interviews the importance of housing navigation services in enhancing success rates.

However, these services typically require significant fiscal investments that most PHAs are unable to provide without additional resources. While these services can be provided through formal partnerships and contractual agreements with local nonprofits or other organizations, such arrangements are typically financially infeasible for most housing authorities, particularly for non-MTW agencies. Therefore, most PHAs that have had the fiscal means to successfully establish formal partnerships for service provision have been MTW agencies.

20 A unit qualifies for the program if it meets HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and falls within allowable rent limits (based on rent reasonableness and payment standards).

21 Nichole Fiore, Jill Khadduri, and Sam Dastrup, *Using Tenant-Based Vouchers to Help People Leave Homelessness: Lessons from Los Angeles*, Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research 26, no. 2, 2024, pp. 197–208.

22 Thrope, *Achieving Housing Choice and Mobility in the Voucher Program*.



Absent such flexibility, some non-MTW agencies have received local grants or resources to fill service gaps. However, this is not widespread and can also impose new challenges for PHAs, as local funding sources are often temporary or unreliable long-term. They also require substantial PHA capacity to stand up new programs that may ultimately be short lived. However, some PHAs have had success in leveraging community partnerships informally through existing community networks and relationships. These relationships can support coordination across providers, helping to share resources, reduce duplication, and expand service capacity. To help mitigate the cost of these services, PHAs often prioritize them for households with more substantial housing barriers, or scale the support based on the depth of support needed. Services can be as modest as one or two meetings with a housing navigator, or as complex as wraparound case management services that may include providing transportation, meeting basic needs, and supporting households with education, employment, healthcare, budgeting, and financial literacy.

CASE STUDY | EMERGENCY HOUSING VOUCHER (EHV) PROGRAM SUPPORTS

SPV programs that offer these services have demonstrated the value and efficacy of these supports in enhancing voucher success rates. Most significantly, this includes the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program for households experiencing homelessness, which concludes at the end of 2026. In addition to paying typical administrative fees, HUD provided supplemental fees to better support the lease-up process for EHV recipients. Specifically, HUD provided \$3,500 for each EHV allocated to PHAs to cover security deposits, housing search assistance, case management, landlord incentives, and other move-in needs and costs. These funds help address household barriers, including financial barriers, in covering moving costs (application fees, security deposit, holding fees, etc.). Support services also assist households with navigating tenant and landlord relationships and negotiations, identifying more unit options that meet the household's needs, and efficiently submitting rental applications. Research has shown that these supplemental supports have been critical in getting households leased-up efficiently and have contributed to the EHV program's overwhelming success.^[23]

23 Christi Economy, Ryan Finnigan, Claudia Aiken, and Ellie Lochhead, *The Potential End of Emergency Housing Voucher Funding: Public Housing Agencies' Search for Solutions*, UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation, December 11, 2025.



#3 STRENGTHEN LANDLORD EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION, AND SERVICES

LOWER COST

Most housing authorities stressed that prioritizing landlord engagement is essential in bolstering their success rates. Although landlords are legally required to participate in the HCV program, proactive landlord engagement is still widely needed to increase housing options for voucher households. To accomplish this, PHAs emphasized how efficient and robust landlord education is a means for increasing strong landlord partnerships. PHAs use a variety of methods to share information about the benefits that landlords receive by leasing to voucher households. Several PHAs found that communicating these benefits of the program to landlords, such as guaranteed timely rental income, was particularly impactful in engaging landlords. Appendix C highlights a landlord recruitment flyer developed by the California Association of Housing Authorities (CAHA) as an example of a potential shared resource that PHAs throughout the state can utilize in their landlord outreach and education efforts.

PHAs also found success by sharing with landlords about the importance of the program within the community and the critical support it provides to the households and populations it serves. Appealing to landlord altruism and addressing landlord stigma head-on have been specifically identified as effective approaches to encouraging proactive landlord participation in the HCV program.^[24] PHAs offer landlord education in a variety of ways, such as webpages, videos, direct outreach, seminars, and workshops. In addition, ongoing education about the program basics, expectations, points of contact, and any programmatic changes or updates is important to maintain landlord relationships over time. PHAs can also expand communication with landlords to further clarify timeline expectations regarding the lease-up process and continue to provide timing updates as needed.

²⁴ Jennifer E. Cossyleon, Philip M. E. Garboden, and Stefanie DeLuca, *Recruiting Opportunity Landlords: Lessons from Landlords in Maryland*, Poverty & Race Research Action Council, June 2020.

While these efforts do require ongoing investment of staff time, some PHAs have adopted strategies to make these efforts more efficient and sustainable. For example, a large housing authority in Southern California created a designated landlord services department to support their pivot from individual-level services to scalable communication and education efforts targeted for groups. This includes landlord seminars and monthly educational meetings, held virtually. They also created introductory videos for new property management staff.

Many PHAs also emphasized the importance of providing efficient, responsive, and consistent processes for landlords. Landlords are often reassured in renting a unit to a voucher holder if the program requirements are handled efficiently and PHA communications remain clear and reliable. Several PHAs shared they need only to rely on landlord recruitment through word-of-mouth referrals, reinforcing the positive impact of strong landlord customer service.

To enhance landlord experiences with the program, housing authorities employ a variety of strategies to facilitate communication and streamline program processes. These strategies include:

- ▣ Responding to landlord inquiries within 24–48 hours
- ▣ Maintaining consistent points of contact, such as a dedicated Landlord Liaison or Landlord Relations Specialist
- ▣ Providing a 24-hour landlord hotline for urgent matters,^[25] tenant mediation services, or other forms of tenancy stabilization support to clarify expectations on how landlords should navigate tenant concerns
- ▣ Developing an online landlord portal as a centralized platform for requests, documents, and communication
- ▣ Conducting periodic landlord surveys to assess experiences and inform program improvements^[26]
- ▣ Providing tools that improve transparency and efficiency, such as rent affordability calculators and rent change request applications

²⁵ Cossyleon, Garboden, and DeLuca, *Recruiting Opportunity Landlords*.

²⁶ Turner Center for Housing Innovation, “Local Solutions, Federal Tools: Utilizing Housing Choice Vouchers in a Shifting Landscape,” Webinar, October 7, 2025.

