

# Homeless System Response: Maximizing Federal Resources to House America

[House America](#) is a federal initiative in which the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) invite mayors, city and county leaders, tribal nation leaders, and governors into a national partnership to utilize [the historic investments provided through the American Rescue Plan](#) to address the crisis of homelessness. House America encourages communities to use American Rescue Plan resources, alongside other federal, tribal, state, and local resources, to re-house 100,000 households experiencing homelessness through a Housing First approach, and to add 20,000 new units of affordable housing into the development pipeline by December 31, 2022.

House America is a vehicle for the focus, drive, and leadership needed from government working at all levels and in local collaboration with those most impacted to address this crisis. We know what works to address homelessness: the investments to provide housing and support services through a Housing First approach, together with focused leadership that sets goals, centers the voice of people with [lived expertise and experience of homelessness](#) and monitors progress.

Through the American Rescue Plan, communities now have historic funding for housing resources—70,000 emergency housing vouchers, \$5 billion in HOME grants, and significant investments to preserve and protect housing on tribal lands—to help more Americans obtain the safety of a stable home. The American Rescue Plan also provides \$350 billion in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through the Department of the Treasury to support the many needs communities face, including homelessness and housing instability, as they respond to the pandemic, its negative economic impacts, and the on-going deep racial and social disparities within systems.

## Maximizing the Impact of Federal Resources

To get the greatest impact from all the resources currently available to end homelessness, communities should use each resource for its best purpose while targeting all the resources together in a coordinated and strategic fashion. This will mean working across cities, counties, Public Housing Agencies, and Continuums of Care to develop an investment plan to rehouse households who are currently homeless.

To end homelessness, each community must [address inequities in who becomes and remains](#) homeless. Only by creating inclusive leadership that [empowers people with lived experience of homelessness](#) and representatives of the racial and ethnic groups most likely to become homeless will communities start to dismantle systems that have perpetuated inequities and homelessness.

The chart below provides a high-level summary of the most impactful way to use the federal resources currently available to prevent and end homelessness and work towards the House America goals. These resources are:

- Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)
- HOME-ARP
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) – CV
- Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program

EHV	HOME-ARP	ESG-CV	ERA
<p>Use to rehouse people experiencing homelessness including youth and DV survivors.</p> <p>Offer EHV's to those with histories of homelessness receiving time-limited assistance from another program.</p>	<p>Create new permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Target any other affordable housing to lowest income households who are at high risk of homelessness.</p>	<p>Rehouse people who are homeless now, including those in shelter.</p> <p>Divert to households seeking homeless assistance to alternative housing arrangements.</p>	<p>Reduce past due rent burden for tenants and landlords and avoid evictions.</p> <p>Use for past due rent before prospective rent.</p> <p>If insufficient for all who qualify, <i>target</i> based on income, past homelessness and geography.</p>

## Coordinated Investment Planning

A Coordinated Investment Plan documents the community plan to strategically align and commit resources from multiple funders or sources to fund the community's rehousing strategy developed through a collaborative planning process.

- The [Rehousing and Coordinated Investment Planning Tool](#) provides a framework for defining and quantifying rehousing needs and a process to plan out the investment of available resources to address those needs.
- [Make the Most of Federal Resources to Stop Increases in Homelessness](#) provides suggestions for strategic investment of federal resources to prevent and end homelessness.
- [Putting the Funding Pieces Together: Guide to Strategic Uses of New and Recent State and Federal Funds to Prevent and End Homelessness](#) was developed for the State of California to assist in planning the use of state and federal resources together and may provide a starting point for planning in other communities.

## Rehousing Households Experiencing Homelessness

Investing in programs that find and maintain housing for households experiencing homelessness allows them to protect themselves and their families from COVID and to leave the trauma of homelessness. The American Rescue Plan and other federal investments have created significant new housing resources.

[Emergency Housing Vouchers \(EHV\)](#). 70,000 new Housing Choice Vouchers to assist households who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking, or were recently homeless or have a high risk of housing instability. EHV information and planning resources include:

- [Emergency Housing Vouchers Funding Briefs](#)
- [Emergency Housing Vouchers: Guidance for Victim Service Providers](#)

[HOME-ARP](#). \$5 billion from the American Rescue Plan to assist individuals or households who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, and other vulnerable populations. HOME-ARP can be used to rehouse households experiencing homelessness through rental assistance and supportive services. HOME-ARP can also be used to develop new rental housing and non-congregate shelters. Technical assistance materials are updated regularly [here](#).

- [HOME-ARP Fact Sheets](#)

[ESG-CV](#). \$4 billion from the CARES Act to help communities prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 for individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance and to support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts created by coronavirus under the Emergency Solutions Grants program.

- [Targeted Rehousing Strategy Overview](#)
- [5 Tips to Approaching Rehousing with Racial Equity](#)
- [Planning a Housing Surge to Accelerate Rehousing Efforts in Response to COVID-19](#)
- [Housing Surges—Special Considerations for Targeting People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness](#)

## Homelessness Prevention and Diversion

For households who are at risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless, homelessness prevention and diversion strategies can stabilize them in their own housing or within their support network. Prevention can also be used to [promote equity](#). [Targeted homelessness prevention](#) that prioritizes households most at risk of becoming homeless if they are evicted, and [housing problem-solving conversations and resources](#) to try to divert people from the homeless system, are two strategies to reduce the number of households becoming homeless in a community. In addition to ESG-CV a significant rental assistance program was created in response to the pandemic.

[Emergency Rental Assistance \(ERA\) Program](#). \$46.5 billion to assist households to pay rental or utilities. Distributed through [state and local programs](#) to help renters stay housed and help landlords maintain the housing.

- [Eviction Diversion Maturity Model: A Prototype for Emergency Rental Assistance](#)

## Building New Units Targeted to Addressing Homelessness

Increasing the development of new permanent affordable and supportive housing units in communities is essential to preventing and ending homelessness. Strategically using American Rescue Plan housing resources, particularly HOME-ARP, along with other public and private resources available to communities to develop an affordable housing production pipeline will help communities reach their House America goals.

- [Hotel/Motel Acquisitions for Permanent Housing](#)
- [Unit Acquisition Strategies and Examples to Support Housing Development](#)
- [Long-Term Financing of Permanent Supportive Housing Projects](#)