



Summary of Community Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation *

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends tenant-based housing voucher programs to improve health and health-related outcomes for adults and to advance health equity. Health-related outcomes include housing quality and security, healthcare use, and neighborhood opportunities (e.g., lower poverty level, better schools).



Major Findings *

The CPSTF recommendation is based on evidence from a systematic review of 7 studies in 20 publications (search period January 1999 to July 2019).

- Households who used vouchers reported greater housing quality and security, less poverty and food insecurity, and fewer physical and mental health conditions compared with households who were eligible, but not offered, assistance from voucher programs.
- Children ages 12 years and younger whose households used vouchers showed improvements in education, employment, and income later in life. Interventions decreased depressive symptoms among adolescents in the four studies that measured this outcome.
- Outcomes for adolescents varied by gender. Females 10-20 years of age whose families used tenant-based vouchers to live in lower poverty neighborhoods experienced better health outcomes while males of the same age experienced worse physical and mental health outcomes.
- An economic review found societal benefits exceed the cost of tenant-based housing voucher programs that serve families with young children who are living in public housing, provide pre-move counseling, and move families to neighborhoods with greater opportunities.

What Are Tenant-based Housing Voucher Programs? *

Tenant-based housing voucher programs help households with very low incomes afford safe and sanitary housing in the private market. Vouchers are tied to households rather than specific housing units, so that households can use vouchers to move to neighborhoods with greater opportunities. Vouchers pay a substantial portion of the rent, which leaves households with money to cover other needs.

Tenant-based housing voucher programs may vary with regard to eligibility criteria (e.g., family income level), rental process (e.g., time allowed to find and rent a property), assistance (e.g., counseling in finding rentals), relocation requirements (e.g., housing in low-poverty neighborhoods), and availability of short-term payments for initial expenses (e.g., rental deposits).

Why Is This Important? *

- U.S. households that earn less than 30% of the area median income face a shortage of affordable and available rental homes.¹
- 7.7 million U.S. renters with very low incomes spend more than half of their incomes on housing and utilities.¹
- In the United States, lower housing quality is associated with higher rates of worsening health among adults over age 50.²



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***Read a complete summary of the systematic review and CPSTF finding.**

<https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/health-equity-tenant-based-housing-voucher-programs>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Housing Choice Vouchers

www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp

¹National Low-Income Housing Coalition. The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Rental Homes. National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2020. Available from URL: https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/gap/Gap-Report_2020.pdf Accessed July 16, 2020.

²Alley DE, Soldo BJ, Pagán JA, et al. Material resources and population health: disadvantages in health care, housing, and food among adults over 50 years of age. *Am J Public Health* 2009;99 (Suppl 3):S693-S701. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2009.161877.

Established in 1996 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) is an independent, nonfederal panel of public health and prevention experts whose members are appointed by the director of CDC. CPSTF provides information for a wide range of decision makers on programs, services, and other interventions aimed at improving population health. Although CDC provides administrative, scientific, and technical support for CPSTF, the recommendations developed are those of CPSTF and do not undergo review or approval by CDC. Find more information at www.thecommunityguide.org.