Efforts to streamline Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection processes while still ensuring unit habitability have also been a promising approach to accommodating landlords. Streamlining inspection processes can speed up successful lease-ups for voucher households, reduce programmatic burdens on landlords, and save housing authority staff time. These strategies vary by the level of capacity and resources the PHA can commit. For example, a small PHA shared that they provide a landlord inspection preparation checklist, and a large PHA shared that they transitioned to a remote video inspection process.^[27] Previous research has also suggested that some PHAs allow inspection waivers for units that have already undergone other types of inspections (typically for units funded with federal dollars), or other forms of HQS pre-qualification or pre-inspection programs.^[28] Additionally, some PHAs have shifted from annual to biannual property inspections to improve landlord convenience.^[29] While the impacts may vary in scale, there are various promising approaches to streamlining landlord processes such as inspections.

Another potential landlord engagement strategy is offering for voucher holders to “lease-in-place,” which allows the household to use their voucher with the unit in which they are currently housed. Because of the existing landlord and tenant relationship, this strategy may be a softer entry-point for new landlords because they may be reassured in leasing to a voucher household with whom they are already familiar.

27 If a PHA chooses to implement a remote video inspection process, it must ensure that Housing Quality Standards are fully maintained. This research identified limited evidence of how this strategy has been employed and the impacts it has had. Therefore, PHAs must thoroughly assess the associated costs and benefits to ensure proper planning, preparation, implementation, and ongoing oversight.

28 Economy, Finnigan, Sussha Roy, and Ward, *Improving Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program*.

29 Cossyleon, Garboden, and DeLuca, *Recruiting Opportunity Landlords*.

#4 PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR LANDLORDS

HIGHER COST

PHAs in California have found that providing landlord incentives is a promising strategy to improve success rates, particularly when PHAs design the incentives to be responsive to their local rental housing market or landlord needs. While this recommendation focuses specifically on *financial* landlord incentives, PHAs that lack sufficient funds to offer financial incentives can offer *non-financial* landlord incentives through strengthening landlord education, communication, and services as discussed in the previous recommendation.

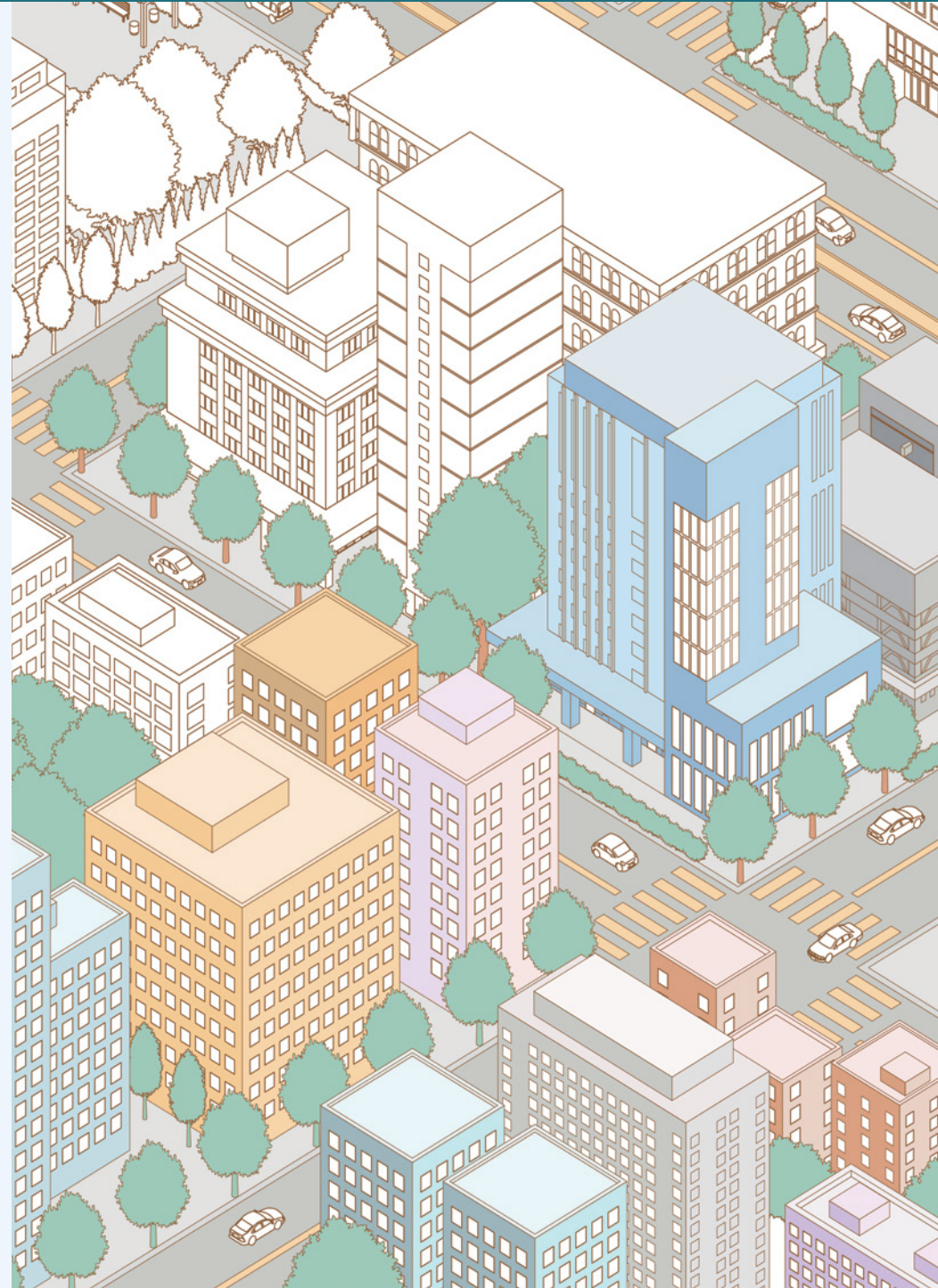
When designed with the local housing market context in mind, financial incentives can make HCV households more competitive in tight rental markets and support broader landlord engagement efforts— potentially even prompting landlords to *prioritize* voucher holders, going beyond their legal obligations under anti-discrimination laws.^[30] While landlord incentives can be an impactful tool for PHAs looking to bolster local landlord outreach and engagement, addressing persistent discrimination through enforcement of source of income (SOI) protection laws is also critical, as discussed in Recommendation 9. Although many landlord concerns related to renting to voucher holders are rooted in biases or perceived administrative burdens, financial incentives have been effective in enhancing proactive local landlord participation.

