

Fact Sheet: Constant Cuts to Section 8 and the Local Impacts

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is the nation's primary housing program for very low and extremely low income families, the elderly, the disabled, and those at risk of homelessness. It has been proven that the most important source for housing for previously homeless or very-low-income household is rental assistance, such as a Section 8 voucher, which is connected with the unit.

The Need for Section 8 Vouchers in Los Angeles County:

In the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) jurisdiction nearly 20,000 households depend on Section 8 vouchers, and hundreds of thousands more need Section this help¹

- Over 107,000 families are on the HACoLA waiting list for Section 8 vouchers.²
- There over 899,000 low to extremely low income households in Los Angeles County and over 88,000 homeless individuals who need Section 8 or some form of rental subsidy.³
- Meanwhile, rents continue to skyrocket, increasing the need for Section 8 housing. The average rent for a 2 bedroom apartment in Los Angeles County is about \$1,275/month.⁴ With the California minimum wage at \$6.75 per hour, two minimum wage workers supporting a family would each have to work nearly 73 hours per week to afford this rent.⁵

Constant Threats to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program:

In recent years, Congress has consistently cut funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development and adjusted the rules for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program resulting in local housing authorities helping fewer needy households.

- In January 2005 HACoLA made the following harmful changes to the Section 8 program due to cuts in federal funding⁶:
 - Reduced payment standards (the amount of subsidy paid toward monthly rent) from 100% to 90% of the Fair Market Rent, resulting in tenants paying higher - often unaffordable - rents.
 - Changed occupancy standards from one bedroom for the head of household plus one bedroom for every two persons thereafter to one bedroom per two persons⁷
 - Suspended new admission to the Family Self Sufficiency Program⁸ and restricted portability to higher cost areas⁹
- Today, **the** Bush Administration's fiscal year 2007 Budget Proposal continues to tie a housing authority's voucher funding to old unreliable data, guaranteeing a loss of voucher units for many housing authorities, including several in Southern California and Los Angeles County. The Administration also continues to support the proposed State and Local Housing Flexibility Act, which threatens the Housing Choice Voucher Program in many ways including reversing the primary purpose of the program - to house the lowest income households.

We cannot allow this vital program to continue to be scaled back and put in jeopardy! You can help: Join the Save Section 8 Coalition today! For more information contact Elizabeth Wright: 213-43901070 x111 or elizabeth@lacehh.org.

¹ LA County Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan, 2003-2008

² Ibid

³ Ibid, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority 2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count

⁴ Real Facts, September 2005 Report.

⁵ National Los Income Housing Coalition, Out of Reach, 2005 <http://www.nlihc.org/oor2005/>

⁶ House Notes: A Newsletter for LA County Section 8 Owners, January 2005

⁷ occupancy standards(determines the number of bedrooms needed based on number of occupants)

⁸ The FSS program establishes an escrow account that is paid to the assisted family upon completion of their contract or program.

⁹ This means that families are not permitted to move to different Housing Authority jurisdictions if the new subsidy is higher than the current subsidy