Financial incentives can make HCV households more competitive in tight rental markets and support broader landlord recruitment efforts— potentially even prompting landlords to prioritize voucher holders, going beyond their legal obligations under anti-discrimination laws.

³⁰ Lisa Sloane, Liz Stewart, and Kevin Martone, *Special Purpose Voucher Programs for People With Disabilities: How They've Evolved, What We've Learned, and Where We're Headed*, Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research 26, no. 2, 2024, pp. 179–196.

While landlord incentives vary across PHAs, they generally fall into a few core categories aimed at increasing leasing competitiveness for voucher holders:

- ▣ **Damage mitigation funds**, allowing landlords to claim reimbursement for any excessive unit repairs needed but not covered by the security deposit. While these funds are infrequently used, they do help to curb perceived risk in renting to voucher households.
- ▣ **Vacancy or “no-loss” payments** to cover lost rent during unit turnover or the paperwork and inspection processes associated with the HCV leasing process to help landlords avoid income gaps.
- ▣ **First-time landlord incentives**, a one-time payment for new landlords.
- ▣ **Returning landlord continuity bonuses** for continuing to rent to voucher households.
- ▣ **Referral bonuses** for landlords who refer new landlords to the program.



#5 EXPAND COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, CoCS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

LOWER COST

Research consistently identifies expanding local and regional cross-sector partnerships as a key strategy for improving program outcomes, including success rates. PHAs have a long track record of working in partnership with external entities, including local governments, Continuums of Care (CoCs), service providers, and other community organizations. SPV programs sometimes come with built-in partnerships with service providers, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and local entities such as county behavioral health teams, child welfare departments, and CoCs. These partners bring their own connections and networks and can offer support such as referring local landlords, assisting with documentation and eligibility processes, and navigating local resources.

PHAs are better positioned to leverage these local relationships if they are well-connected and able to retain long-term staff with institutional knowledge. However, many PHAs have faced difficulty with staff recruitment, retention and staffing shortages.³¹ In addition, local grants are often temporary, and some PHAs shared that the costs to stand up a new program sometimes outweigh the short-term benefits.

Strong coordination among partners is critical for building sustainable opportunities, minimizing duplicative efforts, and streamlining the use of limited resources, housing units, and systems. Community programs operating in silos often leads to duplicative efforts such as landlord outreach and resource lists and can ultimately confuse households and landlords. Several PHAs expressed the value of participating in regular community coordination meetings and aligning efforts.

Strong coordination among partners is critical for building sustainable opportunities, minimizing duplicative efforts, and streamlining the use of limited resources, housing units, and systems.

³¹ Economy, Finnigan, Roy, and Ward, *Improving Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program*.

Beyond expanding their existing networks, PHAs should embrace their role as critical service providers and leaders within their communities and actively participate in local and regional decision-making processes that influence funding allocations. A key opportunity for PHAs to expand their coordination role is through active participation in the regional planning process mandated through the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) program administered by HCD. HHAP statutorily requires eligible applicants (CoCs, large cities, and counties) to submit Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plans that identify roles and responsibilities for applicants and community partners; outline key actions including milestones, lead actors, and partners for each; explain how each key action will help to meet California System Performance Measures; and describe how specific local, state, and federal funding sources will be used to achieve these goals.

In addition, HHAP applicants are required to engage specific stakeholders in the regional homelessness action plan development process. This includes PHAs, which fall under the category of “housing providers.” PHAs should proactively engage in the regional planning process by attending public planning meetings, reviewing draft plans, providing formal input, and advocating for their residents’ needs in discussions about how HHAP funds will be allocated. Because the HHAP regional planning process must outline how various funding sources will be implemented locally, the process increases transparency surrounding local funding allocations and can assist PHAs in better advocating for their needs. For example, managed care plan providers are another required stakeholder in the HHAP process, offering an important connection point for PHAs seeking to better understand how funds that provide housing assistance to beneficiaries through the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) and California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) are being deployed in their region. While HHAP eligible applicants are ultimately responsible for administering HHAP and must follow local procurement processes, PHAs that are engaged in the regional

Beyond expanding their existing networks, PHAs should embrace their role as critical service providers and leaders within their communities and actively participate in local and regional decision-making processes that influence funding allocations.

planning process are better positioned to advocate for funding priorities that align with their communities' needs and identify opportunities to contribute to meeting California System Performance Measures.

PHAs have also successfully pursued innovative opportunities such as partnering with local Master of Social Work (MSW) students for housing navigation support and partnering with local homeless providers such as shelter operators that can assist households with accessing housing navigation services from CalAIM. Beyond the HHAP process, PHAs may also pursue partnerships with their local counties to leverage BHSA funds. Counties are required to allocate 30 percent of their annual BHSA funding toward housing interventions for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness with significant behavioral health needs.^[32] Eligible uses for counties' housing allocations include "other housing supports," defined by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to include Landlord Outreach and Mitigation Funds (for developing outreach materials and offering financial landlord incentives), Participant Assistance Funds (for covering a broad range of move-in costs), Housing Transition Navigation Services and Housing Tenancy Sustaining Services, and broader community outreach and engagement activities (up to 7 percent of the housing allocation).^[33] Finally, PHAs also contribute to affordable housing development and preservation efforts in various ways, including project-basing HCVs to create more deed-restricted affordable homes. In general, PHAs provide critical financial and other implementation assistance to the development of affordable housing, including long-term Project-Based Voucher (PBV) commitments.

32 California Department of Health Care Services, *Proposition 1 Behavioral Health Services Act: How to Use Behavioral Health Services Act/Mental Health Services Act Funds for Housing*, July 18, 2024.

33 California Department of Health Care Services, *Behavioral Health Services Act County Policy Manual, Chapter 7: BHSA Components and Requirements, C.9.4 Other Housing Supports*.

#6 EXPLORE PAYMENT STANDARD MODIFICATIONS TO IMPROVE HOUSING ACCESS

HIGHER COST

Payment standards are the maximum subsidy provided by the PHA toward a household's rental costs and are established based on HUD's Fair Market Rents (FMRs). As housing costs continue to rise and FMRs—typically set by HUD at approximately the 40th percentile of local rents—fail to keep pace with rapidly increasing market rents,³⁴ insufficient payment standards can limit voucher households' access to units. To address this, some PHAs have used different approaches to modify payment standards in ways that improve housing access. However, these strategies are not one-size-fits-all and require careful assessment of local market conditions and fair housing objectives. As local housing market conditions shift, PHAs can continue to explore whether payment standard modifications may be needed to keep pace with housing costs. In addition to analyzing local housing market conditions, PHAs can also analyze geographic lease-up patterns in the context of fair housing data to identify whether voucher households are able to access units in higher-cost, higher-opportunity neighborhoods. To strengthen these types of assessments statewide, PHAs can pursue opportunities for peer learning and knowledge sharing to draw on the experience of other PHAs and develop shared methodologies or resources to inform payment standard decisions.

PHAs can pursue opportunities for peer learning and knowledge sharing to draw on the experience of other PHAs and develop shared methodologies or resources to inform payment standard decisions.

³⁴ Thrope, *Achieving Housing Choice and Mobility in the Voucher Program*.

Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs)

Where disparities in neighborhood access are identified, PHAs can consider adopting Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs), which allow PHAs to set distinct payment standards by ZIP code, instead of using one set of payment standards across the PHA's entire jurisdiction. Increasing payment standards for ZIP codes with higher rental costs increases the number of neighborhoods that voucher households can access, thereby expanding housing opportunities in addition to neighborhood choice. HUD mandates some PHAs, particularly in high-cost areas, to use SAFMRs to determine their maximum payment standards, but PHAs can also choose to opt-in.

Although outcomes can vary across housing markets,^[35] research shows that SAFMR utilization can increase voucher households' access to units in costlier, higher-opportunity neighborhoods.^[36] While this strategy may increase administrative costs in the short term, research indicates that implementing SAFMRs does not necessarily increase the overall cost of administering the HCV program or reduce the number of vouchers PHAs can issue,^[37] as increases to SAFMRs in higher cost neighborhoods are potentially offset by reductions in SAFMRs in lower-cost areas over time. However, when setting payment standards based on SAFMRs, PHAs should carefully assess potential unintended consequences, such as limiting households' ability to use vouchers in lower-cost neighborhoods subject to reduced payment standards. PHAs that use SAFMRs should also prioritize hold-harmless policies, which allow them to maintain existing payment standards for households already receiving assistance, helping to prevent displacement and increased cost burdens.

³⁵ Vincent Reina, Arthur Acolin, and Raphael W. Bostic, *Section 8 Vouchers and Rent Limits: Do Small Area Fair Market Rent Limits Increase Access to Opportunity Neighborhoods? An Early Evaluation*, Housing Policy Debate 29, no. 1, 2019, pp. 44–61.

³⁶ Ingrid Gould Ellen, Katherine O'Regan, and Sarah Stochak, *Pricing for Opportunity: The Impact of Spatially Varying Rent Subsidies on Housing Voucher Neighborhoods and Take Up*, NYU Furman Center, July 2025.

³⁷ Ellen, O'Regan, and Stochak, *Pricing for Opportunity*.

Increasing Overall Payment Standards

Some PHAs have had success in raising overall payment standards for their entire jurisdiction. PHAs can raise their payment standards up to 110% of the FMR, or request approval from HUD to raise them up to 120%.^[38] Though highly impactful, this strategy requires PHAs to spend more of their limited budget allocation on per-unit rental subsidy, which can limit the number of vouchers that a PHA can issue.^[39] Critically, any increase in payment standards should avoid passing on additional costs to voucher households, who are responsible for paying no more than 30% of their income toward rent.

However, PHAs that are able should continue to experiment with variable payment standards, whether through overall payment standard increases or geographically variable increases. To moderate costs, PHAs can be strategically flexible in raising payment standards based on local context such as quality of the local housing stock, rental costs, and market condition variances among neighborhoods.^[40] However, these strategies may increase costs and require difficult budgetary tradeoffs that could result in issuing fewer vouchers and serving fewer households overall. In addition, this recommendation conflicts with recent HUD guidance encouraging PHAs to adopt cost-saving measures, including through reduction of payment standards. PHAs should therefore continue to approach payment standard increases strategically and in response to need based on local data and market conditions.

To moderate costs, PHAs can be strategically flexible in raising payment standards based on local context such as quality of the local housing stock, rental costs, and market condition variances among neighborhoods.

³⁸ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “Establishing Payment Standards,” in *Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook*, June 2025.

³⁹ Economy, Finnigan, Roy, and Ward, *Improving Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program*.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

#7 MAINTAIN FLEXIBLE SEARCH TIMES

LOWER COST

While HUD requires PHAs to allow households at least 60 days to find a suitable unit, research shows that longer search times (up to 180 days) may be warranted due to increasing challenges within the housing market—a need also reflected in conversations with voucher participants. PHAs can offer flexible search times to help households secure a unit,^[41] but the specific approach may vary depending on PHA size and capacity. Larger PHAs may choose to automatically grant households a 180-day search window to reduce administrative burdens caused by extension and reasonable accommodation requests.^[42] However, HUD does not disburse administrative fees (program funds) until a voucher household has leased a unit. Therefore, smaller PHAs are likely to have less capacity to automatically offer extended search times. However, requiring households to request extensions also acts as a strategy to more proactively support households throughout their housing search, as it facilitates a touch point between PHA staff and voucher households, which can help PHAs more promptly identify household barriers and provide relevant support or resource referrals when able. Either way, maintaining flexible search times is a key part of the puzzle toward enhancing success rates.

⁴¹ Sloane, Stewart, and Martone, *Special Purpose Voucher Programs for People With Disabilities*.

⁴² Economy, Finnigan, Roy, and Ward, *Improving Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program*.

#8 REVIEW INTERNAL VOUCHER ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES

LOWER COST

Housing authorities, and especially those unsure where to focus their efforts to improve success rates, can benefit from internal process mapping of how vouchers are leased-up to identify bottlenecks that delay lease-ups and contribute to lower success rates. Process mapping can be used not only to examine a PHA's internal voucher administration workflows but also to understand and assess the lease-up experience from the perspective of voucher households and landlords, helping staff pinpoint possible redundancies, communication gaps, and specific steps that may cause delays.

Various process mapping methodologies have been employed by PHAs for identifying HCV administrative improvements. For example, with the help of consultants, a southern California housing authority conducted process mapping that successfully streamlined workflows, reduced costs, and improved services. However, this approach can also be scaled and adapted to accommodate PHAs' varying capacities. Even lower-cost process mapping exercises can help to identify opportunities to refine workflows, reduce administrative burden, and support more efficient and successful lease-ups.

PART B: STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

#9 STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT OF SOURCE OF INCOME PROTECTIONS TO AFFIRMATIVELY FURTHER FAIR HOUSING (AFFH)

California state law prohibits source of income (SOI) discrimination,^[43] meaning landlords cannot disqualify a household from renting a unit because the household relies on voucher subsidies. This form of discrimination commonly appears in rental advertisements that include phrasing such as “no Section 8,” though discriminatory practices are often more subtle and difficult to detect. The law requires landlords to base their minimum household income limit on the tenant’s portion of the rent that is not covered by the voucher subsidy.^[44] While SOI protections overall have shown positive impacts such as increased household mobility to higher-cost neighborhoods,^[45] voucher households still face high rates of housing market discrimination that continue to impede successful lease-ups. In 2024, the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) had 273 SOI complaint related cases, 20% of their total housing cases that year.^[46]

43 In conjunction with SOI discrimination, voucher households may also face other forms of housing discrimination, including based on disability and criminal history, which can further limit access to private rental units. However, these issues fall outside the scope of this report and warrant further consideration through future research and dialogue.

44 SB 329 (Chapter 600, Statutes of 2019) amended California Government Code sections 12927 and 12955 (Div. 3, Title 2, Part 2.8, Ch. 9), enhancing the Fair Employment and Housing Act to prohibit discrimination against voucher households by expanding the definition of “source of income.”

45 Ingrid Gould Ellen, Katherine M. O’Regan, and Katharine W. H. Harwood, *Advancing Choice in the Housing Choice Voucher Program: Source of Income Protections and Locational Outcomes*, Housing Policy Debate 33, no. 4, 2022, pp. 941–62.

46 California Civil Rights Department, *2024 Annual Report*, November 2025, p. 26, available at <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2025/11/CRD-2024-Annual-Report.pdf>.

Several approaches to improving SOI protection laws would require legislative intervention, and these policies warrant further research that is outside the scope of this report. Research is needed on potential expansions to SOI protections as well as alternative policy approaches the state could consider, such as additional regulations related to tenant selection (for example, establishing universal tenant screening criteria across all private landlords statewide), recordkeeping requirements, or property management licensing.

In addition to policy design, the effectiveness of existing SOI protections depends heavily on enforcement. Research has shown that successful implementation can take years after enactment, reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of enforcement.^[47] As states and local governments continue to explore different enforcement strategies, further research is needed to identify effective approaches. For example, a 2024 report on SOI discrimination in New York City highlights efforts to better equip voucher holders to identify discriminatory practices and strengthen fair housing testing and enforcement strategies.^[48]

Additionally, there is an overarching need for more funding to expand enforcement capacity among state enforcement agencies (the Office of the Attorney General and the Civil Rights Department) and nonprofit fair housing organizations alike, especially in the context of diminished federal enforcement. For example, the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) implements both proactive and reactive enforcement strategies that require significant staff capacity. When the complaint process moves forward, it leads to reactive enforcement through litigation and dispute resolution. However, CRD also proactively provides landlord education and community fair housing trainings to raise awareness of SOI protection laws. For example, testing is used to identify discriminatory advertisements and carry out targeted outreach to provide education to landlords and property owners. Furthermore, state enforcement agencies and nonprofit fair housing organizations that provide legal aid can also strengthen communication and coordination to help streamline multifaceted enforcement efforts.

⁴⁷ Daniel Teles and Yipeng Su. *Source of Income Protections and Access to Low-Poverty Neighborhoods*, Urban Institute, October 2022.

⁴⁸ Community Service Society of New York and Unlock NYC, *Denial Tactics: Tracking New Forms of Source of Income Discrimination in New York City*, August 14, 2024, available at https://smhttp-ssl-58547.nexcesscdn.net/nycss/images/uploads/pubs/Denial_Tactics_Report_V5.pdf.

PHAs can continue to amplify outreach and strengthen education on SOI protection laws to landlords and property owners, provide fair housing and tenant rights trainings to voucher households, and provide referrals to tenant rights and fair housing organizations for personalized household-level support such as navigating complaint processes. Because PHAs work directly with households throughout the housing search process, they are often among the first to hear about potential instances of discrimination and are well positioned to provide guidance, resources, and referrals to voucher households. When made aware of

a particular landlord who appears to be exhibiting discriminatory practices, PHAs can further expand efforts to directly inform the landlord of their legal obligation to comply with anti-SOI discrimination law. In addition, PHAs and community organizations themselves may report to CRD online^[49] when they encounter discriminatory language in apartment listings. HCD can partner with the California Association of Housing Authorities (CAHA) to help share these enforcement tools and practices among PHAs. HCD can also help to facilitate more opportunities for collaboration between PHAs and CRD, including through fair housing training opportunities for PHAs, community partners, landlords, and property owners.

⁴⁹ California Civil Rights Department, “CRD Discriminatory Ad Reporting Tool”, available at <https://ca-gov.neotalogic.com/a/Discriminatory-Ad-Reporting-Tool>.

The screenshot shows the 'Discriminatory Ad Reporting Tool' interface. At the top, it says 'California Civil Rights Department'. Below that, the title 'Discriminatory Ad Reporting Tool' is displayed in red. A brief description follows: 'This tool lets you report advertisements for housing or jobs that contain discriminatory statements. By using this tool, you can help CRD inform the landlord or employer about illegal language in their ad, which can help ensure equal opportunities for everyone in California.' The main section asks 'What would you like to report today?' and offers two radio button options: 'Discriminatory statement found on a housing or employment website (such as Craigslist, Zillow, etc.)' (which is selected) and 'Discriminatory statement made in another setting (in-person, over the phone, via email, etc.)'. A 'Next >' button is located below the options. The footer includes the 'Civil Rights Department' logo and the 'CA.GOV' logo.

Above: PHAs and community organizations themselves may report to [CRD online](https://ca-gov.neotalogic.com/a/Discriminatory-Ad-Reporting-Tool) when they encounter discriminatory language in apartment listings, which can be reached at: <https://ca-gov.neotalogic.com/a/Discriminatory-Ad-Reporting-Tool>.

Lastly, HCD can continue building upon existing resources, such as the AFFH Data Viewer,^[50] to identify areas where HCVs are currently less likely to be used in higher-resource areas.^[51] Using this information, HCD could develop a mapping tool that helps state agencies and nonprofit fair housing organizations strategically target SOI testing and enforcement efforts statewide. Given limited enforcement resources, expanded AFFH mapping efforts could help identify areas where SOI discrimination is more likely to occur and where targeted testing and outreach may have the greatest impact. For example, in 2016, the New York City (NYC) Commission on Human Rights partnered with the NYC Mayor's Office of Data Analytics to analyze and map data to identify larger property owners potentially violating SOI protection laws.^[52] Similarly, HCD could overlay various fair housing-related data layers with HUD census tract-level HCV data and PHA payment standards to help identify areas where voucher households should theoretically be able to access housing but appear unable to do so in practice. HCD can further explore methodologies and opportunities to develop this type of tool.

⁵⁰ California Department of Housing and Community Development, *AFFH Data Viewer*, Housing Open Data Tools, available at <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/affh/data-viewer>.

⁵¹ Mapping this lease-up data can also be used to assess the need for payment standard modifications as discussed in Recommendation 6.

⁵² New York City Mayor's Office of Data Analytics, *Fighting Source of Income Discrimination*, available at <https://modaprojects.cityofnewyork.us/fighting-source-of-income-discrimination/>.

#10 EXPAND HCD TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND RESEARCH ON HCV ADMINISTRATION BEST PRACTICES

HCD has furthered collaboration with housing authorities throughout the state through the workgroup required by AB 653 (Chapter 672, Statutes of 2024). To continue to build and strengthen this relationship, HCD should expand its role in supporting PHAs with enhancing success rates for voucher households in California. Largely based on stakeholder input, this recommendation identifies a few distinct roles for HCD to play.

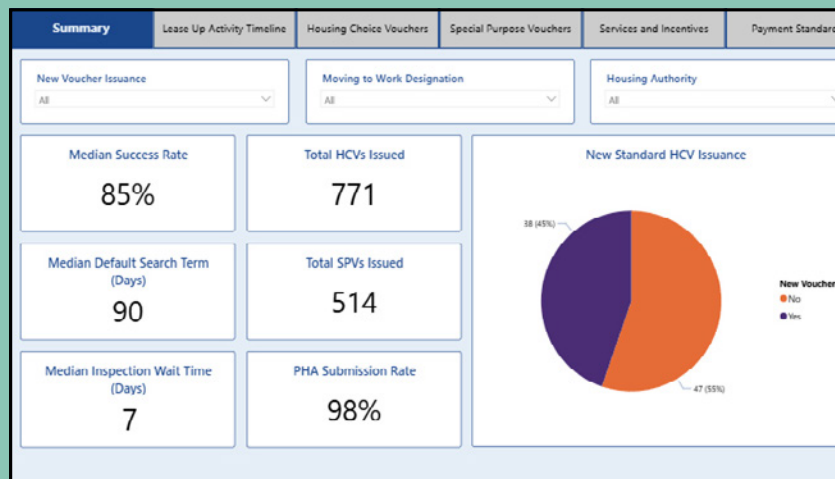
First, HCD can partner with CAHA and representatives of PHAs around the state to support efforts to develop a strong community of practice among PHAs throughout California. PHAs can continue to build upon existing efforts such as HCD's PHA Workgroup and CAHA meetings to take ownership over fostering ongoing spaces for PHA collaboration and knowledge and resource sharing. These efforts can help to identify PHAs' varying strengths and resources that can be shared and utilized among PHAs statewide, so other PHAs can benefit from existing peer efforts and avoid duplication. Potential shared resources can span across various aspects of program administration, such as landlord educational materials, staff trainings, MOU templates for local partnerships, and fair housing educational materials.

Second, HCD can help facilitate and incentivize local government and CoC partnerships with PHAs. For example, HCD can provide technical assistance during the Housing Element review process to local jurisdictions looking to partner with their local housing authority. Guidance can be developed in partnership with PHAs and based on examples of successful partnerships already occurring throughout the state. Several jurisdictions have documented partnerships with housing authorities in their Housing Elements, including initiatives to support housing development and preservation, expand homeownership opportunities for voucher holders, prevent homelessness, and provide long-term housing stability support for voucher households. In addition, HCD can consider other strategies to incentivize these partnerships through funding programs and the Prohousing Designation Program. HCD should also continue to support and, subject to budget availability, expand funding for permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness, as well as programs serving populations with specific housing needs, such as veterans, farmworkers, and people with disabilities.

Upon request, HCD can provide additional support to housing authorities with their own internal data analysis and research goals aimed at informing programmatic improvements. For example, HCD can facilitate connections with researchers or institutions with expertise in the voucher program. HCD could also help facilitate peer learning between PHAs in California by making connections between specific PHAs based on their individual strengths, goals, and opportunities for growth. In addition, HCD can support PHAs with accessing their annually reported data and HCD's HCV Data Dashboard for their research purposes.

Lastly, in collaboration with PHAs, HCD can facilitate or contribute to future research efforts exploring several potential strategies identified during the development of this report. In addition to the actions identified in previous recommendations, future research is needed on opportunities to strengthen regional efforts and local partnerships and the potential role of regional portability, consolidation, and other streamlining strategies. Further research informed by the lived experience of voucher participants is also needed, including research on how PHAs can better engage voucher households to inform programmatic priorities.

HCD'S RECENTLY LAUNCHED HCV DATA DASHBOARD



HCD's Housing Choice Voucher Data Dashboard launched in January 2026 and displays annual data reported by PHAs in California as required under AB 653, including monthly success rates for HCVs and SPVs. As of this report's publication, the dashboard displays pilot data on new vouchers issued in July 2024 and their status as of July 2025. The next round of data collection will capture a full twelve months of success rates data and will be updated annually moving forward. Additional metrics tracked annually in the dashboard include average inspection wait times, search times, and payment standards. For more information or to explore the dashboard, visit <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-open-data-tools/hcv-data-tracking>.

V: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This report's recommendations are intended to remain flexible and responsive for PHAs continuing to navigate the evolving federal landscape and budgetary constraints, especially within the context of persistent structural challenges associated with HCV administration. As PHAs' per unit costs rise, insufficient administrative fees

Looking ahead, sustaining progress on voucher success rates will require a coordinated, multilevel commitment to strengthening the infrastructure that supports voucher households, PHAs, and local partners.

continue to pose a barrier to adopting best practices to enhance success rates. As stated by Rand Corporation and UC Berkeley Turner Center researchers, "PHAs have had to find ways to stretch declining fee revenue at a time when best practices suggest increasing the kind of spending supported by this funding."⁵³

HCD should continue to collaborate with PHAs through the Housing Authority Workgroup created pursuant to AB 653, maintaining open communication and responsiveness as the HCV program circumstances continue to shift. Ongoing tracking and analysis of HCV metrics can provide insights into the status of success rates in California to identify and illustrate programmatic gaps. These insights can inform program design, policy, and funding priorities, and help mobilize resources to address fiscal limitations that hinder success rates.

Looking ahead, sustaining progress on voucher success rates will require a coordinated, multilevel commitment to strengthening the infrastructure that supports voucher households, PHAs, and local partners. As California's housing market continues to evolve, it will be essential for PHAs, state agencies, and community stakeholders to share promising practices, leverage data to inform decision making, and remain adaptable to changing federal guidance and funding landscapes. Continued investment in research, technical assistance, and cross-sector collaboration can help ensure that voucher households, especially those facing the greatest barriers, have meaningful access to stable, high-quality, and opportunity-rich housing throughout the state.

⁵³ Economy, Finnigan, Roy, and Ward, *Improving Utilization in the Housing Choice Voucher Program*.

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PART A CHART: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING AUTHORITIES

	Strategy	Actions	Desired Outcomes
1.	Improve Leasing Experience for Voucher Holders (Lower Cost)	▪ Provide a consistent point of contact ▪ Enhance program orientation ▪ Train PHA staff in trauma-informed service delivery	Improved program and leasing experience for voucher holders.
2.	Offer Housing Navigation and Move-in Cost Assistance (Higher Cost)	▪ Expand access to housing navigation and case management services ▪ Provide move-in cost assistance (e.g. security deposits and application fees) ▪ Leverage partnerships with community-based organizations to help fill service gaps	Reduced barriers for households seeking housing in the private market.

	Strategy	Actions	Desired Outcomes
3.	Strengthen Landlord Communication, Education, and Services (Lower Cost)	▪ Enhance streamlined outreach and recruitment processes ▪ Establish landlord liaisons or points of contact ▪ Develop online portals and resources ▪ Streamline inspection process (e.g. provide a landlord inspection checklist or offer remote inspections)	Increased landlord engagement, resulting in access to more units. Improved landlord experience and more effective communication with PHAs.
4.	Provide Financial Incentives for Landlords (Higher Cost)	Offer incentives such as: ▪ Vacancy loss payments ▪ Damage mitigation funds ▪ First-time or returning landlord bonuses ▪ Create a directory of community organizations and service providers ▪ Proactively identify and pursue local funding opportunities ▪ Participate in community coordination meetings	Increased landlord engagement, resulting in access to more units. Increased competitiveness of voucher holders in the private market.

Strategy		Actions	Desired Outcomes
5.	Expand Coordination and Collaboration with Local Governments, CoCs, and Service Providers (Lower Cost)	- Expand relationships with local governments, CoCs, community organizations and service providers - Explore and pursue local funding opportunities - Proactively participate in local and regional system coordination efforts such as HHAP regional planning	Increased access to community support networks and resources, resulting in faster housing placements. Streamlined coordination and improved communication across community institutions.
6.	Explore Payment Standard Modifications to Improve Housing Access (Higher Cost)	Set different levels of voucher subsidy payment standards by ZIP code (rather than across the entire PHA's jurisdiction)	Increased housing choice, resulting in greater access to high-opportunity neighborhoods.
7.	Maintain Flexible Search Times (Lower Cost)	- Extend housing search times beyond HUD's 60-day minimum - Grant search time extensions to households as needed	Increased placements in suitable, high-quality units with a lower risk of voucher expiration.
8.	Review Internal Voucher Administration Processes (Lower Cost)	Conduct process mapping reviews to pinpoint bottlenecks that may delay lease-ups and contribute to lower success rates.	Improved processes that better support more efficient and successful lease-ups.

PART B CHART: STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

	Strategy	Actions	Desired Outcomes
9.	Strengthen Enforcement of Source of Income Protections to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH)	▪ Provide additional landlord and tenant education, including training and outreach with the Civil Rights Department ▪ Ensure voucher households are connected to fair housing resources, including legal aid	Reduced discrimination in the housing market, resulting in greater housing choice.
10.	Expand HCD TA and Research on HCV Administration Best Practices	▪ Facilitate peer-learning and resource sharing among PHAs ▪ Increase technical assistance for local governments partnering with PHAs (e.g., to implement Housing Element programs) ▪ Collaborate with PHAs and local governments on future research to strengthen HCV program administration	Improved coordination across PHAs and local governments, resulting in more diffuse knowledge-sharing, efficient use of existing resources, and streamlined policy and program implementation.

APPENDIX B: ABBREVIATIONS AND KEY TERMS

ABBREVIATIONS

AFFH – Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

CAHA – California Association of Housing Authorities

CoC – Continuum of Care

EHV – Emergency Housing Voucher

FMR – Fair Market Rent

HCD – California Department of Housing and Community Development

HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

HCV – Housing Choice Voucher

HQS – Housing Quality Standards

HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development

MTW – Moving to Work

PHA – Public housing authority

SAFMR – Small Area Fair Market Rent

SPV – Special Purpose Voucher

KEY TERMS^[54]

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing: Meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics.^[55]

Budget authority: Congressional funds distributed by HUD to PHAs to administer voucher programs over a specific term (as defined in PHAs' annual contracts with HUD).

Housing Choice Voucher Program (also known as Section 8): A federally funded tenant-based rental assistance program administered locally by public housing authorities, providing a subsidy that covers the portion of rent exceeding 30% of a household's income.

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Housing Quality Standards Inspection: Inspection of housing units paid for by rental assistance funds to ensure compliance with minimum quality standards developed by HUD in accordance with Title 24 Section 5.703 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Lease-up: The process by which households establish tenancy through a formal written lease.

⁵⁴ Except where indicated, all definitions of technical terms related to HCV program administration were adapted from *Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance: Housing Choice Voucher Program*, 24 Code of Federal Regulations part 982 (2026), and related HUD guidance documents that interpret the statute.

⁵⁵ California Department of Housing and Community Development, *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing: Guidance for All Public Entities and for Housing Elements*, April 2021, available at https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/affh/docs/affh_document_final_4-27-2021.pdf.

Moving to Work (MTW): The Moving to Work program allows PHAs to design and test innovative housing and self-sufficiency strategies for providing housing assistance to low-income households. The original MTW cohort includes 39 PHAs designated in 1996.^[56]

Moving to Work Expansion: Cohort of 100 PHAs that Congress authorized to add to the MTW program under the 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act.^[57]

Mobility counseling: Housing search assistance or other services provided by PHAs to help voucher households move into high-opportunity areas.

Navigation services: Services to help voucher households obtain housing. While navigation services can serve and benefit any population, they are typically geared toward people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Payment standard: The maximum monthly assistance payment for a household assisted in the tenant-based voucher program before deducting the total tenant payment by the household

Portability: Renting a housing unit through the HCV program outside the jurisdiction of the initial PHA that issued the voucher.

Project-Based Voucher (PBV): A type of voucher administered by PHAs through the Housing Choice Voucher program allocated to units in specific housing projects, as distinct from tenant-based vouchers that allow households to rent units of their choosing on the private market. Used as a verb, to “project-base” a voucher means to convert a tenant-based voucher into a project-based voucher, effectively attaching it to a specific housing project rather than allowing it to move with the household.

⁵⁶ Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-134, 110 Stat. 1321, April 1996, available at <https://www.congress.gov/104/plaws/publ134/PLAW-104publ134.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016, Pub. L. No. 114-113, 129 Stat. 2242, December 2015, available at <https://www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr2029/BILLS-114hr2029enr.pdf>.

Reasonable accommodation: A change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunity to use and enjoy their housing, including public and common spaces. PHAs must provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and residents under the Fair Housing Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Rent reasonableness: HUD requires that units for which rental assistance funds are used must have reasonable rental costs in relation to rents being charged for comparable units in the same location.

Search time: The initial period during which the PHA allows a household to find housing with a voucher.^[58]

Small Area Fair Market Rent (SAFMR): A type of Fair Market Rent calculated for ZIP codes and required for use in certain areas designated by HUD.

Source of Income (SOI) discrimination: Discrimination or refusal to lease to a tenant based on the source of income used to pay rent, such as a voucher or other form of rental assistance. California state law prohibits source of income discrimination against voucher holders under Senate Bill 329 (Chapter 600, Statutes of 2019).

Special Purpose Voucher (SPV): A type of voucher administered by PHAs through the Housing Choice Voucher Program that serves specific populations with distinct needs. Examples include the HUD-Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program, Family Unification Program (FUP), Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program, and Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program. SPVs are funded through a separate Congressional appropriation, distinct from standard HCVs.

Success rate: The share of newly issued voucher households that successfully lease a unit.^[59]

Utilization rate: The proportion of HUD-allocated vouchers and/or budget authority that the PHA has used (distinct from success rate).

⁵⁸ Assembly Bill 653 (Chapter 672, Statutes of 2024).

⁵⁹ Assembly Bill 653 (Chapter 672, Statutes of 2024).

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF LANDLORD RECRUITMENT FLYER

The following flyer can be accessed at the *California Association of Housing Authorities (CAHA)* Website at cahahousing.org/programs, under the [Additional Resources](#) section.



Share the Benefits Offered by Your Local Housing Authority

By partnering with your local housing authority, landlords have access to tenants with valuable rental subsidies, which are designed to protect tenants from life's adverse events, such as job loss, with the added benefit of providing greater financial security to landlords.

The most common rental subsidy program provided by housing authorities is the federally funded Housing Choice Voucher program (also known as Section 8). Here are some of the top financial advantages enjoyed by landlords who rent to Section 8 tenants.

On-Time, Convenient Payments

The housing authority pays their portion of the rent on the 1st of each month, and most housing authorities offer the convenience of direct deposit.

Protection from Tenant Financial Losses

When a Section 8 tenant's income decreases, the housing authority's portion increases to cover the loss of income. This provides the landlord and tenant with a valuable form of insurance against tenant income losses.

Free Marketing and Endless Supply of Potential Tenants

The housing authority is eager to list your vacancy for free. By advertising with the housing authority or through one of their referral websites, landlords have access to a large pool of tenants. Landlords should still screen all potential tenants.

Incentive for Tenant Lease Compliance

To increase tenant compliance, most housing authorities provide counseling, warnings or reminders to tenants who have received notices from their landlords and are at risk of eviction. If it is proven that a tenant violated their lease, the tenant may be terminated from the Section 8 program.





Free Unit Inspections

Under the Section 8 program, the housing authority conducts unit inspections. Usually, the repairs requested by the housing authority are minor and related to routine maintenance. However, the inspection can reveal a problem in its early stages, such as a small roof leak, minor plumbing issue, or termite problem, before significant damage is done.

Other Incentives

A number of southern California housing authorities offer a range of extra services to Section 8 landlords, such as signing bonuses, free educational workshops, payment of damages exceeding the security deposit, payment of rent to hold vacant units, and payment of tenant security deposits. Check with your local housing authority to find out what they have to offer.

For more information, contact your local housing authority. To locate your local housing authority, visit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development website at:

<https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/california/renting>

Safeguard Against Lost Rent During Eviction

Unfortunately, not every tenant (Section 8 or otherwise) will live up to their lease agreement and the landlord will be forced to evict. If this occurs with a Section 8 tenant, the housing authority will continue to pay the housing authority's share of the rent throughout the eviction process until the date the tenant moves out or is locked out.

Competitive Rents

The housing authority pays market rents as long as comparable rents exist in the neighborhood and the tenant's rent portion is affordable. If a unit is not subject to local rent control rules, there are no caps on rent increases for Section 8 tenants, as long as comparable rents continue to exist in the neighborhood.

Prevention of Overcrowding

Throughout southern California, families are doubled or tripled up in two and three bedroom units in order to afford the rent. Overcrowding increases the landlord's utility costs, places additional wear and tear on the unit, and leads to conflicts between neighbors. By renting to a Section 8 tenant, a landlord is not faced with overcrowding. The housing authority restricts the number of individuals allowed in the unit according to the number of bedrooms in the unit.



Source: California Association of Housing Authorities (CAHA), <https://www.cahahousing.org/programs>

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